

Chapter 7

IMPLEMENTATION AND CURRICULA

7.1 Introducing the student participants

While it is recognised that the Model A participants' details are presented in section 6.3 and specifically Table 6.3.1, it is noted here that, in order to consolidate the participants for Trials A, B, C, and D, the data are presented together to not only allow an overview of the entire sample, but also to offer an opportunity to view how many years each student participated, and to create a sense of the overall sample. Therefore, Table 7.1.1 presents the relevant student's name, gender, age range, pre-tertiary music study summarised, audition rating, as well as indications as to their involvement in the various trials.

Table 7.1.1 Entire student cohort participating in Trials A - D

Name	Gender	Age range	Prior music study	Audition rating	Trial			
					A	B	C	D
Olivia	F	18-20	Grade 7 AMEB ¹ Board music – VHA	A-	√	√	√	
Rosie	F	18-20	Grade 6 AMEB Board music result – HA	B+	√			
Elizabeth	F	18-20	Grade 6 AMEB	B-	√			
Francine	F	25-30	Grade 7 AMEB	B+	√	√	√	
Amber	F	18-20	Grade 6 AMEB Board music result - HA	B-	√	√	√	
Samantha	F	18-20	Grade 7 AMEB Piano for leisure syllabus	B-	√			
Kimli	M	20-25	Completed Advanced Diploma in Music (International Music House, Malaysia)	C		√	√	
Sat	F	20-25	Completed Advanced Diploma in Music (IMH, Malaysia)	C		√	√	
Delia	F	20-25	Completed Advanced Diploma in Music (IMH, Malaysia)	C		√	√	
Adrian	M	18-20	Grade 7 AMEB	C		√		
Jasmine	F	18-20	Grade 8 AMEB Board music result – VHA	A		√		
Jenna	F	18-20	Grade 7 AMEB Piano for leisure	B-			√	
Kellie	F	18-20	Grade 7 AMEB Piano for leisure	B-			√	
Sally	F	18-20	Grade 7 AMEB	B+			√	√
Sophie	F	18-20	Grade 7 AMEB Board music result - HA	B+			√	√
Patsy	F	20-25	Completed Advanced Diploma in Music (IMH, Malaysia)	A			√	
Chia	F	20-25	Completed Advanced Diploma in Music (IMH, Malaysia)	B-			√	
Betty	F	18-20	Grade 8 AMEB Board music result – VHA	A				√
Billie	F	18-20	Grade 6 AMEB	B-				√
Kathy	F	18-20	Grade 8 AMEB Board music result – VHA	A				√
Allison	F	18-20	Grade 8 AMEB Board music result – VHA	A				√

Table 7.1.1 reveals that a total of twenty-one students participated in one or more of the trials. Some students (e.g. Jenna, Kellie) participated for one year only as they changed degree courses to full education studies incorporating music as a minor study only, while others (e.g. Sat, Chia) entered the course at different year levels as a result of a

¹ Indicates Australian Music Examinations Board (external examining body operating in Australia)

twinning program with an overseas institution. The sample is relatively consistent in terms of age and experience, while the skill level varied from student to student, a factor which impacted on the group composition for each of the relevant trials. In order to present the group samples in detail, Table 7.1.2 outlines the relevant year, number of students and groups, group composition and rationale for the grouping of students.

Table 7.1.2 Learning groups

Trial	Students	Groups	Group composition	Rationale
A	6	2	Francine, Amber, Elizabeth	Grouping of stronger student (Francine) with others
			Olivia, Rosie, Samantha	Grouping of stronger student (Olivia) with others
B	8	2	Kimli, Sat, Delia	International students together given English skills
			Olivia, Amber, Francine, Adrian, Jasmine	Domestic students to work together and share experiences
C	12	3	Jenna, Kellie, Sally, Sophie	New level one students of similar level
			Kimli, Sat, Delia, Chia	Addition of stronger student (Chia) to existing group
			Amber, Francine, Olivia, Patsy	Addition of Patsy given piano skills and excellent English
D	6	2	Sally, Sophie, Billie	Addition of new level one to existing student dyad
			Allison, Betty, Kathy	Students studying same external exam program (AMEB – A.Mus.A)

As indicated in Table 7.1.2, the group composition varied according to the goals and levels of those within the sample for that year. The four trials therefore represent the full gamut of students working with the teacher during that period. Hence, all twenty-one students received weekly group instruction as their sole model of learning.

7.2 Students' perceptions of pre-tertiary lesson experiences

All students were required to answer a number of questions related to their pre-tertiary piano learning experiences. The data are remarkably consistent, hence in order to enable an overview of the full sample, the responses are presented in Table 7.2.1.

Table 7.2.1 Analysis of pre-tertiary music lessons

Name	Years	Principal format	Frequency	Duration	Typical format and content	Perceived advantages	Perceived disadvantages
Olivia	8	One to one	Weekly	60 mins	Warm up with scales/technical work, then pieces. Lessons were exam preparation 98% of the time, I would only ever play AMEB exam pieces and my teacher would point out areas of technical/fingering problems, expression etc. Sometimes I went through ear tests, general knowledge and sight reading.	Being advised how to play pieces, what to work on in order to improve my technique, having a full hour of one on one help/assistance was a real advantage.	I didn't think of it then, but now I realise that in a one on one lesson you only receive one opinion, you don't hear other versions of your pieces, and your teacher may not pick up on things that others may due to being used to your playing. Fresh opinions are good.
Rosie	8	One to one	Weekly	30 mins	Thirty minutes pieces. If doing an exam, ten minutes aural and scales, twenty minutes pieces. If doing theory exam fifteen theory and fifteen pieces.	No embarrassment playing in front of other people. More confidence when playing.	None, I thought it was great.
Elizabeth	11	One to one	Weekly	60 mins	I would play a piece and then would discuss with the teacher difficulties I had and any mistakes being made, then suggest ways of correcting it.	Attention was undivided and I think that I may have felt intimidated by a group at that stage. Could really focus on individual problems.	I sometimes had a lack of motivation.
Francine	10	One to one	Weekly	60 mins	Twenty minutes scales etc (technical). Forty minutes exam pieces.	Greater personal attention.	No other input from other parties.
Amber	9	One to one	Weekly	30 mins	Play through a piece, afterwards discussing problems and ways to solve them.	Individual attention to work on problem areas and no stress in front of other people.	Sometimes didn't do enough work and teachers word can be taken as gospel.
Kimli	10	One to one	Weekly	60 mins	Included scales, pieces, sight-reading and aural.	Teachers could go into more detail regarding the pieces with me.	Limited comments from teachers, one person, and had to follow their style and whatever they said.

Table 7.2.1 Analysis of pre-tertiary music lessons (continued)

Name	Years	Principal format	Frequency	Duration	Typical format and content of lessons	Perceived advantages	Perceived disadvantages
Sat	14	One to one	Weekly	60 mins	Half an hour of all pieces, 20 minutes of scales and technique, 10 minutes of sight reading.	Can learn more things thoroughly.	No other opinion beside the teacher herself.
Delia	12	One to one	Weekly	60 mins	First play scales, then move on to the pieces. Follow what our tutor taught.	Repetition of what to improve.	Only one opinion. Don't really know the mistakes you make – find out from the tutor.
Adrian	10	One to one	Weekly	60 mins	Go through exam requirements (scales, pieces)	Focus on me only.	Lack of variety of feedback.
Jasmine	9	One to one	Weekly	60 mins	Teacher would assist in preparation of exam requirements. Usually scales, followed by pieces.	Individual attention and detail.	Lack of feedback from alternative sources and limited performance experience.
Jenna		One to one	Weekly	30 mins	The teacher would hear scales, listen to pieces, sight reading and general knowledge.	Teacher had no other distractions [and we would] work at our own pace	Not long enough lessons [and] limited feedback – only one person
Kellie		One to one	Weekly	30 mins	Teacher would focus on one or two pieces and give comments on how to improve problem areas. I'd play scales and sometimes do sight reading.	No fear of playing badly in front of students and [the] teacher was able to give honest opinion	Not as much feedback also no other students at same level to discuss the piece from the same point of view.
Sally		One to one	Weekly	60 mins	I'd play scales for my exam, then pieces. She helped me to do better with these, gave suggestions, comments etc.	Having the teacher concentrate solely on my own work and progress. Knowing that it was my time to make the most of.	I did not then perceive there to be any disadvantages.
Sophie		One to one	Weekly	60 mins	She would ask me to play certain scales and pieces and then help me with any trouble areas by either demonstrating or telling me how to fix it.	You get one-on-one for the duration of the lesson with all the focus and help put on you.	You only get one opinion (teacher). You don't learn the skills of helping and critiquing others.

Table 7.2.1 Analysis of pre-tertiary music lessons (continued)

Name	Years	Principal format	Frequency	Duration	Typical format and content of lessons	Perceived advantages	Perceived disadvantages
Patsy	14	One to one	Weekly	60 mins	Teacher would listen to the pieces I played and supply methods on technique, as well as give new pieces.	Individual attention, more privacy and more focused during the lesson.	Lack of peers' comments, feedback, discussion.
Chia	12	One to one	Weekly	60 mins	Listen to my playing (pieces) and correct me technically.	I think it's the concentration between the students and the teacher.	Very stressful sometimes.
Betty	9	One to one	Weekly	60 mins	Teacher would fix up rhythmic or notational errors, tell me ways or techniques to fix up certain passages and tell me how to interpret the mood of the piece.	You can get through more work and the information or help you get is for your own pieces.	There really aren't any except that you can only get the opinion of your playing from one person.
Billie	8	One to one	Weekly	60 mins	Teacher would listen to pieces and see where I made mistakes, and help correct them by telling me techniques that could fix the mistake.	The teacher was focused on your work so you learned heaps more. The teacher had lots of time to help me and teach me ways to fix mistakes.	Didn't have a second opinion.
Kathy	11	One to one	Weekly	60 mins	I would play scales and pieces and the teacher would listen, offer help, suggest ideas.	More teacher help, more attention due to one-on-one lesson.	Get only one opinion, don't get to listen to and help peers, wasn't really forced to self-analyse my playing.
Allison	10	One to one	Weekly	60 mins	I would play and the teacher would pick up my mistakes – notation and finger-wise.	Teacher can concentrate on the individual and work on fixing problems.	Only one person's opinion on playing.

The data reveal a consistency of pre-tertiary experience, reflective of the standard practice of the majority of private studio training. This experience is typically teacher-driven and often relies on external motivators in the form of exam syllabi. While each student recounts a slightly different standard lesson format, the driver of the model is the students' presentation of material followed by teacher evaluation/directions. The formats described also reflect the solitary nature of the private studio, the exposure to the singular view, that of the teacher. In addition, activities described reflect the fact that shared learning experiences, such as ensemble work, peer discussion, analysis and feedback, sharing of practice strategies, or performances for an audience are not common in the experience of students.

The striking similarity of the perceived advantages of individual tuition may be a result of the egocentricity of the student's role and the perception that undivided and individual attention is a requirement for effective learning. Given the lack of exposure to other models, this view is not surprising. What is also revealed is the fact that the closed nature of the model tends to *protect* students from exposure to a critical audience, and therefore suggests that there is considerable potential for the learning environment to become a comfort zone for the student and teacher. What is most concerning is that several students perceive the lack of exposure to audiences and different views as an advantage of the model, rather than consider the fact that this may inhibit the development of performance experience and subsequent feedback processes.

This comfort zone mentality may be evidenced by students (e.g. Amber, Elizabeth) who refer to the issue of work ethic and motivation as disadvantages of the model, and may indicate that they have become secure within the teacher-student working relationship.

The most common principle to emerge in relation to the fundamental disadvantage of one to one teaching is the closed nature of the environment, the potential for the halo effect, and the limited exposure to other views.

While it was clear that one to one tuition dominated this sample of students' pre-tertiary experiences, each was asked to consider their experience of group teaching in both the master class and small group contexts. Table 7.2.2 presents a summary of the students' experiences of group teaching or master classes, their perceptions as to why they may not have had such experiences, as well as their views on the advantages and disadvantages of these formats for learning.

Table 7.2.2 Students' pre-tertiary experiences of group teaching

Name	Format		Identified reasons for lack of either group teaching and/or master classes (piano)	Typical student role	Typical teacher role	Perceived advantages	Perceived disadvantages
	GT	MC					
Olivia	-	-	One on one lessons were the standard thing. My teacher only gave one on one lessons and I was satisfied with that.	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Rosie	-	-	I was happy with my teacher, never looked into group lessons or heard of any being available.	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Elizabeth	-	-	The possibility never arose.	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Francine	-	-	There was no availability as far as I knew.	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Amber	-	-	It was never an option.	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Kimli	-	-	The school that I studied at didn't provide group tuition.	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Sat	-	-	Not available.	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Delia	-	-	Group teaching could be time consuming if spending time on one student.	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Adrian	-	-	I never had the option.	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Jasmine	-	-	My teachers had always taught one to one.	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Jenna	-	-	Facilities, and it was too hard to fit students in together of the same level	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Kellie	-	-	I was never really informed of master classes or group lessons before university and I wasn't aware of them.	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Sally	-	-	The school had very limited music resources. I was the only student in my year doing music.	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Sophie	-	-	Probably because it's been done for years and years with the one on one method and it's just tradition.	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Chia	√	-	I had group lessons twice a year.	Comment and make corrections.	Give comments on playing and correct students.	Know even more and faster about every piece that group members are playing.	None.

Table 7.2.2 Students' pre-tertiary experiences of group teaching (continued)

Name	Format		Identified reasons for lack of either group teaching and/or master classes (piano)	Typical student role	Typical teacher role	Perceived advantages	Perceived disadvantages
	GT	MC					
Patsy	-	√	I only attended and watched master classes. My piano tutor did not organize any group lessons, perhaps due to the majority of the students who wished to have a one to one lesson.	As an audience member, to watch and listen attentively as well as contributing some views/opinions or giving feedback.	To organize classes, assist the students in their performance. To give feedback, views, opinions of the students' performances.	Exposure to public performances. Knowledge of musicianship.	None.
Betty	-	√	I didn't have teachers who taught in group sessions.	Play through each piece and receive comments about them. Also showing different ways of practicing.	Tell students how to fix up technical aspects as well as relating ideas back to the other students.	You can relate some ideas back to your own pieces.	Some of the information would have been irrelevant.
Billie	-	√	Just didn't have group lessons. Wasn't an option.	See if I could use techniques by trying them. Pay attention and try my best.	Help me improve, teacher me different techniques, and see if I could use them. If I couldn't they'd help me.	Learn so much more in such a short amount of time because they really go into depth and are good at explaining and helping.	None.
Kathy	-	√	Didn't receive group lessons because my teacher wasn't teaching anyone else around my level.	Listen to all the students play and the help offered by the teacher.	Listen to many piano players, not necessarily a lot of music, but enough to be able to help.	Lots of help received. Can learn lots just by listening to someone else play and get help.	Usually last a long time and only get a small amount of time with the teacher
Allison	-	√	I guess I never even thought of the idea of group lessons. I started at the age of 6 with single lessons and the idea of changing teachers or having group lessons never occurred to me. I'd never heard of anyone giving group lessons, so I guess ignorance on my behalf is the main reason.	Apply the ideas and try different things.	Suggest other ways of playing pieces and provided different ideas.	Opens the eyes i.e. see that there is different ways of playing things and what kind of ways there are.	Unable to concentrate on details.

Fourteen students had not participated in group lessons nor master classes and, indeed, the unavailability of such opportunities is not surprising, given the various references in the literature to the uncontested dominance of one to one tuition (see e.g., section 3.1). In terms of those who had experienced master class and group teaching, the views are remarkably similar, and illustrate the basic premise of group learning environments in that they promote exposure to additional aural and oral learning experiences. While the advantages raised are consistent across the sample, disadvantages are less so; indeed three of the six students argue there to be none. Those raised tend to relate to the premise that individual attention is a necessity for learning, a view that may well be an artefact of the number of years of one to one and individual attention afforded to these students.

Given that the students had all experienced at least one year of group teaching, it was deemed particularly relevant to require them to consider the ideal learning format for pre-tertiary piano study, in order to consider whether their early exposure to one to one would dominate their views. Table 7.2.3 presents each student's response, along with appropriate rationale and/or explanations.

Table 7.2.3 Students' perceptions of an ideal pre-tertiary teaching scenario

Name	Proposed learning format	Rationale and/or explanation(s)
Olivia	Individual weekly lessons with follow-up group lessons not necessarily every week, maybe monthly.	In this situation, students would still receive substantial attention for their individual problems, as well as being able to compare/receive other opinions and to get practice performing in front of others etc.
Rosie	Individual lessons.	I had never really experienced any other way.
Elizabeth	A combination of group and individual lessons.	The group lessons wouldn't be so foreign when you reach tertiary, but there's still a place for individual lessons because you can really concentrate on individual problem areas.
Francine	One-hour individual lesson with fortnightly 2-hour group session.	To receive the same amount of personal attention but to get input from other students.
Amber	Combination of group and individual.	It would prepare student for university learning environment and expose them to other points of view (other than teacher).
Kimli	Weekly individual lessons and group lessons per month.	So that the piano students can have more time to let teacher go through the details of the pieces before learning from each other in monthly group lessons
Sat	Both individual and group.	So that I can listen to all sorts of opinions and ways to make my playing better.
Delia	Individual lessons and group tuition.	Giving feedback, discussing problems, and solutions to overcome what needs to be done right and so forth.
Adrian	At least a combination of one to one and group teaching	More enjoyable and social if group lessons are included. One to one tends to become boring.
Jasmine	One to one and group teaching combined	It would allow you to develop a range of skills. Good to work with other students.
Jenna	Individual lessons and group lessons each week (alternating weeks).	Young students can develop their technique with the teacher, but also grow with other students to develop confidence and interpretations of styles
Kellie	A mixture of one to one and group lessons with lots of feedback.	Can be prepared to work with others and to be comfortable playing in front of others. Also to be able to receive feedback from same level students.
Sally	I think one to one, with an occasional group lesson or master class.	While a student is still learning the basics they need individual attention. But it is good that students be familiar with the idea of sharing knowledge and learning with other students.
Sophie	Combination of both individual and group lessons.	They still need individual to focus on their technique and intricate details. Group lessons are also good so that the students can listen to other students and learn how to critique themselves and others.
Patsy	Individual lessons are vital for students prior to entering tertiary studies as well as attending master classes and concerts.	Students are well equipped and more focused. Attending master classes and concerts contribute to good musicianship.
Chia	Individual lesson once a week and group lesson once a month.	Individual lesson for the student to be well prepared before they play in front of everyone.
Betty	Individual tuition.	It allows student to receive technical information and stylistic information in detail before entering Uni.
Billie	I hour one to one lesson, group lesson in alternate week.	Group for additional feedback and performance experience. One to one for basic functional work.
Kathy	Perhaps keep having individual lessons, but have group lessons every couple of weeks.	This will ease the students into University way of life but still maintain one-on-one contact.
Allison	I hour individual lesson per week and group lesson once a month.	Concentrate on details and technical difficulties in individual lessons and on general sound and musicality issues in group lessons.

What is of immediate note is that the majority of students (18 of 20 - 90%) propose a combination of group and individual tuition prior to entering university. While the frequency and combination of formats varies, the data clearly propose that these students perceive the value of including group environments in the learning framework. Indeed, of the two students who argue for individual tuition, Rosie's response is clearly influenced by experience while Betty's view suggests that she sees the relevance of pre-tertiary individual teaching as preparing students for the group environment at tertiary level. Clearly, the change in attitude is a direct result of experiential factors and the data suggest that those who do not experience group learning may approach such models with scepticism; indeed it is hypothesized that those with extended pre-tertiary group learning experience would propose a more group-oriented approach. Further, the data not only challenge the perception that one to one should be the primary learning model, but reveals that the perpetuation of this model at the expense of others has the potential to limit learning experiences for students.

7.3 Initial reactions to small group learning

Students were asked to document their reaction(s) at learning that their lessons were to be in small groups, in terms of their initial response, expectations, and view as the extent to which the program met their expectations. Table 7.3.1 profiles the responses.

Table 7.3.1 Initial reactions to and expectations of the group environment

Name	Initial reaction	Expectations	Extent to which program met expectations
Amber	I was very apprehensive, especially before I got to know my peers.	<i>Question not asked.</i>	<i>Question not asked.</i>
Francine	Relief that there would be support in the form of other students.	<i>Question not asked.</i>	<i>Question not asked.</i>
Rosie	I was very worried about people judging my playing. It was also very strange having a different teacher.	<i>Question not asked.</i>	<i>Question not asked.</i>
Olivia	I was relieved that I wouldn't be on my own with a lecturer and under pressure individually. I also thought it would be beneficial to see what the standard the other students were, and to hear them play.	<i>Question not asked.</i>	<i>Question not asked.</i>
Elizabeth	At first I was horrified but then I got to know my peers a little and it wasn't so bad.	<i>Question not asked.</i>	<i>Question not asked.</i>
Kimli	Fun, excited, a little bit nervous.	To learn more and get more feedback from other piano students.	To about half my expectations.
Sat	Shocked.	Didn't know what to expect.	Surprised with the format – different.
Delia	Surprise and fear were my dominant reactions.	That I would be up to standard in performance, interpretation, skills level, technical level and so on.	It met my expectations.
Adrian	Didn't know what classes would be like.	Didn't have any.	Didn't have any expectations, so was satisfied.
Jasmine	Wasn't sure what was involved but imagined something like a master class.	Just that each student would actively participate within each lesson and put forward their own comments rather than just sitting and listening.	Extremely successful and beneficial, however I still would have liked more constructive criticism from fellow students, rather than "that was good".
Jenna	Initially shocked because I've never been involved in them. Also confused as to how it might operate.	More confidence and generally playing well.	My confidence has improved a lot but I am not playing extremely well.
Kellie	Very worried as to how my level of performance would compare to others.	Just to be given pieces of similar standard and helped in the progress of learning them.	Didn't think it would be as full on. Nor did I think there were going to be other students.

Table 7.3.1 Initial reactions to and expectations of the group environment (continued)

Name	Initial reaction	Expectations	Extent to which program met expectations
Sallie	I was very surprised and concerned as I did not think I would get the individual attention, or adequate help.	To be given works, and then helped to learn them to get me to the next level of ability.	I feel that I have improved and learnt a lot.
Sophie	I was a bit scared because I knew that it would involve critiquing other piano players and I didn't really know what to talk about or say.	I expected pieces that would challenge me and bring a sense of achievement after learning them. And to become a better piano player in general. Also to be able to critically analyse myself as well as others.	My expectations were met, but I believe there is still heaps more room for improvement in all areas.
Chia	Felt excited to attend it. Wanted to be well prepared.	Thought it would be very challenging.	I think it was less challenging than what I expected.
Patsy	I was quite surprised at first because I thought it was impossible to have 4 students in a piano class! However, I didn't really mind after a few classes because later I learnt how to listen critically to the other students' performances as well as to give my views, opinions and advice on their performances, and receive feedback/comments from others.	Generally, my expectations were to prepare/practice pieces that were assigned by the lecturer and play sight-reading.	I didn't know that I was supposed to find my own repertoire and ensemble playing (duet), or know that quick studies were also included in the program.
Kathy	I was interested in hearing other students playing and how the lessons would actually work. I was looking forward to something difference as I could see it was going to be beneficial.	I was expecting to learn a lot about my playing and to improve a lot.	I feel I've improved and I'm a lot more aware of my playing and other's playing.
Allison	Fear of playing in front of other people, and/or embarrassing myself.	Gain more knowledge, get better at playing the piano!	I didn't really have any.
Billie	At first I didn't like the idea. I had never had group lessons before, however, I actually have liked having group lessons because you learning more by listening to the others and you get more feedback.	Wasn't sure what to expect.	I did put effort in but not as much as I should have. I didn't practice as much as I have every other year therefore I didn't do the best as I could have if I put more work in.
Betty	It would be interesting because I had never had a group lesson before.	I knew I was going to do my Amus, so I had expected the piano program to be similar to the preparation for an exam.	Sometimes there wasn't enough time each week to go through the piece in detail.

It is not surprising that many expressed concern at discovering that their learning environment was to move from one to one to a group scenario and, in particular, the resulting additional exposure students would experience. At the same time, some responses were neutral (e.g., Betty, Kathy), while others were clearly positive about the change (e.g., Adrian, Kimli, Francine, Chia). Students' expectations of the approach relate either to the method *per se* or achievement expectations; several responses relate more to the traditional lesson requirement than to what the group model might involve. What is interesting, however, is the fact that several students reflect on a less than desirable work ethic as impacting on the value of the model for them, suggesting that students' work ethic is a direct contributor to the success of the model as a tool for progress. Appendix H synthesises returning students' reactions to additional trial models, and offers insights into their perceptions of how the model was to operate. The data presented reveal an increased degree of comfort for those students who had participated in at least one year of group teaching, suggesting that experience leads to acceptance – even comfort – while students also noted the expectations regarding more difficult requirements at higher year levels.

7.4 Perceptions of curriculum

At the end of each year, the students were required to evaluate the curriculum and workload requirements. In order to gain a sense of the overall sample, Table 7.4.1 presents the overall evaluations, along with comparisons with the previous year (where relevant).

Table 7.4.1 Students' perceptions of level of challenge and workload

Trial	Name	Weekly 1 – not sufficiently challenging, 5 – extremely challenging	Compared with previous year 1 – much less challenging, 5 – much more challenging	Yearly 1 – not sufficiently challenging, 5 – extremely challenging	Compared with previous year 1 – much less challenging, 5 – much more challenging
A	Amber	4	N/a	4	N/a
	Francine	3	N/a	4	N/a
	Olivia	3	N/a	4	N/a
	Rosie	4	N/a	4	N/a
	Elizabeth	4	N/a	4	N/a
B	Amber	3.5	4	3	4
	Francine	4	3	4	3
	Olivia	3	3	2	1
	Kimli	4	N/a	5	N/a
	Delia	5	N/a	5	N/a
	Sat	4	N/a	3	N/a
	Adrian	4	5	5	5
	Jasmine	4.5	3.5	4.5	4.5
C	Amber	3	3	4	5
	Francine	3	3	3	2
	Olivia	3	3	2	3
	Jenna	4	N/a	3	N/a
	Kellie	4	N/a	3	N/a
	Sophie	3	N/a	3	N/a
	Sally	3	N/a	3	N/a
	Chia	3	N/a	3	N/a
	Patsy	5	N/a	5	N/a
	Kimli	4	4	4	4
	Delia	4	4	5	4
	Sat	4	4	5	5
D	Sophie	3	4	4	4
	Sally	5	4	5	5
	Billie	3	N/a	3	N/a
	Betty	4	N/a	4	N/a
	Kathy	3	N/a	3	N/a
	Alison	4	N/a	4	N/a

Table 7.4.1 reveals that the workload was sufficiently challenging without being overly demanding. New students often rate their first year in the group model as relatively challenging, in terms of the weekly (Delia, Patsy) and yearly workload (Kimli, Delia, Adrian, Patsy), suggesting that the various requirements were either more challenging than in their previous study, or that the range of tasks and requirements leads to this perception. Olivia is the only student to rate the workload to be less than appropriately challenging at times, although she is an isolated case. Overall, it would appear that the

curriculum and workload was sufficient at each trial year; students' evaluations of individual curriculum aspects are provided as appendices (Appendices I.1 – I.5 inclusive). In addition, further data were obtained for Trials C and D which required participants to reflect on the repertoire focus, challenge and reward obtained in studying the curriculum (see Appendix J). Although it is problematic to draw generalisations about the curriculum requirements given the small sample size, the potential variables affecting students' views and ratings, and the newness of the group learning environment, the following statements can reasonably be made in relation to the curriculum elements involved across the four trial years:

- Students perceive at least moderate value in the majority of aspects in terms of learning experiences;
- While students generally regard the increasing level of autonomy expected at higher year levels, some still find independence difficult (e.g., in choosing repertoire);
- Students perceive additional activities such as sight reading, quick studies and self-critical assessments as valuable learning experiences; and
- Students perceive at least moderate value in terms of peer assessment.

7.5 Perceptions of lesson dynamics

Students were asked to reflect on a range of aspects related to interaction within the group lessons, including feedback from peers and the teacher, along with the opportunity to make various contributions to the lesson flow. Table 7.5.1 synthesises students' perceptions of the value of the peer feedback they received, as well as the extent to which they felt their feedback was valued by other members of the group, along with explanations and/or comments as appropriate.

Table 7.5.1 Students' perceptions of value of peer feedback received and given

Name	Trial	Feedback received (1 – not much value/impact 5 – very great value/impact)	Feedback given (1 – not valued at all, 5 – completely valued)
Amber	A	(4) Gives another perspective and helpful for tips on pieces	(4) <i>Did not comment</i>
	B	(4) I find it extremely useful when a student is learning a piece that you are, because you can swap advice on difficult sections and how they were overcome.	(4) Because the atmosphere in classes is generally open and friendly.
	C	(4) When another student has played a piece you are working on it is useful to compare etc and be influenced by better fingerings etc.	(5) I can't state particular examples however in my experience the comments from your peers (in your specific discipline) are helpful as often they have encountered the same or similar problems as you.
Fran	A	(4) To hear another viewpoint	(4) <i>Did not comment</i>
	B	(4) I kept getting comments on how I played too introvertedly which I tried to rectify.	(4) All comments are taken seriously and thought over by each student.
	C	(4) Most comments were unanimous in nature, and therefore you couldn't help but be influenced by your peers. Can't recall specifics.	(5) The group was very supportive of one another and clearly everyone's views were valued and respected.
Olivia	A	(3) I'd prefer to hear comments from the lecturer as I feel their opinion is more reliable. Of course it is good to hear peer opinions.	(3) My opinion was probably valued by the other students as much as theirs were valued by me. I can't really remember any times when I said something about someone's playing and they really went away and worked on it, but of course it is good to hear peer opinions. As I mentioned before, the teacher's opinion is probably valued the most.
	B	(3) It is all useful, I either take it or leave it depending on whether I agree or not, but I always think about it. I can't think of specifics, but most comments are usually interpretative.	(5) They always listened and either agreed or disagreed with comments
	C	(3) I can't think of anything specific, but general things such as "needs more shaping", "needs more dynamic contrast", "articulation not consistent" were comments that were useful. Although, these comments were only useful if I did not already recognise these problems.	(3) I think that in this group, the students knew when "the rhythm was stilted" or "the lines needed more phrasing" due to not being fully prepared for the class. This is the thing I most regret, as the sessions would have been far more beneficial had we all been prepared.
Rosie	A	(4) It was good to get other opinions	(3) I'm not the best at giving feedback but when it was worthwhile I'm sure they appreciated it.
Elizabeth	A	(4) They may have a different insight into a piece which you didn't.	(4) Any opinion based on experience is worthwhile and helpful.
Adrian	B	(5) <i>Did not comment.</i>	(4) Students looked interested in what I was saying, some asked for more detail, and some asked for help after class.

Table 7.5.1 Students' perceptions of value of peer feedback received and given (continued)

Name	Trial	Feedback received (1 – not much value/impact 5 – very great value/impact)	Feedback given (1 – not valued at all, 5 – completely valued)
Jasmine	B	(3.5) Some passages were unclear in the Gershwin, especially fast runs and passages. This was helpful as I thought they were actually clear so I worked on evenness and my fingering as well as articulation to make the passages clearer.	(3) It's helpful, but I think most people would value a professional comment much more.
Sat	B	(3) Comments on pedalling my pieces.	(2) My comments and suggestions seemed to be ignored.
	C	(4) Pedalling – [Chia] taught me some techniques for clearing the pedal passages. A lot of peers noticed the change.	(5) Kimli improved a lot, so did Delia in certain areas.
Delia	B	(5) Jasmine's comments (and performance) were inspirational. Other comments were "listen and sing" and "playing and technique must be prepared".	(2) Sometimes they didn't appreciate it. Maybe I was too honest and they didn't believe what I had to say.
	C	(5) Dynamics – the romantic pieces needed more and which was agreed upon by the students.	(5) Because the students listened and carried out my suggestions.
Kimli	B	(3) Clear the pedalling in order to get a cleaner sound.	(4) Because I was able to offer solutions.
	C	(3) Pedalling technique – the correct way to pedal as when I did it incorrectly, the sound was blurred.	(3) From their playing.
Patsy	C	(4) One of the students did mention that I should practice my pieces in sections rather than practicing from the beginning to the end of the piece. I though this particular advice was very useful as it was a much easier step to gradually improve my performance skill.	(3) I've no idea. Honestly!
Chia	C	(4) When I was demonstrating how I would practice alone during my free time, comments were given on how I am supposed to stop playing the same thing and how to listen to myself.	(3) During outside practice time, they looked for me to ask me to listen to them and I gave some comments.
Jenna	C	(3) "Not smooth enough" or "I don't like the dynamics". These made me see there was a lot more work to be done and different things to investigate.	(4) I don't completely value what other students say either.
Kellie	C	(4) Comments such as tempo, articulation, dynamics etc. When students gave feedback based on their own experience I felt it was helpful as they had been successful and so their feedback was successful.	(4) Because sometimes some concepts are understood better by some people. So I feel that some of my comments have helped other students.

Table 7.5.1 Students' perceptions of value of peer feedback received and given (continued)

Name	Trial	Feedback received (1 – not much value/impact 5 – very great value/impact)	Feedback given (1 – not valued at all, 5 – completely valued)
Sophie	C	(4) Advice on how the piece is heard by the listener helped me to know when I need to be obvious with things like dynamics and expression.	(4) They always seemed to listen and work on the comments I gave.
	D	(3) Sally gave me some comments throughout the year: some of these included balance between hands, dynamics	(4) Because Sally and I listen to each other in the practice room and help each other and she takes on my values and comments.
Sally	C	(3) It was good, because we were all playing the same pieces, some students would have certain practice strategies if you were having a problem with a section.	(4) I think they were valued because the others would actually come up to me outside lesson and say that certain things had worked for them or they might ask me what fingering I used etc.
	D	(2) Sophie was always good at picking up incorrect articulation, this was very helpful.	(4) Sophie seemed to appreciate my comments. Billie didn't seem to care either way?
Betty	D	(3) Mostly comments about dynamics or the style of the piece I found helpful because it helped me interpret it better.	(4) Some comments would have been relevant because we were playing some pieces by the same composer.
Billie	D	(4) If the others made good comments on ways to improve I took this advice and used it when I was in practice.	(2) I tried to listen out for errors they were making so I could help them, but a majority of the time I couldn't pick them out, therefore I don't think I have really helped them in that way.
Allison	D	(4) Comments on dynamics – it's hard sometimes to hear all at the piano. Pedal comments too.	(4) Next lesson I could hear the difference in playing.
Kathy	D	(3) A lot of the comments I received I knew already from personal judgement, however some were definitely helpful.	(4) I could see they listened to my views and appreciated my help by taking on some of my suggestions/comments.

The data reveal the benefits of peer feedback processes for students. Although in some cases it had only a moderate impact on students' playing, responses reveal the fact that each member of the group found particular value in comments received. What is also revealed is that the students felt their performance was influenced positively in specific ways and, as a result, definite improvements could be identified. The benefits identified are a direct result of such aspects or requirements as

- learning similar repertoire (Amber);
- students working together outside the sessions (Sophie and Sally);
- performance oriented feedback (Fran);
- studying similar works (Kellie referring to Sally); and
- interpretative or specific diagnostics (Olivia, Jasmine, Kimli).

Olivia notes the nature of feedback is such that it encourages valuable reflection while not all is necessarily relevant.

In terms of perceptions regarding the value of comments presented, responses suggest that most students found that their peers take student feedback seriously. It is interesting that both Sat and Kimli felt initially that their peers did not value their judgements, although it may be – as Kimli suggests – a result of the degree of honesty which they applied to providing feedback. Olivia's early comment is not unexpected, given the nature of the teacher-student relationship. This leaning towards perceiving the professional and/or pedagogue as the primary source for the shaping of performance development is to be expected in the field. Nevertheless the data exhibit the extent to which students are afforded the opportunity to obtain additional valuable feedback within the learning environment.

In addition to the overarching questions regarding peer feedback and interaction, a number of questions students required them to reflect on

- the opportunity to make various self reflections during the sessions;
- the extent to which they were given guidance in providing feedback; as well as
- feedback on feedback, from both the teacher and their peers.

Appendices K.1 and K.2 detail the various perceptions presented by the students over the four-year trial. While questions were more detailed for Models B, C and D, the data analysis reveals that, in general, students perceive:

- the opportunities to be self-reflective in sessions as *more than sufficient*;
- the guidance they receive on the peer feedback they provide as *more than adequate*;
- the teacher's feedback on feedback to be *adequate*; and
- their peers' feedback on feedback as *less than adequate* in general.

While not all students regard their peers' feedback on feedback as less than adequate, it must be acknowledged that this area is challenging for all involved, and very much a developmental skill; it is particularly challenging for the teacher advocating the benefits of the process to students. While it is arguably difficult, and unfamiliar to many students, the trial indicates that additional strategies to enhance student capacities to give useful feedback are needed.

Appendix L provides additional data in terms of students' perceptions of peers of key influence during trials B, C and D. What is both interesting and refreshing is that all of the students were able to reflect critically on the contributions of their colleagues, and to diagnose the manner in which particular comments or advice affected their development. While some appear to have valued peer feedback more than others, it is

significant that students made a conscious effort to at least consider and subsequently adopt or reject their peers' comments, proposing that these processes not only increases the feedback students receive, but affords students increased opportunities to develop critical assessment skills.

Students were then asked to consider the advantages, disadvantages of and to propose enhancements to peer feedback and interaction (see Table 7.5.2).

Table 7.5.2 Peer interaction: identified advantages, disadvantages, and proposed enhancements

Name	Advantages	Disadvantages	Enhancements
Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It helps to have opinions and comments from people of your own peer level. • Comments are helpful as often they have encountered the same or similar problems as you. • It encourages independent thinking (and on the spot critical thought). 	I feel the peer interaction aspect of the group method is highly valuable and there are no negatives.	N/a
Francine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fact that you get more than the teacher's opinion. • It also improves your ability to critique or assess. • The variety of styles and techniques discussed. • Many of the issues discussed in the lessons could be applied to new pieces not yet heard by the class, in a practice situation. 	If anything, there was a reluctance among the students to be too harsh in their criticism for fear of hurting each others feelings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I liked the idea of writing down five adjectives after someone's performance because it helped me to focus. • Love the prelude and fugue sight reading sessions. • Maybe a combination of written as well as oral feedback - tend to be more honest when writing.
Olivia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The variety of comments you can receive. • The option of asking questions about your performance. • Hearing other repertoire. • Hearing other students' progress. • Hearing a range of comments rather than just one. • Performing/being workshopped in front of peers. 	I don't feel there are any negatives, though due to time restrictions felt that an individual session, focussing on specific technical or interpretive aspects could be beneficial in addition to the group session. However, these things could be beneficial to an audience of peers also.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibly watching a video of the session as a group, with teacher, where certain aspects of performances can be pointed out more clearly and discussed. • Possibly more demonstrations and repeats or examples of suggestions from the performer being commented on. These would enhance my personal learning. • One idea could be for a lesson to be prepared where the repertoire to be performed in the lesson is looked at as a quick-study by all in advance, so each person has a thorough understanding of the piece.
Adrian	The fact that performances can be discussed allows [me] to take all comments and learn from them.	None.	More sheets to fill in.
Jasmine	You learn off other students' experiences, by discussing aspects of your music, others may pick up on the same aspects in their own music.	None.	I think it's very important and beneficial to enhance peer interaction as we can learn from each other's mistakes, playing, experiences and comment and it helps people to relax within the group.

Table 7.5.2 Peer interaction: identified advantages, disadvantages, and proposed enhancements (continued)

Name	Advantages	Disadvantages	Enhancements
Patsy	The feedback, comments, opinions act as guidelines for the students to improve their performance skills and students will gradually learn the correct way to practice and come up with their own practice strategies/methods.	None.	If every member of the group is able to contribute their opinions and views and give feedback at the same time, the students will improve his/her musicianship.
Sat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical comments that are shared. • Encouragement and criticism. • More experience leads to a greater ability to assess performers. 	Lack of participation or too shy to criticize.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice sessions to monitor development between classes. • Written feedback. They might be more honest.
Kimli	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn from each other, correct ourselves by hearing from others, exchange ideas to get experience communicating. • To learn from other students' mistakes so that I don't repeat them in my playing. • It helps me to identify mistakes that have been made so that I can correct them myself. 	None.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be leader of the group and students should consult with leader instead of lecturer due to lecturer's schedule. • More critical feedback from the lecturer and students.
Delia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can learn from others – the way they play, advice, their willingness to listen. • We learn from the group experience how to comment critically and how to accept criticism. 	Lack of student commitment to the task.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More participation, more talk, more playing and more involvement. • More playing and less discussion.
Genna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can hear how things are to sound and keeps you motivated. • They offer many angles of approach that you can remember and apply in other contexts. 	Sometimes it is hard to find the right thing to say and you don't want to offend anyone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancement of current activities. • Possibly more group pieces.
Kellie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can get pointers from other students from their own experience. • Gain different practice strategies from other students. 	Can get a little nervous if playing badly in front of other peers.	Students can have chances to take over the lesson by providing most of the feedback.
Sophie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You get more than one opinion. • You learn to be able to criticize playing and work out ways of improving a performance. • You learn what to listen for in other playing and gradually get better at picking it up – you then apply it to your own playing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It increases nervousness. You don't get one-on-one time with the teacher. 	If there were different levels within the group, there could be more opportunity for student to student teaching. Just making sure that we all interact and make comments about each other's playing.

Table 7.5.2 Peer interaction: identified advantages, disadvantages, and proposed enhancements (continued)

Name	Advantages	Disadvantages	Enhancements
Sally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You learn what to listen for when you're helping people which will be very valuable if you go into teaching. • It teaches you what to look for in your own playing. • Can provide help from someone on the same level that you can trust, without embarrassment. • Helps you to think for yourself more, and create ways to solve problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As long as the people know what they're talking about and they're not totally mean about it, then there shouldn't be any negatives. • Can waste time if peers don't have anything worth saying. 	Perhaps more interaction.
Betty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Others may be having similar problems or difficulties in pieces and you can find out ways to fix them. • It helps me to fix up my own mistakes by listening to what the other students are told. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of the information may not be relevant. • It may take a longer time to come to a solution. 	Perhaps have private lessons to fix up mistakes that relate to your own piece and then have group lessons to listen to other people's ideas.
Allison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to peer input and applying it how you see fit. • Discussion brings out other people's views and opens your eyes to what other people hear. • Other people identifying problems I wasn't aware of or couldn't hear – helps learning to identify them myself 	People get embarrassed.	Group activities.
Billie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get different ideas from everyone, therefore you have different ideas of fixing mistakes etc. • Different types of feedback. • You learn how to become independent learners because you improve, start to learn how to do it yourself. It is still hard and good to get advice from others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some students benefit more than others because some students can help more than others. • Can sometimes feel a little intimidated. 	Play with other musicians (different instruments) in informal sessions, to breakdown social inhibitions.
Kathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lot better than one-on-one learning – more discussion therefore can learn more – get more than one person's opinion. • Giving feedback to others definitely helps in analyzing your own playing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer lesson times. • You have to concentrate more. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perhaps feedback could be taken down, whilst the person is playing and given to the player at the end (still give verbal feedback though). • Sometimes it's hard to give negative feedback.

This sample of students clearly perceive peer interaction to be more advantageous than problematic; indeed four argue that there are no disadvantages. Each student is at least able to identify benefits of the processes involved and importantly, to offer suggestions relating to further enhancement of the learning environment. Those negatives raised relate to the potential for inappropriately critical feedback, or hesitance or lack of effort on behalf of the students, issues which are student based rather than process oriented. Olivia's view is interesting in that she sees an inherent tension between the concept of 'individual attention', and the advantages of an audience of peers in this environment. However her own admission in relation to her lack of preparation must also be taken into account in this context. At the very least, her comment relating to the benefits for peers in an audience situation suggest that there is the potential for lost learning opportunities when the learning environment is restricted to the one to one format.

Table 7.5.3 synthesises the students' views on the feedback provided by the teacher, in terms of its value, and also their perceptions as to the extent to which they feel their comments were valued by the teacher (Trial A), or perceptions of how the teacher responded (Trials B, C, D). Participants were also requested to explain and/or support the perceptions presented.

7.5.3 Teacher feedback and interaction examined

Name	Trial	Value (1 – not much value, 5 – extremely valuable)	Model A: Extent to which comments valued by teacher (1 – not valued at all, 5 – completely valued) Model B/C/D: Teacher response to student's self reflections
Rosie	A	(4) Helps you to improve on things that have been pointed out.	(3) <i>Did not comment</i>
Elizabeth	A	(5) Many comments were based on experience and research which is an extremely good resource.	(4) Not really sure, but I guess what we said was at the very least considered
Amber	A	(5) Teacher has had more experience and can be used as guide for us with less knowledge.	(4) Always takes things in and doesn't dismiss comments
	B	(5) <i>Did not comment</i>	Always seemed happy with my own evaluation of my performance. In this respect my self-evaluation has improved 100% since entering tertiary study.
	C	(5) Advice on stylistic characteristics in repertoire. I have had no experience in this and the encouragement of independent thought and self-critical reflection.	Always encouraging and <u>directed</u> our line of thought to arrive at the best possible "answer" without actually telling us.
Fran	A	(5) Comments were more in-depth.	(3) In the spirit of competition
	B	(5) Just about all of them.	Usually had a more encouraging attitude than I did.
	C	(5) Probably the most valued comments were those pertaining to the fact that I should be less introverted in my approach to playing.	Usually in agreement with my comments.
Olivia	A	(5) It is most probable that they are the ones marking in this situation, so obviously pieces etc should be played the way they want. Also, the teachers generally have the most experience and knowledge so I value their opinions greatly.	(3) Everyone's opinion counts and the teacher seemed interested in what we thought.
	B	(5) I valued all teacher comments and tried to incorporate all of them into my playing as I feel the teacher's comments are more viable due to the fact that the teacher has the degree of professional experience to know more. I can't pinpoint specifics.	Professional.
	C	(5) I can't think of specifics, though all suggestions on practice methods, fingering, technical approach were found to be valuable. One specific I now remember was within Prokofiev's Vision Fugitive no. 8 where much of the melody is within outer parts. I had tried several practice methods such as hands separately, outer voices separate and melody on own, just melody and one other part etc. It was not until [he] suggested extremely slow, mechanical practice that the session started to come together. This was particularly useful.	The teacher always responded professionally, questioning the things that were unclear and offering further suggestions in addition to my comments.

7.5.3 Teacher feedback and interaction examined (continued)

Name	Trial	Value (1 – not much value, 5 – extremely valuable)	<u>Model B/C/D</u> : Teacher response to student's self reflections
Adrian	B	(3) When wrong notes are picked up. Telling [me] whether the speed is correct.	The teacher was quite agreeable.
Jasmine	B	(5) Basically everything that was brought up about each piece as I could take that advice and apply it to my playing	Very positive. This encouraged me to further explore my music (playing) and it also allowed me to realise what I was saying and not just let them be words that sound okay.
Sat	B	(3) Suggestions on touch, pedalling, phrasing. Allowed me to apply these to playing.	He knew how to interpret ways of playing as he is a very experienced lecturer. This is because I gained a lot of knowledge from his group sessions.
	C	(4) Playing big chords and leaps. The teacher asked me to prepare before I started playing the second chord, as well as prepare the exact direction I was heading.	Very straight forward and easy to understand.
Delia	B	(5) Comments related to dynamics, technique and interpretation	Understanding. He knows the mistakes by observing.
	C	(4) The importance of rhythm which should be persistent and concise – achieved by the use of the metronome.	Sometimes the feedback was good and bad.
Kimli	B	(4) Pedalling phrasing, interpretation. Ways to improve tone quality.	Good. He always analysed my own reflections on my performance and brought me to the correct way of playing the piano.
	C	(4) The way to pedal and to use pressure on the keyboard – useful in producing quality tone.	Reasonable.
Patsy	C	(5) Practising my piece (Brahms B Minor Rhapsody) without using the pedal and try to play all the notes smoothly (which was really difficult to do). I found it very useful and as weeks passed, I could hear the flow and clarity of the piece that I played.	The teacher's responses were very supportive.
Chia	C	(4) For example when practising, there was a part I didn't know how it actually needed to be done, and the teacher taught me how to stop and get it correct, rather than continue on.	Basically giving comments and suggesting useful practice ideas.
Jenna	C	(4) Breaking chords was useful because I have not done it before.	Supported and helped expand, discuss, explain evaluations.
Kellie	C	(5) I find it useful when teachers suggest a suitable tempo or when they provide a scenario for the piece so that you can create a mood.	They tell you whether you are on the right track and suggest ways to change your playing.

7.5.3 Teacher feedback and interaction examined (continued)

Name	Trial	Value (1 – not much value, 5 – extremely valuable)	<u>Model B/C/D</u> : Teacher response to student's self reflections
Sally	C	(5) All comments were useful to some extent. Mostly the ones about rhythm were always helpful.	I don't know/remember if he did respond.
	D	(3) [Teacher B] talked about posture and rolling the arm which was helpful for creating better tone.	Not really sure. [Teacher B] may have thought I didn't try at piano because I did not like doing the self-critical evaluations. But I am just guessing – I really don't know.
Sophie	C	(5) When I was learning the "Raindrop" prelude I wasn't playing the melody with phrasing, so he taught me to match the sound of the previous note played. I then closed my eyes and had to match the sound. It was useful because it was such an important part of the piece.	Initially either agree or disagree with some bits of the statement which I made and then expand upon my playing or ask me to expand a bit more.
	D	(5) I learnt how to use an outward motion of my elbow for extra arm weight to produce different tone colours.	Usually I was pretty negative about my playing, so the teacher would agree with some of it and then comment on some good areas.
Betty	D	(5) Advice including stylistic and what melodies to bring out.	Advice was given in a professional way.
Billie	D	(5) The more enthusiastic and helpful the teacher was the more I practise and enjoyed it. If they told me heaps of ways to improve I would go practice them. Otherwise I didn't notice the problem or didn't know how to fix it so I didn't practice.	It was good – they just said whether they agreed with my answer or not, and told me what else was wrong or good.
Allison	D	(4) Comments on styles (I didn't know that stuff), too much pedal, I'm usually concentrating on right notes, dynamics, markings and I forget to listen to myself.	He would help work out ways to solve my problems or direct me towards a bigger problem.
Kathy	D	(5) I think the advice you gave me on touch for the Brahms definitely helped.	Would agree or disagree with my comments and encourage or suggest ways to improve.

As should be expected in relation to any form of teaching and learning, students view the role of the teacher as critically important in terms of feedback and direction, be this generic or in terms of specific recollections of advice. Each student presents positive comments related to the effect of the teacher's directions, hence further evidencing the benefits of the teacher's role in the environment. As part of Trial B, C, and D, students were then required to reflect on the role of the teacher and to consider any enhancements to that role. The data are synthesised in Table 7.5.4.

7.5.4 Teacher role examined

Name & trial	Five characteristics	Possible enhancements
Amber (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance • Direction • Helps put our self-analysis into practice 	I sometimes felt, particularly early on that a little more guidance could be provided as I didn't have the necessary experience to make really informed choices regarding stylistically correct playing etc.
(C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator • Guide • Encourager • Knowledge available when needed 	<i>Did not comment.</i>
Fran (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to suggest appropriate pieces • Draw attention to problems in playing other students aren't aware of • Give perspective on standard of pieces in regard to assessment • Enforce the things that students wouldn't necessarily do themselves e.g. sight reading • Give advice on practice and performing strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could give more practical demonstrations as to how to play certain styles etc. • Give advice on some recordings to listen to in the same style etc of particular pieces
(C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give advice on choice of material • Encourage peer and self evaluation • Provide sight reading material • Provide practical examples of solutions to problems with performance • Give advise as to stage craft and dealing with performance anxiety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By giving more practical examples in class • Encouraging more in-depth feedback between students
Olivia (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superior knowledge • Ability to organise/structure • Experience performing • Experience teaching • Supervising figure 	Possibly take more charge?
(C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability/competency/skill • Professionalism • Knowledge • Access to resources • Experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being more authoritative about practice • Being more critical of technique etc.
Jasmine (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentor • Instructor • Guide • Analyst • Evaluator of comments and aspects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforcing that maybe each student must give evaluative comments to the performer and not just pleasant comments. • Maybe more sight reading exercises and discuss each one before and after the exercise. • Maybe just discuss each particular detail in more depth.
Adrian (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group leader • Accuracy assistant • Roster organiser • Expert • Boss 	Since it is a group thing, I feel no more is needed to be done.

7.5.4 Teacher role examined (continued)

Name & trial	Five characteristics	Possible enhancements
Sat (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide comments • Discuss repertoire • Suggest practice strategies • Critique • Evaluator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should give more chance to ask questions. Should make the class interesting.
(C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fun and enjoyable • Strict at times • Very attentive, clear explanations • Forever ready to help his students' need to improve their piano playing • Organised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate more in playing together with his students
Kimli (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repertoire chooser • Corrector of mistakes • Teacher of skills • Provider of feedback • Encourager to practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More consultation between sessions.
(C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corrects the mistakes in my piano playing • Gives advice to my queries • Guides me to make sure that I am on the right track • Gives suggestions in choosing repertoire • Trains me to become an independent piano learner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give more feedback • Give some time for talking to each student personally regarding progress
Delia (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding • Evaluating • Motivational • Flexible • Expressive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Did not answer question.</i>
(C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstration • Questioning • Dedicated • Professional • Supportive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More on technical playing and less of group discussion
Genna (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader • Critical of aspects in pieces • Encouraging in achieved areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More feedback on areas of pieces • This feedback could detail exactly what needs work
Kellie (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides pieces • Feedback given • General knowledge of pieces supplied • Assists in learning pieces • Provides useful information on performance preparation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggest more ways to improve previous performances.
Chia (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listens and comments • Corrects technique • Explains the piece • Free for discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be more strict with their playing
Patsy (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well equipped with knowledge on musicianship • Organised and well-prepared • Systematic approach in the teaching • Dedicated/committed • Very experienced pianist, performer and musician 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To consistently guide the students in terms of practice methods and technique • Do more talking and <u>demonstration</u> on musicianship, techniques and performance etc.

7.5.4 Teacher role examined (continued)

Name & trial	Five characteristics	Possible enhancements
Sally (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging • Informative • Facilitated discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't know.
(D)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct what happens in class • Suggest techniques • Pic up errors and correct • Harbinger of possible failure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher B – would facilitate more student teaching. Be more encouraging and positive.
Sophie (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giver of music • Listen to progression of pieces each week • Critically analyse playing • Give advice about how to play technically • Demonstrate certain ways to play things 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More parties!
(D)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to progress of pieces • Point out areas that needed work specifically • Give an overall impression of piece and areas that need work • Ask for your own self critical evaluations of piece • Ask for group members critical analysis of the piece 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More encouragement even on small things you are doing correctly.
Billie (D)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to the student (what they've been working on) • Ask them for self-critical evaluations • Ask the other students their opinions • Get students to fix mistakes and help them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I thought they are already really good. Have learned so much more this year than the past and was very happy with the amount I have learned. I don't think the teacher's role needs to change.
Betty (D)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give advice on the style of the piece • Technical advice • Better ways to do things • Involve students in group lessons • Related ideas back to other students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maybe give more advice. • Relate advice to other students.
Kathy (D)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussing general music knowledge • Offering advice • Helping in difficult areas • Encouraging learning • Enjoying music 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even more comments would be good.
Allison (D)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentor • Guide • Provider of encouragement • Suggestor of repertoire • Joker! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide punch and pie • Not make us do questionnaires

It is possible to further synthesize the roles defined above into broad categories. For instance, roles defined relate to such areas as guidance/direction/leadership, advice and diagnostics etc. Table 7.5.5 synthesizes the roles into broad areas and considers the total number of comments and relevant percentages.

Table 7.5.5 Synthesis of students' defined teaching roles

Broad teaching role	Number of comments	Percentage of total comments
Guidance/Direction/Leadership	13	11.3%
Facilitation/Organisation/Structure	23	20%
Knowledge source/Information/ Resources/Expert (skills, experience)	28	24.3%
Advice/Diagnostics	29	25.2%
Assessor/Evaluator/Critic	10	8.7%
Mentor/Encourager	12	10.4%

An analysis of Table 7.5.5 proposes that the teacher's transmission and interaction strategies were balanced and varied. These data are pleasing for the teacher as researcher in that they support the notion of operating in a range of roles that both stimulate and encourage student development and independence. In terms of possible enhancements identified in Table 7.5.4, students' views suggest that the procedures in place should be either more stringent (Olivia, Jasmine) or more extensive (Amber, Francine, Sat). Kimli's view raises the issue of dependency, and in fact goes against the notion of creating independent learners, hence his request is worrying. Students were then asked to reflect on the atmosphere and productivity of the sessions they experienced, and where relevant, to compare these aspects with the previous year of study. Table 7.5.6 examines students' perceptions of the atmosphere in sessions.

Table 7.5.6 Perceptions of atmosphere within sessions

Name & trial	Atmosphere in lessons 1 – awkward/uncomfortable, 5 – very comfortable	Compared with previous year 1 – much more uncomfortable, 5 – much more comfortable
Amber (A)	(2) Really depends – I felt a range of emotions. I was always more nervous while playing, but less so when discussing pieces etc.	<i>Question not asked</i>
(B)	(4.5) I'm used to the people in my group, although occasionally it felt as if we didn't get enough done.	(5) In general I felt much better about the whole year and also knowing peers much better puts you at ease.
(C)	(4) I know the peers and teacher. Only reason I would have felt uncomfortable would be my lack of practice.	(4) More familiarity, with both setting and the people.
Fran (A)	(5) Familiar with other students. Never feel as though you're going to "get in trouble" for doing or not doing something.	<i>Question not asked</i>
(B)	(5) No intimidation, relaxed atmosphere.	(5) Used to teaching methods and expectations.
(C)	(5) It's relaxed and very positive.	(3) The atmosphere didn't vary that much from the previous year.
Olivia (A)	(4) Everybody knew each other well, and knew how each person played, but there is always that element of anxiety in any situation where you have to perform (for me at least).	<i>Question not asked</i>
(B)	(4) It's always good to have an audience and set of evaluators, but sometimes I am distracted/put off and find myself performing at the standard of those around me, whether this is low or high. This would extremely benefit me if I was in a class of excellent performers.	(3) Everyone is of similar standard so there is no intimidation. Pretty much the same as last year.
(C)	(4) The intimidation I would feel in an individual lesson is negated by the presence of peers.	(3) The atmosphere was the same as last year. The presence of the video camera this year did not change the atmosphere as I don't think anyone really noticed it.
Rosie (A)	(3) At the beginning I was quite uncomfortable not being used to group lessons, however I became more comfortable as time went on.	<i>Question not asked</i>
Elizabeth (A)	(2) Depends on the lesson and at what stage pieces were at, but I personally got nervous and my playing reflected that (through no fault of anybody's).	<i>Question not asked</i>
Jasmine (B)	(4) It is a good size, any bigger and it would have been more uncomfortable.	(5) It felt more of a relaxed atmosphere. I guess I was more comfortable with the people in the group as well.

Table 7.5.5 Perceptions of atmosphere within sessions (continued)

Name & trial	Atmosphere in lessons 1 – awkward/uncomfortable, 5 – very comfortable	Compared with previous year 1 – much more uncomfortable, 5 – much more comfortable
Adrian (B)	(5) Nice to have discussion rather than one on one with a teacher	(5) I wasn't in a group last year, and prefer the situation much more this year.
Sat (B)	(2) Personality clashes affected the atmosphere.	<i>Question not asked</i>
(C)	(5) Not too many people in the class. We can learn more and spend more time in analysing the proper way to play certain pieces.	(3) Had some conflict with my peers.
Delia (B)	(3) Have to get used to it.	<i>Question not asked</i>
(C)	(3) At times people were less involved in others learning.	(3) Because of pressure.
Kimli (B)	(3) Sometimes uncomfortable due to pressure of group criticism, mostly if not prepared.	<i>Question not asked</i>
(C)	(4) Because it is fun to be in a group lesson and we can learn from each other's mistakes.	(4) We are more used to the environment.
Jenna (C)	(4) Friendly but a little disappointing if your work is a bit behind.	<i>Question not asked</i>
Kellie (C)	(4) Got to know students better and good to be able to talk with students same age.	<i>Question not asked</i>
Sally (C)	(4) Because everyone was friendly and nice.	<i>Question not asked</i>
(D)	(1) I felt increasingly intimidated by [Teacher B] and found it difficult to play well as I became very nervous.	(1) Last year [Teacher A] seemed to genuinely want me to do well. This year [Teacher B] increasingly seemed to think I was not going to do well and treated me as such. I became extremely uncomfortable when [Teacher B] implied that we were not good students and that she would rather not teach us.
Sophie (C)	(5) Because we were all friends and there was lots of joking around and it was a fun atmosphere.	<i>Question not asked</i>
(D)	(4) Because we knew the people in the group.	(2) More comfortable and fun last year. Maybe because I did more work last year. Not as open as last year maybe because we didn't know [Billie] as well.
Chia (C)	(4) I think it is more enjoyable.	<i>Question not asked</i>
Patsy (C)	(2) I've never experienced group lessons before entering university and the 'zero' knowledge on the nature of group lessons made me quite uncomfortable with the atmosphere.	<i>Question not asked</i>
Billie (D)	(4) Because I was happy with the way I was being taught.	<i>Question not asked</i>
Betty (D)	(4) Sometimes the learning environment is harder in a group lesson.	<i>Question not asked</i>
Allison (D)	(4) Everybody was friendly and easy-going and it was a relaxed atmosphere.	<i>Question not asked</i>
Kathy (D)	(4) Comfortable – however everyone is probably a bit too polite!	<i>Question not asked</i>
Total group	3.73	3.54

On average, the data propose at least a moderate level of comfort for students. Those who have experienced group lessons for an extended period of time report increased comfort and sense of shared learning as compared with the awkwardness reported by some students new to the environment. At the same time, this was also Chia's first experience of group lessons and she states a preference for this format for learning, hence timely adjustment to the new style of learning environment may in fact not necessarily be a problem for all students. It is also interesting that Olivia, in her third year of study, noted that by having peers in the lesson environment, it reduced potential feelings of intimidation for her.

Table 7.5.7 synthesises the students' perceptions on the productivity of sessions as well as perceptions of the productivity of their peers. Where appropriate, the students were asked to compare the productivity of the previous year for both themselves and their peers.

Table 7.5.7 Perceptions of productivity of sessions

Name & trial	Productivity of lessons 1 – very low, 5 – very high	Compared with previous year 1 – much less productive, 5 – much more productive	Peers' productivity 1 – not at all productive, 5 – very productive	Compared with previous year 1 – much less productive, 5 – much more productive
Rosie (A)	(4) Without them I probably would have done very little work.	<i>Question not asked</i>	<i>Question not asked</i>	<i>Question not asked</i>
Elizabeth (A)	(3) Learnt things that helped with pieces but I still think that individual lessons could help iron out individual problems a little more effectively.	<i>Question not asked</i>	<i>Question not asked</i>	<i>Question not asked</i>
Amber (A)	(3) Sometimes don't get to fully focus on specific problems	<i>Question not asked</i>	<i>Question not asked</i>	<i>Question not asked</i>
(B)	(4) The second semester was much more productive.	(4) I was better adjusted and this came through.	(4) It seemed like Fran developed over the year and she got through her exams.	(3) I'm not really sure.
(C)	(3) Because of my lack of preparation.	(3) Similar circumstances	(4) Depended on the effort put in – more effort, more productive.	(4) More mature decisions in some aspects. There was a drive to succeed for final exams.
Fran (A)	(4) <i>No comment provided.</i>	<i>Question not asked</i>	<i>Question not asked</i>	<i>Question not asked</i>
(B)	(4) They're productive if you put in enough effort of your own.	(4) More confident to ask questions or give an opinion.	(4) As I've had more to do with [Amber] than anyone else, I think the improvement in her playing and confidence is evidence of the value of group piano classes.	(5) <i>Referred to an earlier response</i> "As I've had more to do with [Amber] than anyone else, I think the improvement in her playing and confidence is evidence of the value of group piano classes".
(C)	(5) Although my effort wasn't substantial, I still managed to learn a great deal.	(4) They were more productive in that we gained an even greater knowledge of different concepts.	(5) I noticed a great improvement in everyone's playing.	(4) I noticed a vast improvement in the quality of everyone's performances.

Table 7.5.6 Perceptions of productivity of sessions (continued)

Name & trial	Productivity of lessons 1 – very low, 5 – very high	Compared with previous year 1 – much less productive, 5 – much more productive	Peers' productivity 1 – not at all productive, 5 – very productive	Compared with previous year 1 – much less productive, 5 – much more productive
Olivia (A)	(3) We were learning a new piece every three weeks so we always had something to work on regularly unlike people from other master classes who I spoke to.	<i>Question not asked</i>	<i>Question not asked</i>	<i>Question not asked</i>
(B)	(2) I was very busy this year with other areas of study, so I left little time to prepare for master classes. This let my productivity down. You really need to be prepared to benefit from the classes.	(1) I was generally less prepared compared to last year, although the structure of the classes had potential to be evaluated as a (5).	(4) I do not know, just guessing on evidence.	(4) <i>Referred to an earlier response</i> "I do not know, just guessing on evidence".
(C)	(1) Purely my fault by not preparing for lessons and often not playing anything in class resulting in the class being a waste.	(2) The classes themselves had great potential to be extremely productive, but due to the above (resulting from my poor motivation and time control), they were less productive than last year.	(1 – 5) Depended on the peer – I feel Amber and Fran were often not prepared and consequently were not productive, whereas Patsy seemed to utilize the classes effectively by having something prepared constantly. These consequences were our own responsibility.	(<i>did not answer</i>) As I was not in a class with these peers last year I can not really comment.
Jasmine (B)	(5) I have learnt a great deal by both listening and participating. I find that when I am able to comment on others performances, I can also see that aspect within my own music.	(4) Because each aspect within each lesson was discussed in greater detail. It felt more comfortable.	(5) Because they don't just have to rely on themselves, but can have the opinions and comments of others to help them through.	(5) Everyone seemed more relaxed and willing to contribute rather than just sit back and listen.
Adrian (B)	(5) Prefer group because of discussion aspect.	<i>Did not respond.</i>	(5) <i>Did not comment.</i>	<i>Did not respond.</i>

Table 7.5.6 Perceptions of productivity of sessions (continued)

Name & trial	Productivity of lessons 1 – very low, 5 – very high	Compared with previous year 1 – much less productive, 5 – much more productive	Peers' productivity 1 – not at all productive, 5 – very productive	Compared with previous year 1 – much less productive, 5 – much more productive
Sat (B)	(2) Don't have any individual classes – coping with the change is difficult.	<i>Question not asked</i>	(2) We had individual lessons before entering the University. It is hard for us to adapt in group lessons after so long having individual lessons.	<i>Question not asked</i>
(C)	(4) Students were more involved or said more.	(4) Chia did give us a lot of useful tips and knew our difficulties. We practiced together and gave each other comments.	(4) Both Delia and Kimli improved a lot.	(4) Students were involved or said more.
Delia (B)	(4) Never have been to a group piano class before and I learnt a lot.	<i>Question not asked</i>	(4) It's good as I can see they are improving.	<i>Question not asked</i>
(C)	(4) Because there is a lot of feedback involved.	(5) More detailed discussions to learn from.	(4) <i>Indicated same response as previous</i> "More detailed discussions to learn from".	(4) They improved their playing as a result of more criticism.
Kimli (B)	(4) Learned from each other, developed interpretation skills, technique etc. Hear more playing and opinions and repertoire.	<i>Question not asked</i>	(3) Sometimes they worked well and sometimes not.	<i>Question not asked</i>
(C)	(4) Because I had improvements in my piano playing.	(4) Because we had the chance to complete self-critical reports and we obtained more feedback from the lecturer and student.	(4) Because I have learned a lot from the peers.	(4) More critical than last year.
Chia (C)	(3) I would have liked more peer comments about my playing.	<i>Question not asked</i>	(3) Some comments helped their playing.	<i>Question not asked</i>
Jenna (C)	(4) In comparison to last year it was extremely productive providing motivation in most cases.	<i>Question not asked</i>	(3) I think it was hard for all students to adjust from individual to group lessons in the beginning.	<i>Question not asked</i>
Kellie (C)	(5) A lot more feedback. More initiative to have pieces ready for them to listen to.	<i>Question not asked</i>	(5) Again same reasons as previous question – more feedback.	<i>Question not asked</i>

Table 7.5.6 Perceptions of productivity of sessions (continued)

Name & trial	Productivity of lessons 1 – very low, 5 – very high	Compared with previous year 1 – much less productive, 5 – much more productive	Peers' productivity 1 – not at all productive, 5 – very productive	Compared with previous year 1 – much less productive, 5 – much more productive
Sally (C)	(4) Because I have achieved a lot.	<i>Question not asked</i>	(4) They seemed to have learnt a lot and done very well.	<i>Question not asked</i>
(D)	(2) Although I have learnt some great pieces, I feel that I have lost some confidence in myself as a musician.	(3) The pieces studies were of a higher standard; more was learnt in this way.	(3) Sophie found similar problems to me, and due to injury was not able to achieve what she could have. Billie seemed to be constantly come back with the same problems, she did not seem to learn how to get over them.	(3) Sonia was also uncomfortable with Teacher B.
Sophie (C)	(5) I learnt a lot about my piano playing, improved my technique and learnt how to critique others' playing.	<i>Question not asked</i>	(5) I think that everyone has improved a great deal with their piano playing as well as their feedback for us.	<i>Question not asked</i>
(D)	(2) Because I didn't do as much work.	(2) Because I didn't do as much work.	(3) <i>No comment provided.</i>	<i>Did not answer.</i>
Patsy (C)	(4) Whatever was discussed during lessons was well grasped. I've expanded my repertoire and been exposed to teaching methods. For me, group lessons are a "mature" way to study performance at University level.	<i>Question not asked</i>	(4) They are actively involved in discussions and gave useful feedback/opinions. Their performances gradually changed (in terms of improvement) after they applied those methods, technical skill etc that were discussed during lessons.	<i>Question not asked</i>
Billie (D)	(3) I don't think there is too much of a difference in the amount you would get taught or learn in a group lesson compared to an individual one.	<i>Question not asked</i>	(3) I think they were more productive for me rather than them because I wasn't able to help them as much. They helped me more.	<i>Question not asked</i>
Betty (D)	(4) Sometimes the information was not relevant when the other students were playing.	<i>Question not asked</i>	(4) It seems to have helped them interpret their piece better.	<i>Question not asked</i>
Allison (D)	(4) Listening to other people play gave me new ideas.	<i>Question not asked</i>	(4) They fixed little problems such as speeding up in pieces, or too much pedal etc.	<i>Question not asked</i>
Kathy (D)	(4) Being my first group lesson experience, I found the extra advice very helpful.	<i>Question not asked</i>	(4) I saw my peers take the advice and I could see definite improvement in their playing.	<i>Question not asked</i>

The data are interesting in that productivity tends to relate to students' work ethic across the year and from year to year. Overall however, the data reveal that there is a considerable level of productivity achieved from those members of the trials, hence supporting the notion that a group environment adequately allows for student progression and development.

7.6 Probing students' self-reflections on lessons

As indicated in section 6.7.3, procedures for analysing students' self-reflection sheets were developed and subsequently completed. Individual line graphs, (see Appendix N), are synthesized in Figures 7.6.1 and 7.6.2 in the context of the total sample, presenting the average of each student's reported self-evaluations for the four key areas.

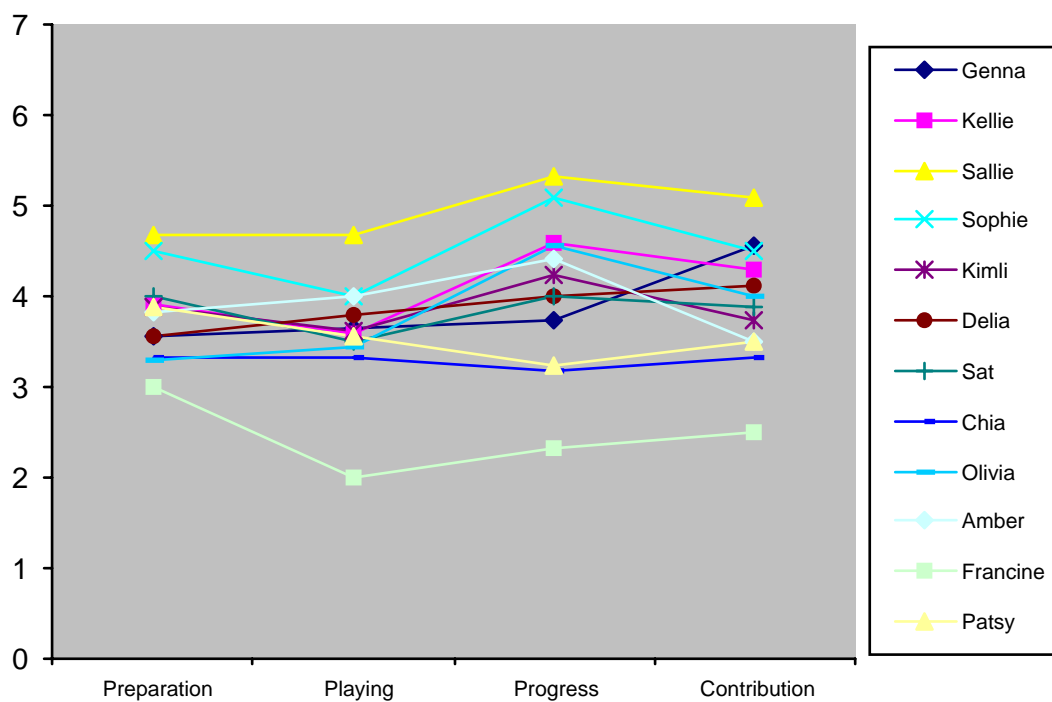


Figure 7.6.1

Average ratings by trial C students for key areas

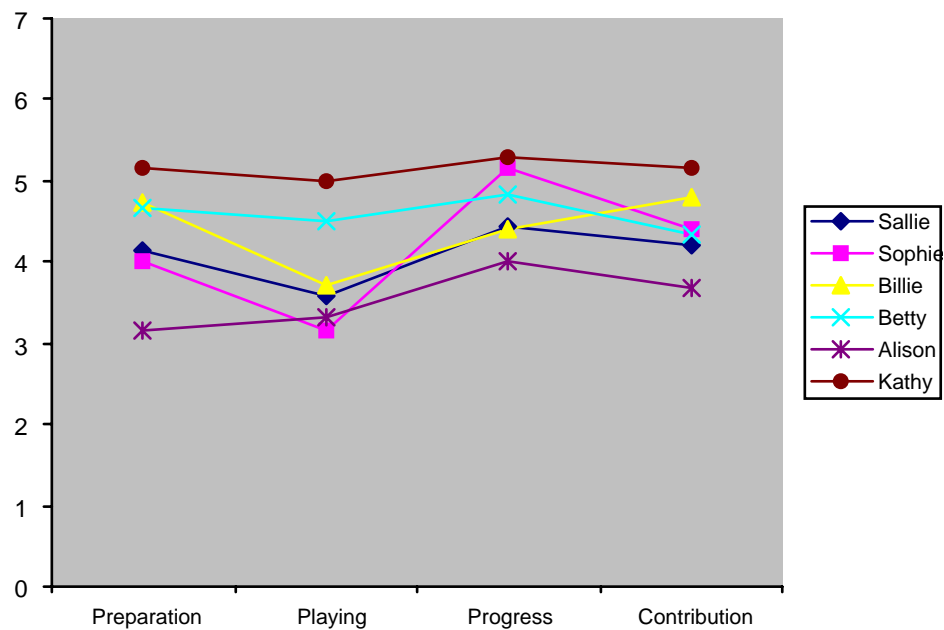


Figure 7.6.2

Average ratings by trial D students for key areas

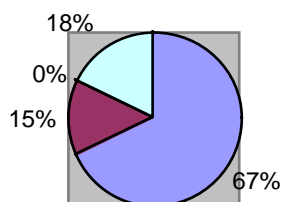
While it is possible to view basic trends in the line graphs above, with progress often the most highly ranked area, Figure 7.6.3 offers a clearer picture of this scenario, and presents a colour coded ranking of individual students' average ratings of the four key areas, with each student's highest average ranked as one. To further highlight the trends, pie graphs present the spread of the four areas within each rank.

Trial C												Trial D						
RANK	Names																	
	Kellie	Sally	Sophie	Kimli	Delia	Sat	Chia	Olivia	Amber	Francine	Patsy	Sally	Sophie	Billie	Betty	Alison	Kathy	
	1																	
	2																	
	3																	
4																		

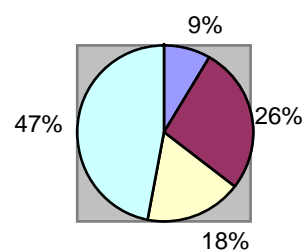
Colour key

Progress
Contribution
Preparation
Playing

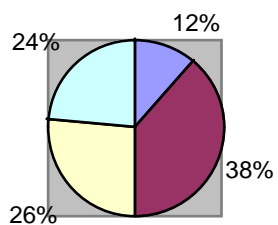
Ranking 1



Ranking 2



Ranking 3



Ranking 4

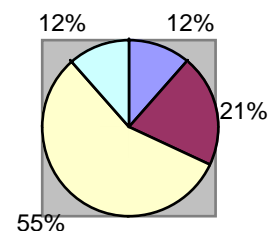


Figure 7.6.3

Self-evaluation of achievement in key areas ranked across all students

It is noteworthy that participants feel more positive about their *progress* and *contribution* than they do about their *playing* or *preparation*. Indeed the relative negativity about outputs (playing) and inputs (preparation) may well indicate a growing maturity and work ethic – an hypothesis which is consistent with the greater satisfaction with progress/contribution – a sense of working towards a desired goal.

Students' diagnostic capacity in relation to the most significant influence(s) on their preparation is detailed in Table 7.6.1.

Table 7.6.1 Students' self evaluations of key influences on preparation

Name	No. weeks	Insufficient preparation	Generic preparation	Targeted preparation	+ve progress	Peer consultation	Staff consultation
Genna	11	16.7	25	41.6	16.7		
Kellie	10	40	30	20	10		
Sallie	12		40	50	10		
Sallie	14		90			10	
Sophie	12		66.7	25	8.3		
Sophie	15	8.3	33.4	50			8.3
Kimli	8	37.5	37.5	25			
Delia	9	55.6	11.1		33.3		
Sat	8	62.5		37.5			
Chia	6	66.7	16.7	16.7			
Olivia	7	14	43	43			
Amber	6	20	20	60			
Francine	6	66.7	33.3				
Patsy	8	14.3	28.6	57.1			
Billie	15	14.3	35.7	35.7	14.3		
Betty	6		16.7	66.6	16.7		
Alison	6	16.7	33.3	50			
Kathy	6	33.3	16.7	50			

Students are clearly aware of the influence of insufficient preparation, with four level three students (Delia, Sat, Chia, Francine) reporting this for more than half of all lessons. While it may be possible to argue that these students are overly critical, it is also reasonable to assume that they are appropriately critical, given the fact that they are in their final year of undergraduate study and hence arguably aware of their input as a

direct influence. For the majority of the time, the remainder of students focus on either generic or targeted preparation which is reflective of the typical scenario of lesson preparation.

Table 7.6.2 presents a summary of all qualitative comments presented by students in relation to positive and negative aspects of the lessons they evaluated.

Table 7.6.2 Students' discrete comments summarized

Name	No. weeks	Positive aspects	Average comments	Unsatisfactory Aspects	Average comments
Genna	11	27	2.45	27	2.45
Kellie	10	21	2.1	26	2.6
Sallie	12	18	1.5	18	1.5
Sallie	14	18	1.29	21	1.5
Sophie	12	34	2.83	33	2.75
Sophie	15	30	2	34	2.27
Kimli	8	17	2.13	22	2.75
Delia	9	27	3	27	3
Sat	8	21	2.63	24	3
Chia	6	0	0	14	2.33
Olivia	7	18	2.57	14	2
Amber	6	13	2.17	15	2.5
Francine	6	9	1.5	14	2.33
Patsy	8	15	1.88	18	2.25
Billie	15	26	1.73	39	2.6
Betty	6	17	2.83	18	3
Alison	6	13	2.17	17	2.83
Kathy	6	14	2.33	17	2.83

On average, three students (Genna, Sallie – Trial C, Delia) reported the same number of positive and negative comments. Two (Sopie – Trial C, Olivia – Trial C) identified more positives than negatives, although there is a very small difference in Sophie's case. On average, the remainder and majority of students reported more negative aspects on average, which may be related to the reported poor preparation, overly critical reflections, or that the students are accurate in their reflections. Chia is clearly inappropriately critical in her evaluations, with no positive aspects reported. Certainly, the relative spread of positive and negative comments suggests, at the very least, that students are very capable of being diagnostic in relation to their output during sessions.

Students' diagnostic capacities are further revealed in the analysis of these views on positive and negative aspects (Table 7.6.3).

Table 7.6.3 Students' self evaluations of positive and unsatisfactory aspects

Name	No. weeks	Preparation						Technical aspects		Musical aspects		Progress		Peer consultations		Staff consultations		Other consultations	
		<i>Insufficient</i>		<i>Generic</i>		<i>Targeted</i>													
		+ve %	-ve %	+ve %	-ve %	+ve %	-ve %	+ve %	-ve %	+ve %	-ve %	+ve %	-ve %	+ve %	-ve %	+ve %	-ve %	+ve %	-ve %
Genna	11		7.4		3.7			81.3	66.7	3.7	3.7	16.7	18.5						
Kellie	10					9.5	3.85	76.2	92.3			14.3	3.85						
Sallie	12		22.2				11.1	22.2	38.9	11.1		61.1	22.2	5.6					5.6
Sallie	14		33.3					22.2	19			61.1	28.6	16.7	9.5		4.8		4.8
Sophie	12		3.05					38.2	81.8	8.8	12.1	41.2	3.05	11.8					
Sophie	15		20.6					46.7	61.8	3.3	17.6	36.7		13.3					
Kimli	8		5					56	77	25	18	19							
Delia	9							77.8	92.6	22.2	7.4								
Sat	8				8.3			61.9	75	14.3	16.7	14.3							
Chia*	6		14.3						64.3		14.3		7.1						
Olivia	7			5.5				55.5	64.3	16.7	28.6	22.3	7.1						
Amber	6		13.3	7.7				46.3	73.4	23	13.3	23							
Francine	6		14.3		7.1	11.1	7.1	66.7	42.9		7.1	22.2	21.4						
Patsy	8			6.7				66.7	61.1	13.3	33.3	13.3	5.6						
Billie	15		23.1	3.85				30.8	33.3		7.7	61.5	35.9	3.85					
Betty	6							23.5	77.8	5.9	22.2	70.6							
Alison	6		17.6	7.7	5.9			23.1	47.1	23.1	17.6	38.4	5.9		5.9	7.7			
Kathy	6							14.3	29.4	42.8	70.6	35.8		7.1					

* Did not indicate any positive aspects

Again, insufficient preparation is identified as a significant negative in relation to lesson outputs. While some students make comments related to generic and targeted preparation, technical aspects (mechanics) are the dominant focus for students, be they positive or negative. Eight students refer to positive technical aspects on at least 50 per cent of occasions. More students, in this case twelve, refer to negative technical aspects at least 50 per cent of the time, with two of these even above 90 per cent (Kellie, Delia). In general, there is a correlation between negative and positive comments in relation to technique, with Betty and Sophie (Trial C) the only students to have a significant difference between positive and negative reflections on technical aspects, in both cases focussing on negative aspects. Overall, the focus on and identification of problematic technical aspects may, in many cases, relate to the insufficient preparation identified above in Table 7.6.2.

At the same time, evidence of the opportunity for students to develop within the teaching and learning environment is evidenced in Table 7.6.3 in terms of enabling progress, given the frequency by which it appears in some students' evaluations, e.g., Betty, Billie, Sallie. Other principles to emerge from the data include the reported benefits of peer interaction (e.g. Sally, Sophie, Kathy), evidence of the positive outcomes of the shared learning environment. Additional comments to be made are the fact that Chia is clearly harsh in her self-critical reflections, at no stage identifying positive aspects or positive progress, while Sallie's negative views on peer, staff and other consultations relate more to her dissatisfaction in working with Teacher B.

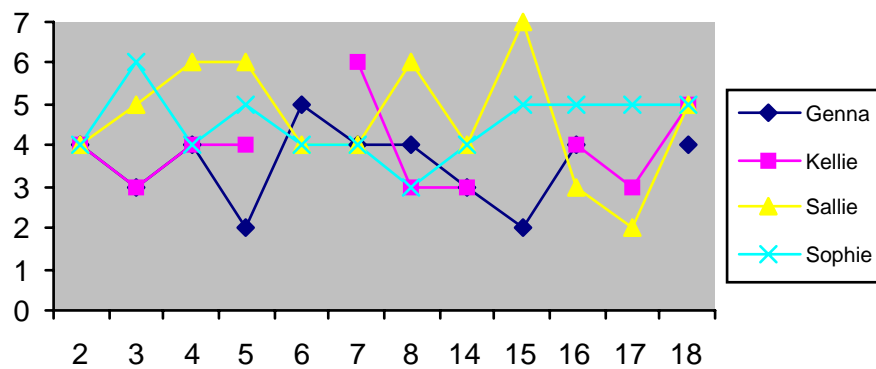
The issue of work ethic and preparation is evidenced in students' planned strategies for the following week (see data presented in Table 7.6.4).

Table 7.6.4 Planned strategies identified

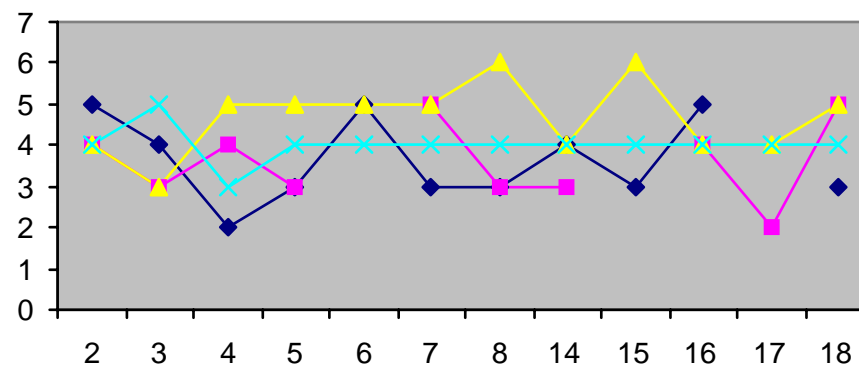
Name	No. weeks	Insufficient preparation	Generic preparation	Targeted preparation	Peer consultations	Staff consultations	Other consultations
Genna	11		33.3	63.4	3.3		
Kellie	10		15.4	84.6			
Sallie	12		40	40	15	5	
Sallie	14		57.1	39.3	3.6		
Sophie	12		8.3	91.7			
Sophie	15		48.4	51.6			
Kimli	8		25	37.5	4.1	8.4	25
Delia	9		37	59.3	3.7		
Sat	8		21.7	78.3			
Chia	6		15.4	84.6			
Olivia	7		27.8	61.1			11.1
Amber	6		46.7	53.3			
Francine	6	7.1	42.9	50			
Patsy	8		5.6	94.4			
Billie	15		28.2	71.8			
Betty	6			100			
Alison	6		12.5	56.25			31.25
Kathy	6			100			

While preparation is clearly the focus, and this fact is not surprising given the nature of the learning process, many reflections relate to such simple organizational matters as the need for more consistent work or basic time management skills. It is also evidence of the benefits of group learning that, although small in number, some students reflect on the fact that peers offer benefits between lessons, an outcome of the work that is encouraged and promoted during the weekly sessions. On one occasion, Francine felt that not practising would lead to a more productive week than that previously.

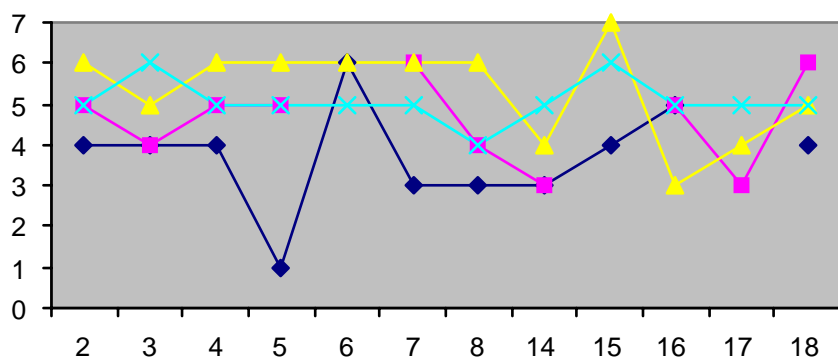
Figures 7.6.4 and 7.6.5 synthesize the key area ratings for two groups, given these students completed evaluation sheets for at least twelve weeks, and provide more substantial data upon which to suggest conclusions.



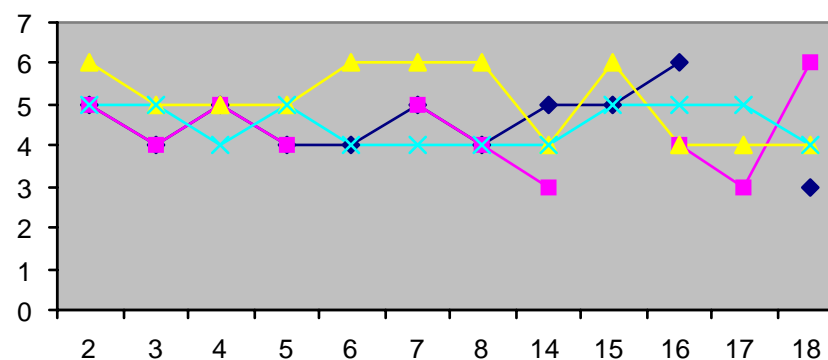
Preparation



Playing



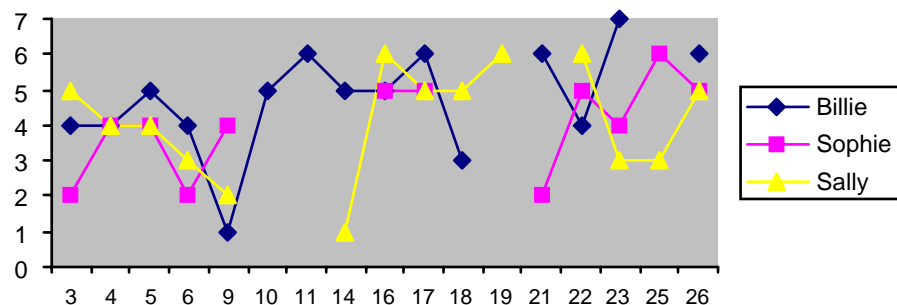
Progress



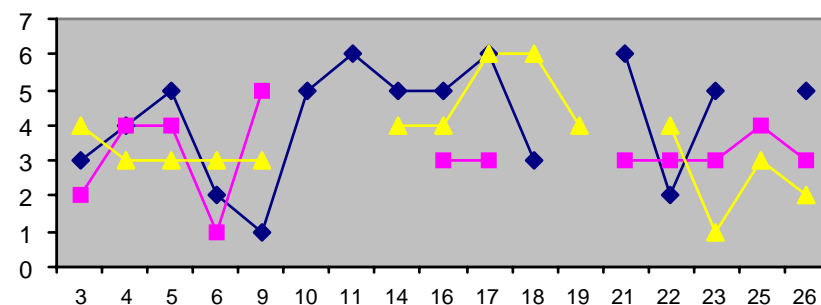
Contribution

Figure 7.6.4

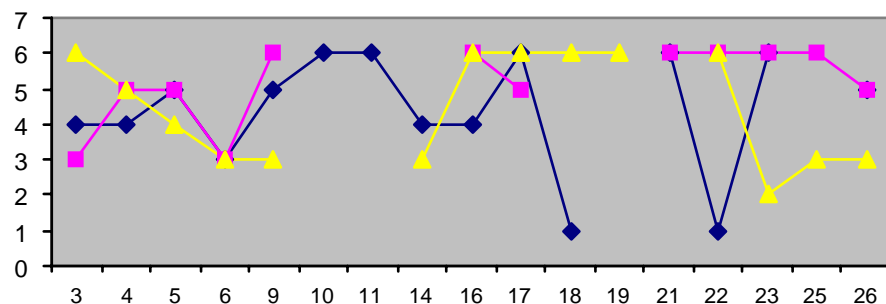
Trial C: level one students' self-evaluations of key areas



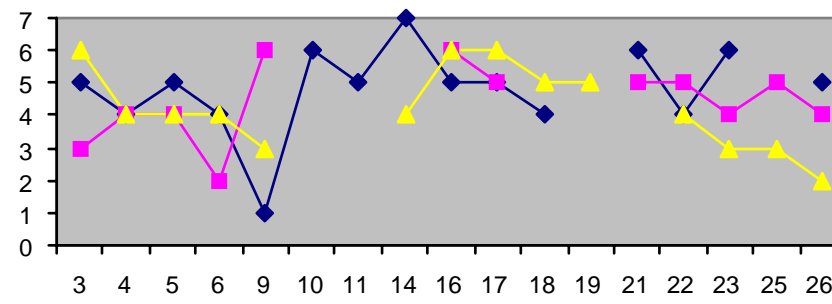
Preparation



Playing



Progress



Contribution

Figure 7.6.5

Trial D: Sallie, Sophie and Billie's self-evaluations of key areas¹

¹ Sophie did not complete evaluations for weeks 14, 18 and 19 indicating that she 'didn't play'. Some weeks do not have all three self-reflections due to students leaving class early, or not submitting sheets after agreeing to return them soon after the lesson.

The data in Figures 7.6.3 and 7.6.4 evidence a number of the key benefits of the group method. One is in terms of preparation and playing given the fact that, for the majority of weeks, there are at least one or two students within the group who argue at least an average level of achievement, often higher. Therefore, while some students may not be prepared sufficiently that week, and hence their playing is not at its best, they are exposed to students who are demonstrably better prepared, and whose playing is potentially at a higher level on that occasion. This therefore enables exposure to a range of more thoroughly prepared presentations, which may also impact on their motivation, or at least remind them of the necessity for thorough preparation. Hence in general, the productivity of the lesson does not rely on one student, and the teacher therefore has the opportunity to focus on those students who have more work prepared, while others are still exposed to the learning process, the progress of other students, and are at all times able to contribute via verbal interaction and reflection.

The benefits of exposure to other students also emerges in the *progress* graph in that, at all stages, there is at least one student who argues above average progress since the previous lesson. The regular exposure to students who see themselves as making progress leaves open the possibility this may inspire others to keep pace with the group, or at least to reflect on the means by which to develop and proceed further. This also provides evidence that, in any one week, there is a strong element of productivity and development within the group, a factor which would not occur if the learning environment were restricted to one student.

While preparation and progress may not always be optimal, a fundamental advantage of group learning is revealed in the *contribution* graph in that, for the majority of the time,

students feel they are able to contribute at a high level. While more consistent in the Trial C group (Figure 7.6.3), there is at least one student contributing in an above average capacity in the Trial D group per week (Figure 7.6.4). Hence, while a student may not have prepared sufficiently for any particular week, the nature of the interaction and the shared learning environment enables them to participate in a proactive and positive manner rather than simply further wasting their time. This also enables the teacher to draw upon students' ability to offer feedback and critical analyses, and to support those students obtaining performance shaping and teaching focus. In addition, the generic skills developed as part of this contribution to the learning environment are potentially significant, in such areas as critical thinking, independent learning, and communication skills.

An overview of the self-reflection procedures therefore reveals the following general principles in relation to the sample of students involved in Trials C and D:

- Progress is argued and ranked highly by many students, evidence that the model promotes productivity;
- Work ethic and preparation issues are counter-balanced across group members;
- Despite challenges associated with preparation, less prepared students are able to maximize gain from the lesson situation as a result of the fact that more than one student is involved in the learning transaction;
- The process requires students actively to consider aspects relevant to their preparation for, work within and needs beyond each lesson;
- Students are given the opportunity to be more aware of their progress within and across lessons; and
- Student reflections offer the teacher further insights into

- a) how students are working within the environment;
- b) what areas become a negative/positive focus for students;
- c) the impact of peer interaction on progress and the learning environment; and
- d) students' development over time.

7.7 Journal analysis

As indicated in section 6.7.4, all submitted journals were analysed as seen in Tables 7.7.1-3.

Table 7.7.1 International students' journals

Name	Area	TECHNIQUE		REPERTOIRE			PERSONAL INPUT			ADDITIONAL WORK			PROGRESS			Total no. discrete comments
		Security %	Facility %	Aesthetics %	Historical B'ground %	Choice %	Insuff. %	Targeted %	Generic %	Other rehears's %	Piano Acc't %	Consult's %	Nil %	Minimal %	Signif. %	
SAT	Goals	8.6	20.0	10.0		4.3		14.3	20.0	5.7		11.4	5.7			70
	Action	2.4	19.5				19.5	29.3	17.1			9.8	2.4			41
	Achievement	5.3					21.05	10.5	10.5					21.05	31.6	19
	Satisfactory element(s)	14.3	7.1	28.7					14.3			7.1		7.1	21.4	14
	Unsatisfactory element(s)	46.7	20.0				33.3									15
	Overall progress													50.0	50.0	8
KIMLI	Goals	12.9	16.8	8.9		1.0		9.9	7.9			42.6				101
	Action	6.9	10.9	12.9			5.9	12.9	17.8			32.7				101
	Achievement	4.8		4.8								9.5	4.8	23.7	52.4	21
	Satisfactory element(s)	38.9	5.55	22.2				5.55	5.55			5.55			16.7	18
	Unsatisfactory element(s)	31.6	26.3	10.5			15.8							15.8		19
	Overall progress												23.1	46.1	30.8	13
DELIA	Goals	18.7	6.25	25.0	9.4			6.25	18.7			15.7				32
	Action	20.0	15.0	5.0				20.0	10.0			30.0				20
	Achievement	44.5		11.1	22.2									22.2		9
	Satisfactory element(s)	44.5		33.3		11.1		11.1								9
	Unsatisfactory element(s)	66.7		16.65			16.65									6
	Overall progress													100.0		4

Table 7.7.2 Level three students' journals

Name	Area	TECHNIQUE		REPERTOIRE			PERSONAL INPUT			ADDITIONAL WORK			PROGRESS			Total no. discrete comments
		Security %	Facility %	Aesthetics %	Historical B'ground %	Choice %	Insuff. %	Targeted %	Generic %	Other rehearsals %	Piano Acc't %	Consult's %	Nil %	Minimal %	Signif. %	
OLIVIA	Goals	19.4	4.4	13.0	4.4	8.7		8.7	4.4	8.7	26.1	2.2				46
	Action		2.4	7.3		7.3	17.1	26.8	7.3	4.9	17.1	9.8				41
	Achievement												20.0	50.0	30.0	10
	Satisfactory element(s)			11.1		33.4		11.1	11.1	11.1				11.1	11.1	9
	Unsatisfactory element(s)	12.5				12.5	50.0			12.5	12.5					8
	Overall progress												44.45	44.45	11.1	9
AMBER	Goals	4.85	7.3	9.8		4.85		14.6	17.1	9.8	12.2	19.5				41
	Action		9.4	3.15		3.15		28.1	15.6	12.5	12.5	15.6				32
	Achievement		21.45	21.45					7.1			14.3		7.1	28.6	14
	Satisfactory element(s)	16.7		16.7				16.7			8.3				41.6	12
	Unsatisfactory element(s)	17.7	17.7			17.7	27.2	9.1						9.1		11
	Overall progress													3	2	5
PATSY	Goals	11.4	9.1	11.4	2.3	2.3		22.7	27.3	6.75		6.75				44
	Action	5.55	5.55	5.55	5.55	11.15	5.55	22.2	27.8	5.55		5.55				18
	Achievement						11.1		11.1	11.1			11.1	22.2	33.4	9
	Satisfactory element(s)	22.25	11.1	22.25		11.1		11.1						11.1	11.1	9
	Unsatisfactory element(s)		10.0				40.0	10.0	10.0	10.0			10.0	10.0		10
	Overall progress			11.1						11.1				44.5	33.3	9

Table 7.7.3 Level one students' journals

Name	Area	TECHNIQUE		REPERTOIRE			PERSONAL INPUT			ADDITIONAL WORK			PROGRESS			Total no. discrete comments
		Security %	Facility %	Aesthetics %	Historical B'ground %	Choice %	Insuff. %	Targeted %	Generic %	Other rehearsals %	Piano Acc't %	Consult's %	Nil %	Minimal %	Signif. %	
SOPHIE	Goals	10.0	15.7	10.0			8.6	12.9	8.6	7.1	5.7	15.7			5.7	70
	Action	4.0	12.0	10.0		10.0	8.0	20.0	4.0	10.0	4.0	18.0				50
	Achievement	3.3	13.3	16.7				10.0	6.7	3.3		16.7	3.3	10.0	16.7	30
	Satisfactory element(s)	30.7		7.7				23.1	7.7	7.7			7.7	7.7	7.7	13
	Unsatisfactory element(s)	33.3	16.7	8.325		8.325		8.325				8.325			16.7	12
	Overall progress												25.0	33.3	41.7	12
SALLIE	Goals	13.0	19.7	4.3		4.3	2.2	13.0	26.1	2.2		15.2				46
	Action		6.7			3.3	33.3	16.7	26.7			13.3				30
	Achievement	5.85				5.85	11.8	11.8					23.5	29.4	11.8	17
	Satisfactory element(s)	9.1				17.7		17.7	9.1			9.1		18.15	18.15	11
	Unsatisfactory element(s)		9.1				81.8							9.1		11
	Overall progress												9.1	81.8	9.1	11
GENNA	Goals	20.0	20.0	22.9				11.4	17.1			8.6				35
	Action			14.3				35.7	50.0							14
	Achievement	27.3	27.3				17.7	27.3								11
	Satisfactory element(s)	50.0												33.3	16.7	6
	Unsatisfactory element(s)	12.5	25.0				25.0	37.5								8
	Overall progress												33.3	50.0	16.7	6

An analysis of the data reveals the following general principles in relation to this particular sample of students' work:

- Students tend to be more ambitious and hence expansive when planning at the commencement of their week's work, hence the higher number of goals *vis à vis* statements related to action;
- Technical issues are a focus for the majority of students which corresponds to the emergent data from the self-reflection sheets which also reflect emphasis on musical mechanics;
- Musical issues, in particular aesthetics, are relatively strong in terms of focus in all but Sallie's case, suggesting that despite the focus on technique in the lesson self-reflection procedures, students do not necessarily achieve realisation of these in the lesson environment but work on these aspects beyond the lesson;
- A number of students (e.g. Sat, Kimli, Olivia, Patsy) identify insufficient input as an issue impacting on both weekly achievement and/or overall progress;
- Only one student (Sat) argues significant progress for at least half of the reported weeks, suggesting that students are either overly harsh or appropriately diagnostic of their work ethic and development; and
- At the same time, the journals reveal that students are able to diagnose progress, hence the relative success of their personal rehearsal/preparation routine(s).

In terms of the journals offering a window on the teaching and learning environment, a number of aspects relevant to the teacher emerge, most notably the ongoing impact of students' work ethic on their development and contribution in lessons. In addition, the journal offers the teacher an insight into the amount of activity in such other areas as

accompanying and/or ensemble work (e.g., Olivia, Sophie) or consultations with such mechanisms as peers, recordings or sight-reading texts (e.g., Amber, Kimli, Sophie).

Table 7.7.4 presents students' evaluation of the journal strategy on a five-point scale of low (1) to high (5). Despite not submitting any journals, Fran chose to evaluate the process, suggesting that she attempted but decided not to complete the requirements.

Table 7.7.4 Student evaluation of the journal process

Aspect	Genna	Sallie	Sophie	Amber	Olivia	Fran	Patsy	Kimli	Delia	Sat	Mean
Workload	4	5	4	3	5	5	4	4	3	5	4.2
Difficulty	1	5	4	2	3	5	4	4	2	5	3.5
Value	3	5	4	3	1	1	2	4	3	5	3.1

Students perceive a higher than average workload and level of challenge in the journal and, at this stage of their development, only moderate value.

7.8 Olivia's perceptions of group learning

As indicated in 6.7.2.1, Olivia was the only student to submit a letter, despite the fact that all students were invited to do so. Olivia's letter begins by outlining the challenges associated with moving from one to one to group lessons. She acknowledges that her initial thoughts were mixed, identifying on the one hand, the benefit of not having the intimidation factor, pressure and repetition of material common to individual lessons, thereby emerging from the "years of repetition that come with having only one opinion each week". She also identifies the benefits of being able to work with other students, compare peer standards, and learn via these mechanisms albeit despite the inherent challenges of peer comparison. Olivia also voices the doubts about group learning in terms of whether the appropriate focus on individuals can be accommodated.

Having foregrounded the group context, she then presents a range of practical suggestions to prospective students desirous of maximizing their learning experiences:

- Thorough preparation
- Benefits of preparing different work for each week to avoid repetition and boredom
- Openness to criticism and feedback
- Goal setting towards desired outcomes
- Risk taking in the provision of feedback
- Listening to learn

She extends her advice to the need for thorough performance preparation as well as encouragement to engage in extra curricular activities such as accompanying, teaching, ensemble work, all of which have the potential to contribute to a holistic and beneficial learning environment.

While Olivia's advice reveals a keen understanding of the requirements for successful learning in groups, she admits the integral factor of the learner "... my three years of study could have been vastly different – for better or for worse – depending on my attitude and approach to the learning experience". Her concluding statements of wisdom relate to appreciating practice and the piano, and the importance of remembering one's goals for studying music. Her final words -

"It is up to you to make the most out of the group lessons – don't waste them, as they may be the last formal lessons you ever have"

- demonstrate her keen recognition that learners have the major responsibility for both the quantity and quality of their own learning. Olivia has a keen appreciation of her

audience and has thus prepared an interesting and valuable document for future students.