

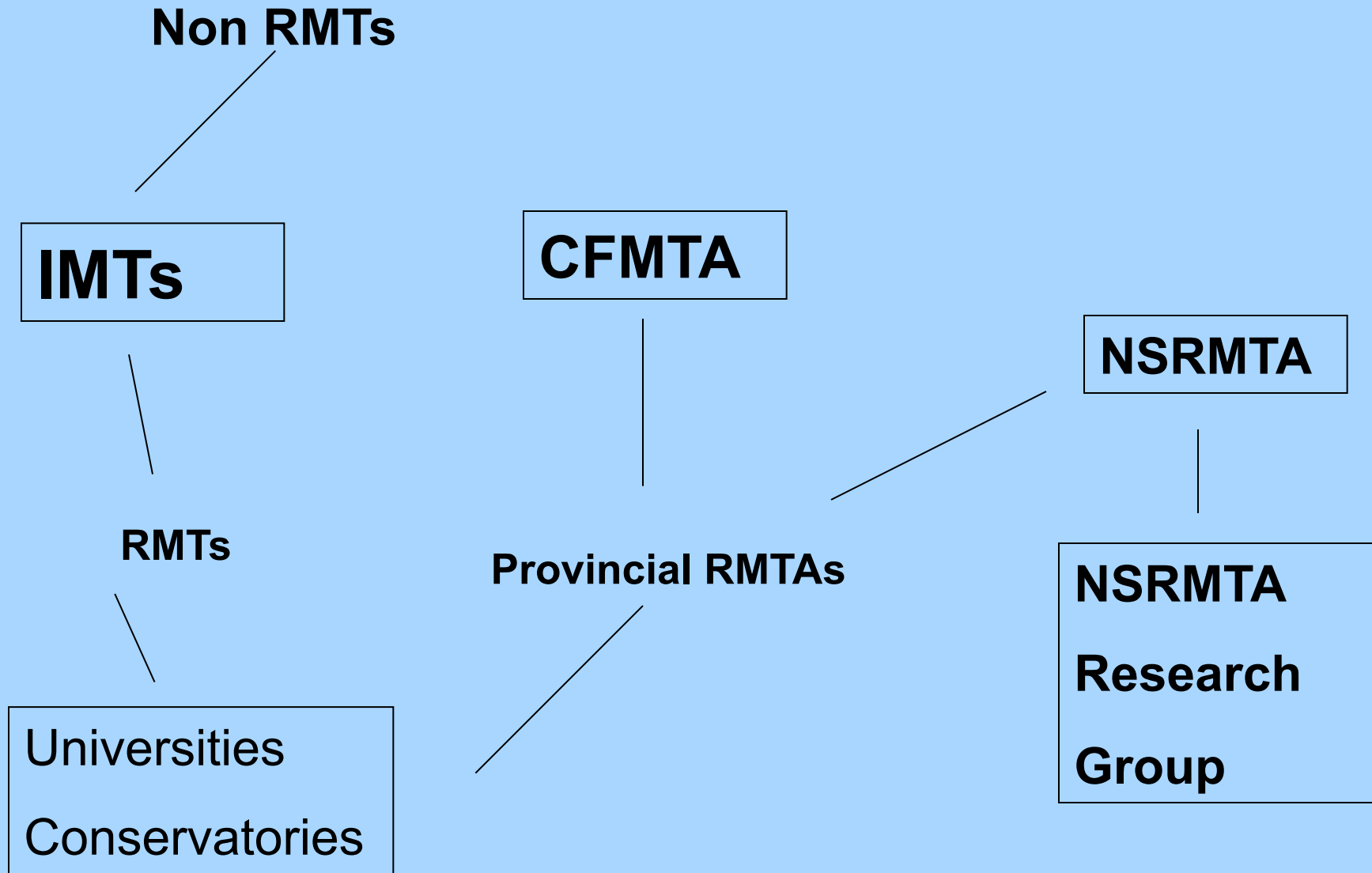


MOTIVATION A Life Force

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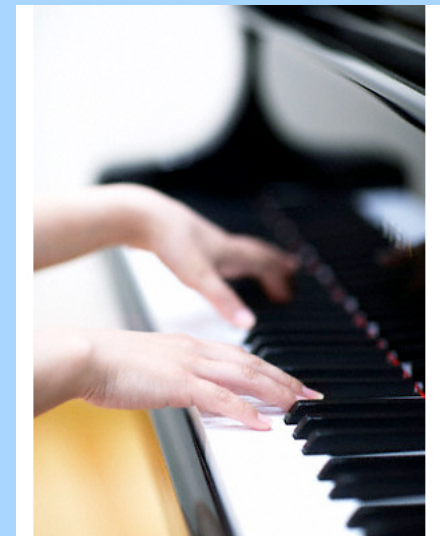
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The field of independent music teaching in Canada



QUESTIONS: Why do so many students, who start off well, not continue lessons beyond the elementary or early intermediate level? What causes those students who do complete their Associate diplomas to continue their studies?
What motivates our students?

Let us take a look and see what the literature says about motivation....



- Intrinsic motivation: causes a student to pursue lessons because he or she enjoys them. This enjoyment provides the only incentive in order to continue lessons. (Schunk, Pintrich & Meece, 2007).
- Extrinsic motivation, is based on receiving external rewards for engaging in a particular behaviour. When these incentives are removed however, engagement in the activity usually stops (Stipek, 2002).

Let us look at some of the current theories:

Self determination Theory: emphasizes 'autonomous study motivation' which implies students' motivation depends on having some say about their study behaviour (Vansteenkiste, 2004).



Epistemological identity theory: means students are able to say “I think this course is just right for me” (Mansell et al. 2004).

Achievement goal theory: i) mastery goals: relates to reaching a level of competence. ii) performance goals: relates to demonstrating competence to others. iii) performance avoidance goals: relates to avoiding the appearance of being inadequate (Skaalvik, 2004).



Positive psychology is primarily the study of people's strengths and well-being as opposed to classical psychology's study of people's weaknesses and unhappiness (Snyder & Lopez, 2002).

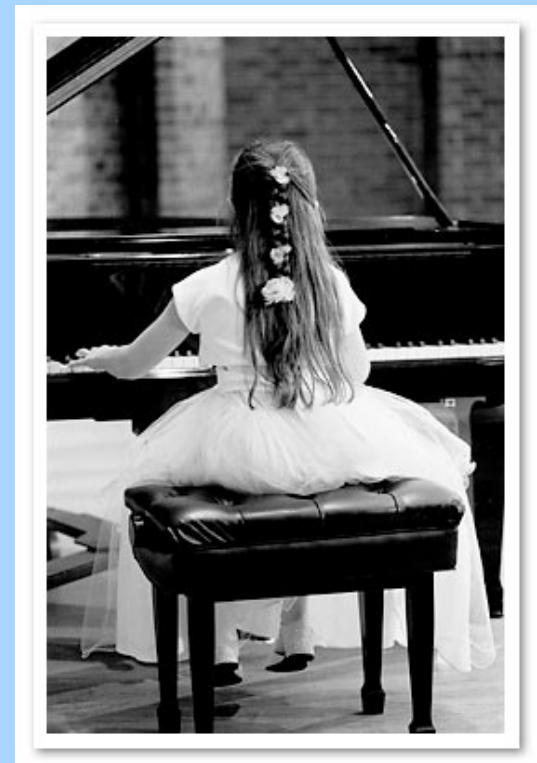
Self Theory relates to what a student's theory is about his or her own intelligence (Dweck, 1999).

I believe I'm ...

Theories about intelligence:

Entity theorists believe that their intelligence is largely fixed and cannot be changed by effort.

Incremental theorists believe that their intelligence can be increased by effort.



Intelligence has been defined as a person's perception of their innate ability.

Success often appears to be defined in terms of a person's potential rather than external achievement (Dweck, 1999)

- Students are motivated to learn when they find the learning task meaningful and interesting (Blumfield, 1992) and interesting tasks often lead to intrinsic motivation to learn (Lepper & Hodell, 1989).



Dweck found it more useful to praise students' efforts than their achievements. She suggests that students need to be convinced that successes can best be attained through resilience, perseverance, and conquering setbacks by learning from them and going on.

Method: This was a qualitative action research project.

Seven teacher/researchers, all members of the NSRMTA Research Group, interviewed thirteen other independent music teachers, thirteen students and thirteen parents of students. The interviews varied in length, some lasting up to an hour and a half, and were conducted over a period of several years.

Ethics

- Standard consent forms were used that comply with university ethics committee regulations.
- Parents signed the forms for their children.
- All interviewees were assured that their names would remain anonymous.

What students said

- There was lots of music in their home
- They liked their teacher and had a good relationship with them
- Had lots of parental encouragement
- They liked music and wanted to play
- Took pride in their accomplishments
- Played for fun but wanted to get better
- **De-motivator** – music too hard.
- Didn't enjoy practicing. Had time management problems. Too busy.

What the parents said

- They had a musical background
- Provided the instrument and kept it in tune
- Were willing to pay for lessons
- Give encouragement by exposing their children to music
- Showed they valued music
- Assisted in time management
- Gave lots of praise
- Played in church
- Told the child their musical abilities made them special
- Parents thought that giving their children private piano lessons gave them an advantage over other children

What the other teachers said

- Children had too many other activities
- Repertoire choices were important
- Parental encouragement important
- Teacher was also a friend
- Teacher's personality needed to mesh with the student's
- Provide fun activities
- Not all fun

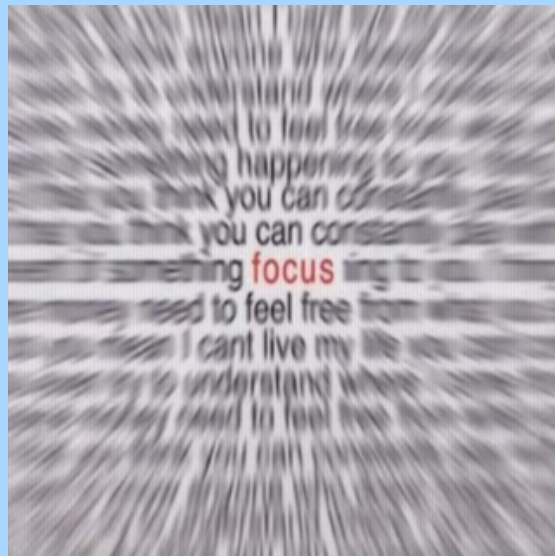
DISCUSSION

Piano teachers recognize that it is important for students to enjoy their lessons. It is commonly recognized that the student's experience of his lesson, greatly affect the quality of his learning and his enthusiasm to continue lessons. Lack of enjoyment is one of the main reasons why students give up their lessons (McAllister, 2010)

The research literature tells us that personal relationship between teacher and student when studying privately, may be particularly important in music instrument learning in comparison to other skills (Davidson, Moore, Sloboda, Howe, 1998).



Drop outs: When students who had discontinued their music lessons were asked why they stopped, their answers included that they had other priorities.



- Other literature state that a high percentage of mothers of piano students did not work outside the home. Perhaps having family members at home, whether siblings or parents, who witness the work of the piano student is important to develop good practice habits and fostered the perception that studying piano is a valuable activity.
- Parents of children who continued lessons, met the piano teachers more often those who dropped out (Eugenia Costa-Giomi, 2004).

- Choosing Repertoire

It goes without saying that the most successful way to increase students' enjoyment of music lessons is to choose high-quality repertoire that they want to play. Our job is to get students to the point where they feel satisfaction and pride in addition to the sheer delight brought on by making music. If teachers assign music that is too challenging, students feel frustrated and not motivated to practice (McAllister, 2010)

- **Student-Centered Instruction**

is a strong motivator. It is a form of active learning where students are engaged and involved in what they are studying. This states that students learn more by doing and experiencing than by observing. Put simply, this happens when the planning, teaching, and assessment revolve around the needs and abilities of the students. Teachers share control and students are allowed to explore, experiment, and discover on their own. The benefits are that students appreciate and value what they are being taught (Brown, 2008).

Other factors

“I know that tune”

“I wanted to make my teacher happy”

“teaching privately is an opportunity to give each student a chance to express their individuality and creativity”

“my mother taught me that a person is never lonely as long as music is part of their life”

“music has always been and always will be a huge part of my life. Music

allows me to express myself” .

“My family has always been supportive, especially my grandpa. He would call sometimes just for me to put the phone up to the piano and for me to play away” .

“I have a teacher who has taught me to be all that I can be, someone who made me reach for the unreachable, some one who has been there for me ever single step of the way” .

Success and achievement are great motivators –

“I can still remember the day that I finally perfected “My Heart Will Go On”. I swear that was the best day of my life!”



Our students taught us who they worked with, how they worked with these people and what parents and teachers did to encourage students' music learning.



Research that tests theories...

Research that tests theories of long-term retention is limited because it is difficult to track students. It is limited primarily by its inability to distinguish a dropout from a transfer student, or a student who may resume lessons later on in life.

Findings and future research

The primary findings of this research are that good conversations and communication are needed with parents and the best motivator for students is their love of music and joy in performing it.

Taking music lessons has a strong emotional element and further research needs to be conducted into this aspect.

“There exists in every child a strong imagination, a powerful need to create and a natural, instinctive understanding of rhythm and melody that has been part of every human generation since the beginning of time.

“The satisfaction of being able to play a piece well or mastering the technical difficulties of a complex passage; the pride that comes from being able to play an instrument when so few people can even read music; the confidence that arises when performing well in front of friends and family – these are the types of rewards that music offers. Practicing is work, but playing music is fun” (McAllister, 2010 p. 19).

Future Possibilities

We hope that other IMTs will start other collaborative research groups or join ours so that we can continue to compile and analyze new data.

We also hope that we can collaborate with conservatory and university teacher/researchers on projects of common interest.

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