

**A CASE STUDY EXPLORING PIANO PEDAGOGY IN YANGON,  
MYANMAR**

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
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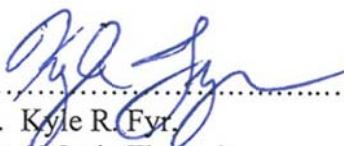
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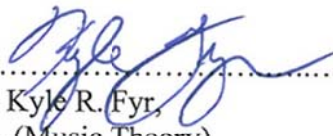
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**ABSTRACT**

The topic of this thesis is a case study exploring piano pedagogy in Yangon, Myanmar. The purpose of this research was to study piano teaching and learning, to study and gain a comprehensive understanding of current piano teaching pedagogies and the challenges and obstacles of piano teaching in Yangon/Myanmar.

The researcher employed the qualitative research method in this study. This research was conducted for the purpose of exploring 1) a current piano teaching process, 2) the condition of piano teaching and learning in Yangon, and 3) the problems and obstacles of piano teaching and learning in Yangon, Myanmar. This research serves to examine the development of piano teaching and the teaching process in Yangon/Myanmar; focusing on the piano pedagogy employed by contemporary Myanmar piano teachers. Eight piano teachers, who have at least 10 years' experience as piano teachers, were interviewed.

The results of this research revealed that piano teachers in Yangon/Myanmar cannot yet fully undertake the essential competencies of comprehensive piano teaching and musicianship. The common problems are students' lack of interest in music, a majority of piano teachers are not qualified enough, and the tuition system in Myanmar education offers less piano practice time for the students. Parental involvement is also currently very weak in Myanmar, but parents can help with their children's piano studies by understanding how important their role is. This thesis offers various recommendations to enable piano teachers in Yangon/Myanmar to improve the level of their teaching.

**KEY WORDS: PIANO PEDAGOGY/ YANGON/ MYANMAR**

115 pages

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background and Significance of the Research**

Art is a term that describes human creativity. The Oxford dictionary defines art as “the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power” (Stevenson, 2010). The learning of art helps people to develop their artistic imagination, mental, and physical development. Moreover, through art, humanity expresses profound emotions such as love, sorrow, sadness, and triumph. The development of art reflects the progress of humanity.

Among the arts, music is one of the most important and is crucial for all of humanity. Music cannot be separated from the human condition and, likewise, music plays a pivotal role in the history of mankind. Not only have people used music to express their love, grieving, misery, and happiness, but also to celebrate cultural movements and to support activities of our daily lives, such as supporting agriculture and harvesting activities. In addition, music is used for the purpose of political advocacy, such as patriotic songs, conformity, and to encourage strength on the battlefield, marching and celebrating triumph. Music is also an essential part of a person’s basic education (Songsakul, 2003).

There is no doubt that music education is a vital component of all societies. Ample research has identified the importance of music education. For instance, in 1967, fifty musicians, scientists, educators, philosophers, heads of labor organization groups, theologians, and representatives from all sectors of United States government participated in a symposium at Tanglewood.

At the conclusion of the conference they affirmed their collective belief in the importance of the value of studying of music in public education and asserted that school music programs should be global in scope. They affirmed that “the school

music curriculum should have belongs all periods, styles, form, and culture. The musical repertory should be used up to involve music of present time, comprising current popular teen-age music, avant-grade music and incorporating of American folk music and music of other country” (Goble, 2010:1).

The 1999 Arts Curriculum of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts identified that through music, students become fluent in the language of music, intellectual, artistic, and cultural expression. Fluency in music brings understanding of contemporary and historical cultures, as well as self-knowledge. In the state of Virginia, their 2006 Music Standard of Learning for Public School policy identified that students will examine various cultural perspectives and the factors that shape aesthetics. By viewing and evaluating the works of musical artists, student will become aware of the contribution of music to the quality of the human experience.

Unlike other Southeast Asian countries, Western music education does not have an extensive history in Burma/Myanmar. Myanmar was an isolated country and was ruled by the military junta from 1962-2011. During this period Myanmar faced many challenges. Thein Lwin’s (2002) document analysis of the Burma education system (1945-2000), showed that Western art music was not a facet of the primary, secondary, or high school music education curricula. According to Onishi and Young (2012:219), since there were no conservatories or ensembles of Western music available for training, Myanmar has very few gifted children in music. Even though there were some primary and secondary State School of Arts in Yangon and Mandalay, they mainly taught Burmese traditional music, arts, and theater. There was no record of high performance standards or involvement in performance competitions for Western art music in string, piano, or wind instruments.

Despite its neglect in the formal curriculum and public education system, the society of Myanmar has become increasingly more aware of Western music. In the past, Myanmar society did not show much interest in music education. In the present, people have become appreciably more aware of music education. Not only have children shown interest in learning music, but parents have become increasingly supportive of their children learning to play musical instrument such as the piano, violin, guitar, etc. In addition, Myanmar politics has changed and has become more open than in previous decades. There are many musical concerts, pop singing

competitions; Western classical music programs such as workshops and performances by foreign guest artists. In addition, there are many private music learning centers and music stores that are open, taking more active roles than in previous decades.

Since World War I, Myanmar has incorporated many Western musical instruments into Myanmar traditional music. These include the piano, slide guitar, mandolin, banjo, and the violin. Even though Western musical instruments have been employed since World War I, their use has been restricted to the playing of Burmese traditional music. As Burmese traditional music is an oral tradition that does not employ music notation, their approaches for learning, training, and playing differ from Western classical training techniques.

The piano has been successfully employed in both Burmese traditional and Western art music. When compared with other instruments, the piano seems to be more an attractive instrument, with its sounds and appearance, enticing to younger audiences and students. Another reason is its value in society and its increase in popularity. While the piano teaching of Burmese traditional music is fairly well established, Western piano teaching and learning lags behind other Asian countries. Although there are some private music centers that offer western classical piano lessons, it has been a struggle to develop and demonstrate a high international standard of performance until recently.

In light of the aforementioned facts, this thesis serves to examine the development of piano teaching and teaching process in Yangon/Myanmar; focusing on the piano pedagogy employed by contemporary Myanmar piano teachers. The results of this research will identify the relative strengths and weaknesses of piano pedagogy in Myanmar, and serve to support piano teachers by offering advice to help improve future piano teaching.

## **1.2 Objective of the Research**

1. To study piano teaching in Yangon /Myanmar.
2. To study and gain a comprehensive understanding of current piano teaching pedagogies.

3. To study the challenges and obstacles of piano teaching and learning in Yangon/Myanmar.

### **1.3 Expected Benefits**

1. Develop a comprehensive understanding of current piano teaching that can be shared with piano teachers of Yangon, Myanmar.

2. Identify areas of instruction not fully covered in current piano teaching methods and offer innovative approaches to remove barriers and promote new teaching approaches for the future.

3. Expand the understanding of the lesson plan development, creation of materials, and teaching preparation to support effective piano instruction.

4. Become a more skilled educator.

5. The result of this research will be used as information for others teaching piano in Yangon, Myanmar.

### **1.4 Limitation**

1. Key informants of this research are the piano teachers who possess not less than 10 years teaching experience and also currently teaching piano in Yangon. This study explores piano pedagogy in Yangon. The researcher focuses on the piano teaching process in Yangon, the quality of piano instruction, and the obstacles and problems impacting piano teaching in Yangon, Myanmar. A wide range of teachers chosen from different music teaching centers, schools, college and independent piano teachers in Yangon.

### **1.5 Definition**

1. **Piano pedagogy** is an art of professional teaching of piano in classroom, school, private and group lessons that can nurture a well-rounded musician for individual piano students.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Music in Myanmar**

An introduction to the history of music education in Myanmar is presented in the following sections:

- 2.1.1. A Brief History of Myanmar Traditional Music
- 2.1.2. The First Piano in Myanmar
- 2.1.3. Western Music Education in Myanmar

##### **2.1.1 A Brief History of Myanmar Traditional Music**

Myanmar traditional music is one of the least known of Asian music. The earliest records concerning Myanmar traditional music can be found in the Chinese annals of the Tang dynasty. In 802 A.D., the king of the Pyu Kingdom (now Myanmar) sent thirty-five musicians to the Tang dynasty capital, Yang-chao. Those musicians were warmly received, greatly appreciated, and welcomed at the court. The Phu musicians performed twelve Buddhist songs, and their 14 different types of instruments played at this event were recorded by the Chinese chroniclers (Becker, 1967, p .18).

Myanmar traditional music is an orally-transmitted repertoire that differs greatly from Western music. It has a regular pulse (or beat), but no harmony, and contains musical features of music from other countries, such as India, China, and Thailand (Min Kyi, n.d). Chalermkit Kengkeaw, Jarernchai Chonpairot, Chalermasak Pikulsri(2013) stated that in 1788, during the Konbaung dynasty, Myanmar musicians adopted Thai music and completed the translation and transcription of Thai word to Myanmar words, without changing the original melody, tone, or rhythms.

Throughout its history, Myanmar traditional music usually accompanies theatrical performance, plays, religious festivals, as well as the singing of songs and opera. Myanmar traditional instruments are divided into five categories such as *kyei*,

*kyo*, *thay-ye*, *lei*, and *let-kop*. The families of *kyei* instruments are made of brass or metal, the *kyo* family use strings, the *thay-ye* group of instruments are made from leather, the *lei* group of instruments is wind instruments, made of wood and bamboo, and the *let-kop* instruments are percussion instruments (Kengkeaw, Chonpairot & Pikulsri, 2013). In addition, some Western musical instruments can be found in Burmese traditional music. Since World War I, Western musical instruments are adopted in Burmese traditional music. The Western musical instruments such as piano, slide guitar, mandolin, banjo and the violin instruments have been incorporated into Burmese traditional music, and play combined with Burmese traditional instruments. Burmese musicians and people have also accepted these Western instruments as part of the Burmese traditional instruments.

Burmese classical music is commonly called "Maha Gita" (great or royal song) and is also known as "Thachin Gyi" (great song). The term Thachin Gyi refers to all repertoires of Burmese classical music. In Thachin Gyi, there are different types of songs such as *kyo*, *bwe* and *thachin-khan* (the oldest repertoires), *pat pyo* (royal court music), *lwan chin* (songs of longing), *myin gin* (hourse dance music), *nat chin* (spiritual worship music), *yodaya* (music from Ayutthaya), *talaing than* (music adopted from Mon people) and *bole* (songs of sorrow).

There are two types of ensembles that play Thachin Gyi, which are Hsaing ensemble and the refined-style ensemble. The Hsaing ensemble consists of 6 to 10 players and the instruments are *maung-hsaing* (gong circle), *kyi-waing* (gong frame), *chaut-lone-pat* (six drums set), *pat-wine* (drum circle that lead the whole *hsaing* ensemble), *se* (cymbals) and *wa* (clappers) and *hnae* (a double-reed woodwind instrument). The refined-style music is duet or trio playing. In refined-style music, one or two instruments support the vocalist. The vocalist is the most important in the group and sings the main melody. Usually, the vocalist plays the *si* (cymbals) and *wa* (clappers) while singing to be able to control the metric cycle (Lu, 2009:258).

Myanmar (Burmese) culture and music developed until the reign of King Mindon Min (1853-1878). Burma engaged the British Empire and faced three times conflict (in 1824, 1852 and 1885). These conflicts led to Anglo-British wars and Burma came under British sovereignty. Many of Burma's natural resources, cultures,

traditions, and arts disappeared during this period of colonization (Miettinen Jukka, n.d).

### **2.1.2 The First Piano in Myanmar**

Kit Young identifies the first piano to arrive in Myanmar/Burma was during the period of King Mindon at Mandalay (1850's-1870). That piano was given to the King Mindon by the Italian ambassador as a present and the king instructed one of his court music ministers to play it. Piano is called "Sandaya" in Burma language. U Thein Maung (traditional pianist, composer) suggests two speculative derivations for the word "sandaya." The first part of the word suggests the word "se", which mean "machine". The remainder of the word "yandaya" means "complicated parts". According to the etymology, the second suggests was offered as "san de wa wa" or 'feeling around with one's hand like a blind person' which the court musicians did in Mandalay and Ava when the piano first arrived (Kit Young: n.d).

Although the piano was not a Burmese traditional instrument, the piano became an important instrument in Burma in the years shortly before World War II. During the peak of silent films in Burma, the piano became increasingly more visible to the public; however its repertoire was restricted to Burmese traditional musics. Such pianos were re-tuned to match the Burmese tuning system (Garfias, 1995). Even though the piano was an imported Western instrument, the Burmese musicians played the instrument with their own approach, independent of typical Western playing styles and techniques. This unorthodox piano technique originates from preexisting Burmese traditional instrument performance practices for two instruments: the "*patala*," which is play by two mallets, and the "*patt waing*," which is play by two hands (Garfias, 1995). While the piano is a Western instrument, some contemporary Burmese musicians continue to use it for traditional music. This usage has led to its emergence and acceptance as a very important and pivotal instrument of Burmese traditional music today.

### **2.1.3 Western Music Education in Myanmar**

Over the span of the nineteenth century there were three significant Anglo-Burmese conflicts in 1824-26, 1852, and 1885. In 1885, the Burmese king was

deposed and exiled to India. At that time Burma was under the rule of the British Empire, governed as a province of British India (Thein Lwin, 1999). Years later, foreign musical instruments such as the piano, violin, mandolin, Hawaiian slide guitar, Chinese lute, and banjo were introduced and subsequently became absorbed into Myanmar traditional music (Kit Young. n.d). In addition, Western musical instruments were combined with traditional instruments to play incidental music for silent movies. Despite the extensive use of Western musical instruments, education in Western music traditions was not a part of the formal public school education curriculum until very recently.

Onishi and Young's "Western music education in post-world war II Burma/Myanmar," as found in "Musical childhoods of Asia and the Pacific" are among the first published scholarship concerning Western music education in Myanmar (2012). Summarizing their central comments, although Myanmar achieved independence from the British Empire in 1947, most of the British educational structures of the colonial period remained unchanged in the Myanmar education system. At that time, the primary and secondary schools were governed by various Christian missionaries and staffed by Burmese teachers who graduated from the British teacher's colleges. In 1950s, the government U Nu opened schools for lower-income families to give them access to more educational opportunities at institutions that permitted a diverse range of religions. During the period of the Ne Win government (1962-1988), churches, string ensembles, and church choirs were not permitted in the government schools. Since that time Western music ceased to be a component of public education in Myanmar. Among all Myanmar people, Christian Karan are the most experienced in Western music (Lum, Whiteman: 2012).

With no conservatories or ensembles of Western training, neither instrumental nor secular choral, Myanmar had very few opportunities to expose or teach young children to Western music traditions (Onishi, Young, 2012). One exception to this was University of Culture in Yangon and Mandalay where the students are taught the fine arts, including theater, art, and music. In Yangon, some of the international schools have modest music programs, such as the Yangon International Education Center, Network Primary School, Yangon International School (YIS), International School of Yangon, Modern Language Center, International

Language and Business Center (ILBC), and Horizon Kindergarten; although their tuition fees are prohibitively expensive, affordable only for the wealthy. In addition, the Myanmar Institute of Theology and the Judson College Baptist Youth Conference offer music courses, but predominantly for a Christian fellowship in Yangon. Unlike other South-East Asian countries, Myanmar did not have venues popularizing Western music styles such as pop, rock, jazz, or classical music; as well as a general lack of organized groups, resulting in classical music concerts that fail to attract audiences (Lum, Whiteman, 2012:219).

There was one more private music school, Gitameit Music Center, which has exclusively taught music since 2003 in Yangon. Learning musical notation, sight-singing, instrumental (such as piano, violin, and guitar), and choral music was offered at the Gitameit Music Center. Moreover, compulsory subjects included, listening class, dictation class, how to use the library, how to use the internet, and how to make sight-reading a daily practice to develop a good habit for the young music learners. Kit Young, the founder of Gitameit Music Center, brought in many guest musicians and made workshops at Gitameit Music Center, to be exposed to various kinds of music and genres from all around the world, to Myanmar people who are aspiring in music and art.

## **2.2 Approaches to Music Education**

There are various methods and approaches to teach music. The most widely used music teaching approaches are the Dalcroze (eurhythmic), Kodaly, Orff and Suzuki methods.

### **2.2.1 Dalcroze Eurhythmic Approach**

The Jaques-Dalcroze approach is a method of using the body to learn music and also known as Dalcroze Eurhythmics, and was developed in the early 20th century by Swiss musician, educator Emile Jaques-Dalcroze. This approach puts emphasis on rhythm, creative body movements, improvisation and aural perception to express the various elements of music (Churchley, 1967:46). The Dalcroze approach includes three elements eurhythmics, solfege, and improvisation.

Eurhythmics refers to musical expression through movement, and developing musical skill through kinetic exercises. Spontaneous body movements (steps, claps, taps, swings, and arm gestures, etc.) are used in eurhythmics class, in order to explore and learn the notions of space, duration, weight and speed or rhythm and structure by listening to music.

**Solfege:** The term Solfege means a song without words and is mostly used for vocal training. Solfege is used for teaching the connection between what is heard and what is written. Through solfege, students can write melodies, rhythms and harmonies by ear moreover, students can translate the written music into sounds by seeing at first sight (sight-singing). Solfege learning improves the mental ability (inner hearing) hear the exact sound without the help of instrument and voice. Dalcroze tends to develop the inner hearing: the ability to hear rhythms, intervals, phrasing and dynamic nuances of music mentally when reading music. Through solfege, students can develop the ability to improvise, and compose melodies vocally (Juntunen, 2004:28).

**Improvisation:** Improvisation is an important part in Dalcroze class. The students improvise with instruments, full-body movement and singing along with ostinato patterns. It is better to teach with a small group in teaching improvisation, and improvisation does not need to be complicated to be effective, but students need to improvise many styles, sounds, colors and movements.

### **2.2.2 Kodaly Approach**

The Kodaly method was developed by Zoltan Kodaly (1882-1967), Hungarian music educator, composer and ethnomusicologist. The voice is the main musical instrument in the Kodaly method. In the Kodaly method, teachers acquire conducting skills and excellent musicianship. The Kodaly method consists of rhythm, solfege, sight-reading, singing, listening and writing, dictation, performing and creating music.

**Singing:** tuneful singing is the most important concept and foundation of the Kodaly method. Every student possesses a voice and can be taught to sing. Singing helps to develop children's aural skills, and singing should be taught before teaching other formal instrumental lessons.

Repertoire: repertoires should be mother-tongue folk songs or traditional children's songs and games that include the basic rhythmic and melodic building blocks of music.

Reading and writing: reading and writing is vital component in the Kodaly method and teachers use a variety of tools to develop these skills. In the Kodaly method, relative solmization, moveable *do* is used. Moveable *do* means, if the tonic note is *do* in major and *la* in minor. Hand signs are used for the student to visualize whether the tone is going up or down. Rhythm syllables are also applied in this method. The Kodaly method follows a set of sequence, and the musical concepts and teaching materials are based on teachers' experience and student's age (Houlahan & Tacka, 2015).

### **2.2.3 Orff Approach**

The Orff method is a creative music and movement approach developed by German composer Carl Orff (1895-1982) and his colleague Gunild Keetman during 1920s. The concepts of the Orff approach are learning music through singing, dancing, movement and playing Orff instruments such as glockenspiel, xylophone, metallophone, and drums. Firstly, Orff focused on natural behaviors to make music. The simple percussion instruments and also body percussion are used to build upon human natural singing voice (Cunha & Carvalho, 2012). The Orff approach does not follow a particular order and has no prescribed repertoire of pieces that teachers need to follow. The Orff approach (Long, 2013) consists of the following elements:

Observation: The students observe music, instruments, video, teacher and other students, and watching and observing someone doing something in the class.

Imitation: The teacher gives the pattern and lets the student imitate simultaneously, which is rhythmic speech, singing, body percussion. Playing instruments and movements can developed their basic musical skills. Some students may imitate easily, some may overlap, and some are delayed.

Exploration/ Experimentation: Let the students explore the possibilities they can find with their body in both sound and movement, so that students can feel their own personal musicianship rather than copying the teachers' musicianship.

**Improvisation/Creation:** Students improvise a melody or rhythm by using Orff instrumentarium, accompanying the spontaneously pattern given by teacher or the pattern they created on their own.

**Independence:** Students find the ability to improvise, analyze, and communicate on their own.

**Literacy:** Let the student read, write and learn from their own compositions.

Overall, the main idea of the Orff approach is to develop students' intellectual and artistic abilities first and letting the students explore about musical concepts, elements, the body and movements before literacy is studied.

#### **2.2.4 Suzuki Approach**

The Suzuki method was developed by Shinichi Suzuki after the end of World War II. Dr. Suzuki was born in Japan in 1898. He was a violinist and started to play the violin when he was young adult. Later, he went to Germany and continued his violin studies with Karl Klingler. He observed that children who are born German households naturally speak the German language very fluently with great accuracy. In the same manner, the children who are born in Japanese households naturally speak Japanese language very fluently. It is because children are surrounded by these language sounds from birth. Although infants cannot speak, they have the ability to learn to speak. If infants can learn such a complicated language, they surely can also learn music in the same way. The Suzuki method is based on a single idea called the mother tongue approach (Bigler & Lloyd-Watts, 1979).

As a child, we learn to speak by listening and repeating words from parents. In the same way, children can be nurtured with a good music sense by surrounding music. Listening should come first as a daily habit and imitation follows later. In listening, a parent does not need to force the children to listen to the music, but lets them stay freely and do what they want. Although the children do not pay special attention to the music, they can easily perceive the music. According to the Suzuki philosophy, children should be exposed to music from birth, and the parent's involvement is very important in the Suzuki approach. Parents and teacher should work together to help the student to achieve a common goal.

### **2.3 Pedagogical Considerations of Fundamental Piano Teaching**

The meaning of piano pedagogy is an art of professional piano teaching in classrooms, schools, private and group lessons. The study of piano teaching and teaching training in the area of piano teaching can nurture a well-rounded musician for individual piano students. Tayrattanachai (2014) summarized the importance of piano pedagogy in her research. Piano pedagogy is a field to develop professional piano teachers, and provide expertise as an excellent piano teacher in their teaching career. Moreover, piano teachers can be trained systematically to be able to solve the problems. Since piano pedagogy is an educational field, it should have a specific purpose when teaching and learning.

Jacobson (2006:9) said “awareness of good teaching characteristics and of the values of music study helps teachers define a personal teaching philosophy”. Jacobson revealed that some of the piano teachers are more aware of product rather than process. A good piano teacher accommodates both product and process by using private lessons. The best piano teaching should be the combination of both product and process oriented approaches by using a group lesson as a supplementary lesson that enhances students’ musical knowledge. The teacher needs to consider the expectations of both parents and students. Some parents want their children to learn piano for the purpose of winning a competition, while others want their children to learn piano for enjoyment, fun, social trends and to know the basic knowledge of music.

Maydwell (2007:5) suggested that piano teachers should have a strong philosophy in music education, because it is personally related to three areas of their life. First of all, piano teachers need to believe that their piano teaching career is important. “Teachers need to be convinced about what they want to achieve and how to achieve it” (Maydwell, 2007:5). She explained that if the piano teachers do not have a strong direction, the teacher will become demoralized because of the isolated nature of the work. If they believe that piano teaching provides one of the most enriching art forms in life, they will overcome difficult times with that belief in mind. Secondly, piano teachers need to have a clear long-term goal. In order to achieve the goal, teachers need to have planned and provide the details of the week-by-week lesson that are made with a sense of purpose. Thirdly, piano teachers can also be a good force for

the community because they can put their perspectives forward on the value of music education if they get a chance in the community.

The level of piano students can be grouped by age and their musical experience. In terms of student age and school year, Uszler, Gordon & Smith (1999) categorized students into five groups as follows:

1. Preschool Students – four through six years old
2. Elementary Students – seven through eight years old
3. Adult Students – slightly older students, nine- or ten years old
4. Intermediate Students – between the ages of ten and fourteen, an adolescent or preadolescent
5. Advanced Students - fourteen and older students

Bestien (1988:13) categorized students into four groups as follows:

1. Young Beginners - Preschool children or the children about age seven
2. Adult Beginners – age 12 and up
3. Intermediate Students - Junior high school ( grades 7, 8, 9)
4. Advanced Students – Senior high school ( grades 10, 11, 12 )

Baker (2004:3) categorized student piano level according to the age of the student.

1. Pre-piano – ages 4 through 6
2. Beginners – ages 7 through 9 or 10
3. Intermediate – ages 9 or 10 through 13 or 14
4. Advanced – ages 14 or 15 through ages 18 to 80!

Typically, the essential competencies of comprehensive piano teaching and musicianship begin with a list of course and those courses can be categorized as follows: (Bastien, 1988:222)

- 2.3.1 Repertoire
- 2.3.2 Technique
- 2.3.3 Sight Reading
- 2.3.4 Music Theory
- 2.3.5 Ear Training
- 2.3.6 Memorization
- 2.3.7 Harmonization and Improvisation
- 2.3.8 Ensemble Playing

### **2.3.1 Repertoire**

In piano teaching, students use method books to learn new concepts and skills, and students also need to learn additional music (repertoire) for reinforcement and motivation (Jacobson, 2006). Maydwell (2007) also recommended that the choice of repertoire must be suitable with student's musical maturity, hand size and technical level. All musical periods, style, genres and composers must be included. Teachers should also ask the student what song or composer he/she wants to play. Sight-reading and listening to recordings are encouraged.

Uszler, Gordon & Smith (1999:151) claim that sometimes students need to learn difficult pieces, assuming self-motivation, but in contrast, too difficult pieces can lead to physical disability and feeling of discouragement. This is why careful, efficient selection and pain-free practice are required. According to Bastien (1988) second year students are ready for easy classical pieces, but may not be ready for serious repertoire until the third year of lessons. The third year student's repertoire should be more demanding, as the pieces are longer and more involved. Intermediate repertoires are slightly more difficult and more difficult for upper intermediate. Choosing repertoire is the most important in music teaching. (Bastien, 1988) The four periods of music and a broad style of musical background should be present in a student's repertoire

### **2.3.2 Technique**

Technique is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as "A way of carrying out a particular task, especially the execution or performance of an artistic work or a scientific procedure". The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defined "technique" as "the method or the details of procedure essential to expertness of execution in any art". Regarding music, Giesecking & Leimer (1972) defined technique as "the controlling the fingers when playing an instrument. Generally, it is used only in a limited sense regarding fluency, rapid execution of difficult passages and steady aim".

Technique is needed to understand because not understanding of technique leads to incorrect practice methods. (Chang, 2007) Chang continues to say that "Technique is the ability to execute a zillion different piano passages; therefore it is not dexterity, but an aggregate of many skills". Bastien (1988:6,169) said "the study of repertoire alone probably will not be sufficient to develop the playing skills needed"

and students should have adequate technique in order to play clean sound, good pedal, tonal balance and appropriate dynamics. According to Bastien, techniques are taught as follows:

a) Beginning Technique

1. Posture and hand position
2. Arm drop, large muscle motions
3. Legato touch
4. Staccato touch
5. Balance of melody and accompaniment
6. Down-up wrist motion for phrasing
7. Legato thirds

b) Second year technique

1. Phrasing legato and staccato combined
2. Balance between hands
3. Dynamic shading
4. Part-playing
5. Scales
6. Triads and inversions
7. Alberti bass

c) Third year technique

1. Finger patterns ( hand position shifts, crossing, broken chord patterns and arpeggio)
2. Finger independence studies
3. Forearm rotation
4. Pedaling
5. Technique studies ( exercises, etudes)

d) Intermediate technique

1. Scales
2. Arpeggios
3. Chords
4. Parallel note passages
5. Trills

## 6. Technique studies

Bastien (1988:6) suggested the following list for technique study:

### 1. Applied Technique

Clementi : Gradus ad Parnassum

Czerny : The School of Velocity, Op. 299 or The Art of Finger Dexterity, Op. 740

Moszkowski: 15 Etudes de Virtuosite

### 2. Pure Technique

Dohnanyi : Essential Finger Exercises

Hanon : The Virtuoso Pianist in Sixty Exercises

Philipp : Exercises for the Independence of the Fingers

Pischna : Sixty Progressive Exercises

Major and minor scales, arpeggios, and broken chords in all keys.

### 2.3.3 Sight Reading

Sight reading can be defined as the ability to play music for the first time without any practice or without benefit of practice. There are two distinct skills in sight reading: the first is a reading skill which the musicians scan and process the printed music, and the second is a mechanical skill, where the performer places his fingers in the right place on the instrument at the right moment (Wolf, 1976).

Tsangari (2010:13) stated Edward Darling's idea in her research that "The failure to learn to sight play is the single most prevalent reason for student dropouts". Sight-reading is considered to be very an important skill for musicians. At the beginner level, sight-reading helps to learn new music quickly. Moreover, it is also important for chamber or orchestra musicians and accompanists. All music teachers need fluent sight-reading abilities to demonstrate musical examples when teaching to the students. The lesson should spend more time on musicality and interpretation rather than spending on correcting notes or rhythms. Moreover, sight-reading encourages musicianship and confidence through familiarity with a variety of repertoires and a range of styles.

Bastien (1988:6) suggested sight-reading should be developed from the beginning stages of lessons and continued through the more advanced levels in order to read the new music easily. Newman (1956:17-22) concluded the principles and methods of sight reading for piano as follows:

1. Sight- reading should be done systematically, with a panorama of literature mapped out in advance.
2. Sight-reading should be done at a tempo that permits at least 80 percent of the notes to be played correctly
3. Looking ahead and quick mental recording of the image are major factors in rapid reading.
4. Without such aids pianists can mainly try consciously to look at least a measure ahead (depending on the tempo) and not simply keep his eyes glued on the staff note he is then playing.
5. A good sight reader will have a sufficient feel for the keyboard so that he does not have to look at the keys themselves as he plays.
6. Join an ensemble because ensemble playing is usually so much fun, socially as well as musically, and once that habit is under way the student rarely needs any further inducement to keep it up.
7. In the moment of sight reading, one must not worry about fingering.

The benefits of sight-reading can overcome the initial difficulties. Once a student can achieve a certain level of sight reading skill, the student can manage the next level material without having much trouble. Moreover, sight-reading helps the student not only to develop facility in playing music at first sight, but also pianistic skill in general (Deutsch, 1959:17).

### **2.3.4 Music Theory**

Music theory is a study of structure behind the music. The purpose of teaching music theory (Bastien, 1988:199) is to make the student musically literate. Most of students have difficulty in memorizing their pieces because they do not know what they are playing. By learning theory, the student can analyze their pieces, such as looking for chord structure, keys, intervals, and modulations, and it will also help when students memorize their pieces. Sight reading, dictation, ear training and

keyboard harmony should be covered when teaching music theory. Systematic theory instruction should be taught to all students, in either private or group lessons.

### **2.3.5 Ear Training**

Ear training is an essential element for both students and musicians. Music is an aural art and a language that is perceived by ear (Fisher, 2010:121). At the beginning stages of teaching, children must play by ear without notation in order to emphasize sound before symbols (Monroy, 2011). Maydwell also recommended for young students to listen to a recording of the song that they are playing, because if the student does not listen to the recording, they are not able to understand what the teacher criticizes when they make mistakes (Maydwell, 2007:170).

A musician's finger movements should be under control by ears and inner hearing is most important. A musician should be able to sing in their head when their eyes read the music notation. The goal of ear training is to recognize the music elements such as rhythm, pitch and harmony (Kasemnukulreerk, 2006).

Fisher (2010:121) stated that there are four fundamental elements that are perceived by ears, which are pitch, duration, intensity and quality of sound. Students are able to match pitches, differentiate high and low, and identify the direction, such as steps, skips and repeats. Moreover, students are able to identify the names of intervals both ascending and descending. Students must have an ability to feel a steady pulse, the value of the sound such as how short or how long, both aurally and physically. In addition, students are able to differentiate rhythmic pattern and the quality of the sound such loudness, softness, richness, brightness, brittleness and harshness, warmth and the intensity of the sound.

### **2.3.6 Memorization**

Chang (2007:104) said "advanced pianists must play from memory because of the high level of technical skill that is expected" and "non-memorizers may need the sheet music in front of them for psychological support and small cues here and there". Bastien (1988:245) explained that memorizing means playing music by heart without looking at the music score. Playing by memory is one of the most crucial skills for all musicians. Students or musicians must practice their piece systematically

for over a period of time in order to learn their piece thoroughly. He suggested correct practice procedures for memorization as follows:

- Slow and careful practice
- Attention to detail (tempo, phrasing, articulation, dynamic, fingering, etc.)
- Learning the form of the piece
- Developing the correct kinesthetic (muscular) reflex necessary for a secure performance
- Understanding the harmonic structure of the piece
- Mental practice
- Playing on hand and mining the other

Student needs to consider while practicing not just playing the notes by kinesthetic (muscular) but analysis of the harmonic structure of the piece. Once the music is correctly learned, students can benefit from correct practice and will know exactly where the hands are going and where the hands should go next on the keyboard. Mental practice, in which one learns the piece mentally away from the instrument, is also greatly effective for memorizing pieces.

In terms of memorizing the piece, Scionti (1998:107) recommended to study each measure first, and fingering, time, rhythm and touch. After that, try to play grouping two or four measures together that are related by dynamics, phrasing and pedaling, and mind the shape and expression while playing. Harmonic analysis is strongly recommended for memorization and should be studied seriously. This can help the performer to see the composition in its complete structure in their mind with no fragments. In addition, playing each hand alone measure by measure is very beneficial for memorizing difficult and complicated parts. Scionti (1998:108) summarized that the best way for memorization is to use head work rather than hard work, which is playing many times with carelessness. The more the performer can prepare as detailed as possible, the better the result will be gained.

### **2.3.7 Harmonization and Improvisation**

Students need to learn both harmonization and improvisation in order to develop their creativity. In harmonization teaching, a student is assigned a melody to

be harmonized and potential chords are given to harmonize. In addition, key transposition is also covered when teaching harmonization. For improvisation, students can improvise with the teacher and partners help. The partner plays ostinato, waltz bass or alberti bass and the students improvise.

### **2.3.8 Ensemble Playing**

Ensemble playing is vital skill for all musicians. By playing duets, duos, quartets and accompanying for other instruments, students can gain limitless benefits (Fisher, 2010). Playing with teacher accompaniments, piano duet or duo, accompanying for other instruments such as violin, flute, cello, etc., are considered ensemble playing. Jacobson (2006:261) concluded the advantages of ensemble playing are as follows:

- Aural - Intense listening while playing music with others.
- Rhythm - Students can maintain a steady beat and moving forward even when they make mistakes.
- Harmony – Students’ listening will develop
- General musicianship – Ensemble playing contributes to a student’s general musicianship
- Social interaction – Ensemble playing provides a social interface for students

There are teaching and learning instructions that are suggested by Jacobson (2006:262) for teaching ensemble playing. They are:

- The ensemble piece should be less difficult than the student’s solo piece
- Teacher parts must be played musically as a model for the student
- Teacher must provide musical playing, singing, body movement and signal in order to play more musically for the student
- Students are encouraged to listen to the other part
- Students should rehearse together when they learn their individual parts.

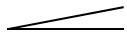
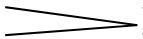
- Teachers should determine if students are ready to play together or not  
Ensemble playing can be a great opportunity for students of all ages, mainly for the peer-minded students who need opportunities to interact musically with friends. (Uszle, Gordon & Smith ,1999)

## 2.4 The Method of Piano Teaching

According to Walter Robert (Agay: 2012) there are four ways of teaching piano which are Criticism, Demonstration, Analysis, and Inspiration.

### 2.4.1 Criticism

In most piano lessons, the student plays and performs the music in a private teaching room and the performance is criticized by the instructor (teacher). The teacher judges the student's performance, whether the student playing is good, needs more practice, more articulation, dynamic or expression. The student performance may stop or pause often; a good method is interrupting and correcting every mistake while the student makes mistakes. But if the performance is reasonably fine, then teacher should keep listening, and suggestion and corrections will be provided after the performance is done. And teacher needs to mind not only criticizing but also the importance of stopping criticizing when the student is playing.

Teachers need to criticize both good and bad performances of student playing. In addition, teachers should not give a favor to the student by saying, such as very good, excellent, perfect, etc. Walter Robert suggested that teachers should use remarks such as "It does not have enough profile", "It should sound more brilliant" and "Your playing lacks depth", etc. Some criticisms will be written on the top of the music score by the teacher, and some criticisms will be lectured verbally. If the teacher wants to explain in more detail, the symbols can be used to make it more clear and obvious when the criticism are written on the music score, circle for wrong note and notes, pedal marks (a line under a certain place), crescendo (  ), decrescendo (  ) and accent (^) etc. Teachers can use any symbols and marks to express his/her point of view that are easy to understand for the student.

Another way of teaching criticism which was developed by violinist pedagogue Carl Flesch, which is that a student plays the song while he sat in the distance. There are two music sheet copies, one for the student and one for the teacher. The student plays from an unmarked copy and the teacher records and marks his copy. In the copy, musical illustrations and details of musical suggestions will be written by the teacher, and the student will use that record for the next lesson. The next lesson, the marks and illustrations are erased.

Another way of criticism is tape recording. The teacher criticizes the student performance while the student is performing and the explanation of the teacher's suggestions, advice about the student's playing will be recorded by tape recorder, so that the student can listen to his previous performance when he practices next time and improves his performance.

#### **2.4.2 Demonstration**

Teaching by demonstration can be described as a traditional piano teaching method that most piano teachers mainly used since long ago. There are two methods of demonstration in piano teaching. The first method is the teacher plays the song or part of a song very slowly or in tempo to the student in order to perceive a way of expressing the song such as the rhythmic pulse or the mood of the song, etc. The teacher plays very skillfully, playing the song with no mistakes by playing in different way. After that, the student imitates the teacher's playing without any question and the student masters it. The teacher must have a very high level of skill, if the student is an advanced student. The second method of demonstration is the teacher applied a record of a song that had been published. The advance student is assigned to listen to that record of the song with the purpose of understanding the music, but there are some considerable uncertainties about whether the student has ability to hear the important parts of the song or not. The teacher should demonstrate the song very slowly, each hand alone, part playing and the use of fingering as well.

For a beginner student, the teacher should play the whole songs for the student in order to become familiar with the pieces. For advanced level students, the teacher does not need to play all of it. But a teacher must have the potential to play the

pieces. The teacher should not assign the pieces that he/she does not know well and has never played.

### **2.4.3 Analysis**

Students need to analyze their piece such as playing individual parts rather than playing every part of the song, correct playing of notes, key, harmonic progression and chord, dynamic, articulation, phrasing, the use of fingering, and hand alone playing. Then, try to break down the piece into small sections, finding and choosing the right fingering and motions. The teacher needs to try to communicate with the student musically rather than talking too much. Analysis will develop the student's creativity, confidence, appropriate movement of hands and fingers, technical freedom and self-discipline.

### **2.4.4 Inspiration**

In the inspiration method, a student is able to play the piece correctly and in an approximate tempo. Then the teacher acts like a conductor. The teacher plays along with the student and count out loud or sings the melody. The student plays the right hand and the teacher plays the left hand, or the student plays the left hand and the teacher plays the right hand. The teacher gives the signal or any other meaning, such as loud, soft, crescendo, etc..., which are already understood mutual agreed by the teacher and the student.

Nararak (2006:20) summarized these four teaching methods, saying that an experience teacher instinctively knows those four teaching methods: Criticism, Demonstration, Analysis and Inspiration. The teacher may use one of those methods or two or more methods mixed together for teaching. But the teacher should not be limited to only one of those methods in teaching; all of four methods must be used.

## **2.5 Piano Learning Styles**

In piano playing, each student learns differently. In terms of piano learning, there are three kinds of learning. They are visual, auditory and tactile/kinesthetic learning (Garcia, 2002 & Jacobson, 2006: 33).

- **Visual:** A visual learner thinks images and converts information into pictures. Reading, writing and looking at pictures is the best way of learning for visual learners. As a piano student, those people tend to be good at sight-reading. When they play piano or memorize the piece, they may need to watch their hands and look at the score and scan with their eyes, but they probably unable to sing what they just played. They may have trouble in memorizing the music and also difficulty in playing expressively. For young learners, using flashcards and worksheets are more effective.

- **Auditory:** Auditory students learn best by listening or hearing. They can easily remember what the teacher says or plays. They may like to play the song by closing their eyes and listening to their playing. In addition, they would enjoy playing the song by guessing what notes or chords come next rather than reading notes. They prefer to play the song by their own version, and notes or rhythms may slightly change when they play.

- **Tactile/kinesthetic:** These people learn through their sense of touch and body. They are better at learning by doing activities with their entire body and manipulating objects. Teaching like game format using materials is more beneficial for them. They tend to like dance or athletics. As a piano student, they are the ones who keep playing the same piece over and over again.

Piano teachers need to know each student's learning style and what kind of learning style they should use for each student. Teachers also need to understand themselves. Teachers need to beware of their own dominant learning and teaching style. A visual teacher may insist auditory students to read the notes before hearing it, and an auditory teacher may teach a kinesthetic student more by ear rather than teaching by demonstration and rote. Therefore, if the teacher cannot use the right teaching style for each student, the teaching will be less successful than expected. Some students may need a combination of learning styles.

## **2.6 Notes Reading Methods in Piano Teaching**

According to the Oxford dictionary, "method" is defined as "a way of doing something" or "a particular procedure for accomplishing or approaching something, especially a systematic or established one". In piano teaching, the function

of a method book is a plan of systematic progression to impart a logical advancement in learning concepts and skills in teaching. Methods books are pivotal for initial development of strong reading skills and delay reading skills until later. Many piano teachers rely on method books for the first two or three years of instruction for their beginner students. Choosing the appropriate method book is very important for piano teachers. Some experienced teachers have their own devised methods based on their own background and education. But for inexperienced teachers, they need to consider what method is appropriate and will meet the needs of each student (Jacobson, 2006).

Piano lessons are taught by various kinds of "methods", and piano teachers have their own favorite method for their students depending on individual preferences. Most popular note reading methods are categorized as follows:

2.6.1 Middle C Method

2.6.2 Multi key Approach

2.6.3 Intervallic Approach

2.6.4 Eclectic Approach

### **2.6.1 Middle C Method Approach**

The Middle C method is the most traditional method and has been widely used for centuries. Most teachers grew up with the middle C method. According to Bastien (1988) the middle C method was made by John Thompson's, *Little Fingers to Play*, published by the Willis Music Company in 1936. The Middle C method has been strongly established in the U.S.A. for many years.

The middle C method is based on middle C. Students place both thumbs on middle C and play little melodies, while simultaneously learning notation and rhythm. Every note has provided the finger numbers and the keys of the pieces are limited C, G and F. Later on, intervals, chord structure, transposition, harmonization, the order of sharps and flats, and key signatures are introduced step by step. (Bastien, 1988).

The first pitch taught in middle C reading approach is middle C. Both of the thumbs share middle C. Middle C is easy to recognize for the beginner student since the note is a ledger line note between two staves. Later students are introduced to the rest of the notes, one at a time, by visually memorizing their placement. The

middle C method does not emphasize on the relationship of the white keys to the black keys. (Jacobson, 2006).

### **2.6.2 Multi-Key Approach**

The multi-key approach is very different method to the middle C method that developed by Robert Pace in 1961. The procedure of the multi-key approach is from the whole to the parts. Chord, harmony and transposition are established as concepts and directional reading is learned in the same way and continues the expansion of intervals through the octave. From the beginning, melodies are harmonized by I and V7 chords that can train student's musical experience with the multi-key approach (Monroy, 2011).

Jacobson (2006) explained that in the multi-key approach, students are taught five finger patterns in all major keys within a short period of time. Keys are introduced in groups and the groups are determined by the black and white-key shapes of the tonic triad:

1. Group 1 (C, G and F major) – triads consisting of all white keys.
2. Group 2 (D, A and E major) – triads consisting of white, black, white keys.
3. Group 3 (D-flat, A flat and E flat major) – triads consisting of black, white, black keys.
4. Group 4 (F- sharp, B- flat and B major) – triads consisting of other black- and white-key relationships.

The multi-key method helps the student to learn the entire keyboard not just the white key area but the black key area as well. Students turn out to be comfortable to play in all keys through learning the multi-key approach.

### **2.6.3 Intervallic Approach**

The intervallic approach developed in the late 1950s (Uszler, Gordon & Smith. 1999). The intervallic approach begins with gradual-staff notation. The staff is introduced only one line at a time in order for the student to focus on intervals. Notes are grouped by pattern and note-reading is introduced by contour (direction and

interval). Students are able to concentrate on counting and are free to develop sense of pulse without the full staff (Jacobson, 2006).

The intervallic reading approach helps a student to understand that reading music is like reading a road map. To hear when the students make a mistake, interval recognition needs to be paired with the sound of the intervals. Visual recognition without aural recognition is limited. The aural aspect of the intervallic approach should be encouraged both at the lessons and during group musicianship classes (Camp, 1992).

#### **2.6.4 Eclectic Approach**

The eclectic approach is the method that is a combination of the above methods (Middle C method, Multi-key and Intervallic method).

To conclude, Bastien, (1988, 43-47) suggested that “No one music educator or one set of books has all the answers” and all method books have strengths and weaknesses. Varieties of beginning material are needed for the teacher, in order to select an effective program for every single student. A teacher has the responsibility to help students to become musically literate in fundamentals within a two or three-year time span. Moreover, the teacher needs to be open-minded and look for new or innovative methods for the students. But teachers should not be limited to one method or one author’s course. One method alone will not work well for every student.

In the the reviewed and analysis of surveying repertoire selection and categories by Lu (2012), the piano method books that have been used in the past until now are listed as follows:

1. Elementary Method for the Pianoforte (1860)
2. Practical Method for the Pianoforte(1899)
3. Year by Year (1924)
4. Oxford Piano Course (1928)
5. Bauer Diller Quaile Course (1931)
6. John Thompson Modern Piano Course (1936)
7. Piano Course (1938)
8. John Schaum Piano Course (1945)
9. Michael Aaron Piano Course (1945)

- 10.The ABC of Piano Playing (1946)
- 11.Piano Course for Juniors (1949)
- 12.Leila Fletcher Piano Course (1950)
- 13.Piano Method (1950)
- 14.Piano Course (1953)
- 15.Ada Richter Piano Course (1955)
- 16.Easiest Piano Course( John Thompson, 1955)
- 17.Step by Step (1959)
- 18.Howard Kasschau Piano Course (1959)
- 19.The Pointer System (1959)
- 20.Alfred D'Auberge Piano Course (1960)
- 21.Mark Nevin Piano Course (1960)
- 22.Eric Steiner: Piano Course (1960)
- 23.Piano For Pleasure ( Florence Giriamo, 1960)
- 24.Music for Piano (1961)
- 25.Piano Books for Young Pianists (1961)
- 26.Making Music at the Piano (1962)
- 27.Learning to Play (1962)
- 28.Piano Course (1963)
- 29.Keyboard Explore (1963)
- 30.Belwin Piano Method (1964)
- 31.Music for Piano Students (1965)
- 32.The Irl Allison Piano Library (1966)
- 33.David Carr Glover Piano Library (1967)
- 34.The Albert De Vito Piano Course (1968)
- 35.Piano All the Way (1969)
- 36.A Sensory- Motor Approach to Music Learning (1969)
- 37.Music Through The piano Library (1970)
- 38.John Brimhall Piano Method (1970)
- 39.Discovering the Piano- The Multiple Key Approach (1970)
- 40.Adult Piano Student (1970)
- 41.Suzuki Piano Method (1972)

42. The Very Young Pianist (1970)
43. Creating Music at the Piano (1971)
44. Music for Moppets (1971)
45. The Joy of First-Year Piano: A Method and Repertory for the Beginning Pianist (1972)
46. Mainstream Piano Method (1973)
47. The Music Tree (1973)
48. The Little Avant-Garde (1974)
49. Music Pathways (1974)
50. Creative Keyboard (1975)
51. The Bastien Piano Library (1976)
52. Kinder-Keyboard (1977)
53. The Older Beginner Piano Course (1977)
54. The Young Beginner, The Very Young Beginner, Adult Beginner (1977)
55. The Classical Performer; The Classical Pianist; Classical Patterns (1977)
56. The Russian School of Piano Playing (1978)
57. The Adult Pianist (1979)
58. Artistry at the Piano (1979)
59. The Keyboard Arts Method (1980)
60. Piano Tomorrow Series (1980)
61. Keyboard Musician (1980)
62. Keyboard Strategies: Master Text 1 (1980)
63. The Young Pianist Series (1981)
64. Alfred's Basic Piano Library (1981)
65. Piano: 2nd Time Around ( Bastien, 1981)
66. Sing and Play (1981)
67. Yamaha Music Education System(1981)
68. Bastien Intermediate Piano Course (1982)
69. Alfred's Basic Adult Piano Course (1983)
70. Creative Keyboard for Adult Beginners (1983)

71. Piano Lab: An Introduction to Class Piano (1983)
72. Music Readiness Series (1984)
73. Progressive Class Piano (1984)
74. Bastien Piano Basics (1985)
75. The Complete Piano Player Collection (1985)
76. The Gifted Pianist (1986)
77. Piano For Pleasure (1986)
78. Keyboard Fundamentals (1986)
79. Piano for the Young Beginner (1987)
80. Alfred's Prep Course (1988)
81. David Carr Glover Method for Piano (1988)
82. Contemporary Class Piano (1988)
83. Piano Time (1989)
84. The Well-Prepared Pianist (1991)
85. New Horizons: Piano Course For Busy Adults (1992)
86. Bastiens' Invitation to Music (1993)
87. The Adult Piano Method Play by Choice (1993)
88. My First Piano Adventure (1993)
89. Piano Adventures (1993)
90. Celebration Series (2nd edition, 1994)
91. Group Piano for Adults Book (1995)
92. Hal Leonard Piano Lesson ( 1996)
93. Belwin Complete Adult Keyboard Course (1996)
94. Keyboard Fundamentals (1996)
95. First Impressions- An Intermediate Piano Method (1996)
96. Noona Comprehensive Piano Library (1997)
97. Piano Plan And Simple! (1997)
98. Piano For The Developing Musician (1998)
99. Beanstalk Basics for Piano (1998)
100. Piano 101 (1999)
101. Basic for Piano (1999)
102. Music for Little Mozarts (1999)

103. Piano Discoveries (2001)
104. Celebrate Piano (2003)
105. Music Moves for Piano (2004)
106. Piano Town Method (2004)
107. Alfred's Premier Piano Course (2005)
108. American Popular Piano (2006)
109. Melody Adventures (2006)

## **2.7 Private and Group Piano lessons**

There are two kinds of piano teaching which are individual piano teaching and group piano teaching. An individual or private lesson is a traditional piano teaching that most piano teachers use today, in which a student learns alone with the teacher.

### **2.7.1 Private piano lessons**

According to Bastien (1988:29), there are three types of private lessons: thirty minute lessons, forty-five minute lesson, and hour lessons. He pointed out that since there is no class participation in private lessons, student may lose interest in private lessons after a year later because there is no external motivation that can force the student other than teacher. There are advantages of private lesson which are easier to schedule, the teacher does not need much time to prepare for the lesson, each student can get a full attention of the teacher and teacher and student have more chance and time to discuss the piece.

### **2.7.2 Group piano lesson**

The first group piano teaching started in Dublin, Ireland, around 1815, by the German musician Johann Bernhard Longier. Group piano teaching was introduced to many countries by Longier's students returned home to their respective countries. Even 19<sup>th</sup>-century pianists such as Franz Liszt, Frederic Chopin and Clara Schumann used group piano teaching when they taught their students, which is called a "Master Class" (Fisher, 2010). Maydwell (2007:49) stated that group piano lessons can provide

great benefits such as motivating, students can be taught in a small amount of time, students can listen to one another and give critical feedback, great fun, students are enjoying by playing for their friend, audience and peers, students learn from one another, etc..

In 1982, the International Social of Music Educators met at Bristol, England and stated that group piano teaching can gain a wider range of musical experience, discussion, critical listing, historical contexts, structural analysis and collective decision-making (Fisher: 2010). Teaching a group piano lesson provides a comprehensive music curriculum to many students in less time. Students can also learn one from another. Students can gain a great opportunity from a group piano lesson because they perform with their friends or peers in a nonthreatening environment and get more confidence and less performance anxiety. Moreover, through group lessons, students have the opportunity to learn not only their individual repertoire, but also they can study a wide variety of pieces through listening to their peers' playing.

In group lessons for advanced level students, a teacher can teach two-hour lessons (maximum 4 students) per week, and one-hour lessons (2 students) per week. For younger students, shorter lessons are scheduled (Pace, 1978:2).

## **2.8 Piano Practicing**

Practicing is important for all musicians because they spend most of their time practicing their pieces, learning how to play complicated things, and how to find the best solution for a difficult passage. There are also ample researches, books, interviews and techniques about ways of practicing that are published. There is no doubt that practicing is an integral part for every musician. Practicing is hard work and a very important thing for both music students and musicians that require special study, aptitude and expertise.

Bancroft (2004) stated about practicing that "Practice requires analyzing parts, organizing priorities, creating action plans, making assumptions, reacting to realities and limitations, and reviewing music over and over until it can be performed correctly, or at least as well as possible. Successful musicianship requires regular

practice, and practice should never be used as punishment". There are two kinds of practicing which are active practice and passive practice. Passive practice, which is called the "straight through" approach, means that student plays the music with less awareness of or no regard to the important musical elements such as notes, rhythms, phrasing, form, articulation, dynamic and correct interpretation. The student only plays the music straight through from the beginning to the end. In this kind of practicing, students spend a lot of time on practicing their piece by repeating the same mistakes again and again. After practicing many times, the students become ingrained with the mistakes and the mistakes are very difficult to correct.

Active practice means stopping and spending more time on difficult passages to make a decision and fix up everything before moving on. Technique, phrasing, interpretation and style are considered before playing. If the student practices correctly, this active practice can be applied to any piece of music.

Bastien (1988:124) said that only careful and correct practicing will develop a student's performance such as the mood to perform music, projecting the style, etc. To perform in a correct manner with the right mood, the student needs to practice slowly, hands separate practice, correct fingering, correct hand motions for good phrasing, using metronome and counting aloud while playing.

## **2.9 Parental Involvement in Piano Teaching**

Parental involvement is very important in music learning and especially teaching for young beginners. The term parental involvement means people who take care of children, such as mothers, fathers, grandparents and other members of the family or relatives who are acting as guardians. Parental involvement includes home-based parental involvement, such as listening to children, reading and monitoring homework, and also attending school functions and responding to school obligations, such as parent education workshops and parent-teacher meetings (Hornby, 2011:1). Parents can even take an active role in school. Cotton & Wikelund (1989) believed that "they can take an active role in the governance and decision making necessary for planning, developing, and providing an education for the community's children".

Bastien (1988:101) said “Parental cooperation and periodic supervision is extremely important in maintaining a healthy rapport between all parties concerned—the student, parents and teacher”. Ho (2011) discovered that the attitude and interest are the most significant factors when students learn instrument playing, and parental involvement can help students’ self-perception and self-determination. Parental participation in music activities is encouraged and crucially important for the student’s learning and playing an instrument.

Jacobson (2006:360) pointed out that the success of piano lesson depends not only on the piano teacher, but also on the student and parents. A piano teacher needs to educate and explain the role of parents in the piano learning process. In addition, parents are also responsible for their child to practice piano. Since practicing is vitally important to being successful in piano learning, the parent can make a regular practice time for their child when there is no distraction, possible time to practice and no school work. Parents can also help by giving positive reinforcement for their children, and being supportive and encouraging while their child practices piano.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research topic is a case study exploring piano pedagogy in Yangon, Myanmar. The researcher has chosen to use qualitative research in this study. This research was conducted for the purpose of exploring the piano teaching process, the condition of piano teaching and learning in Yangon, and the problems and obstacles of piano teaching and learning in Yangon, Myanmar. In this research, eight piano teachers were interviewed. Research methods are listed as follows:

- 3.1 Interviewed Samples
- 3.2 Research Instruments
- 3.3 Data Analysis
- 3.4 Data Presentations

#### **3.1 Interviewed Samples**

The research for the case study exploring piano pedagogy in Yangon was conducted by using the qualitative method. This study was done between November 2014 and January 2015. The sources of data were from private music centers, colleges, churches, institutes and independent teachers.

##### **3.1.1 Population**

The population of the research is piano teacher who are working in 12 well-known private music teaching centers, churches, institutes, colleges, universities and independent music teachers in the area of Yangon. These 12 music teaching centers, schools, institutes and independent teachers are listed as follows:

1. Gitameit Music Center
2. Grace Music Institute
3. Legacy Music Academy

4. Do Re Me Music School
5. Kachin Baptist Church (K.B.C)
6. National University of Arts and Culture
7. Karen Baptist Theological Seminary (K.B.T.S)
8. State School of Fine Art
9. Myanmar Institute of Theology (M.I.T)
10. Htay Htay ( Independent piano teacher)
11. Myoe Naing ( Independent piano teacher)
12. Nant Mauleen ( Independent piano teacher)

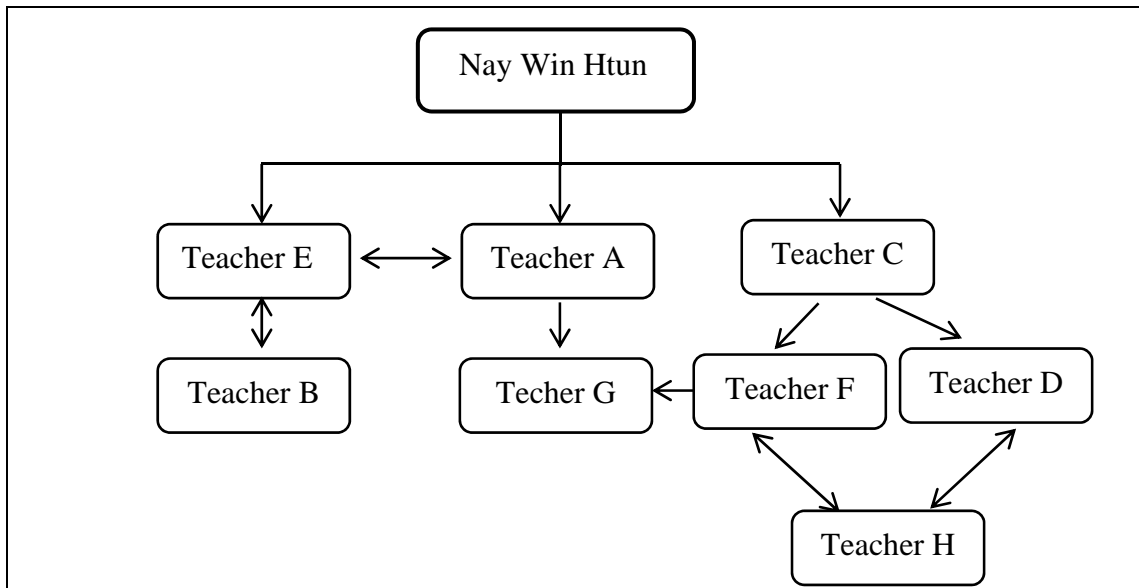
### **3.1.2 Sample**

To acquire the research sample, the snow ball technique was used together with the determination of the selecting criteria.

The criteria are set up as follow:

1. The selected key informants are currently teaching piano in the area of Yangon.
2. The key informant must possess their piano teaching experience not less than 10 years

The researcher first contacted with Mr. Ne Win Htun, the manager of Gitameit Music Center. He was acknowledged as a significant musician in Yangon. From teachers and music centers he mentioned and recommended, the researcher then recruited and followed up to be the next selected key informant and so on.



**Figure 3.1: Snow ball chart of research sample selecting**

From using the snow ball technique and the selected criteria, the research sample used subjectively purposive sampling as a tool for key informants. The size of the sample is comprised of eight persons namely:

Eight piano teachers who provided data

1. Mrs. Htay Htay, independent piano teacher
2. Mr. Marip Naw San, piano teacher, music instructor of Kachin Baptist Church
3. Mr. Moe Naing, piano teacher and principal of Legacy Music Academy
4. Mr. Myoe Naing, pianist, singer and independent piano teacher
5. Mrs. Nant Mauleen, independent piano teacher
6. Ms. Naw Peh Paleh, piano teacher and lecturer of Karen Baptist Theological Seminary
7. Ms. Nyein Lynn Phyu (Olive), piano teacher and head of piano department in Gitameit Music Center
8. Mr. Saw Yawshu Myat Zaw, piano teacher, conductor and lecturer of Myanmar Institute of Theology

### **3.2 Research Instruments and Data Gathering**

In the research for the case study exploring piano pedagogy in Yangon, the qualitative method was used to collect data. Only piano teachers were interviewed to observe and know the current condition of piano teaching and learning in Yangon. The researcher created an interview guide from literature review. The interview questions were checked and evaluated by:

- Dr. Peter G. Fielding
- Dr. Anak Charanyanada
- Proposal committee
- IRB committee

Data gathering was conducted as follows:

3.2.1 Interview guideline questions

3.2.2 Formal and informal direct interaction with individual in a person-to-person interview

3.2.3 Interview was audio recorded

3.2.4 Notebooks were used to write important facts, personal and additional data.

### **3.3 Data Analysis**

Regarding the analysis of data for this research, first the researcher interviewed the participants and audio recorded the interviews. Data from interviews was a main source of analysis. The researcher transcribed the audio records into text and read through the whole interview to get a sense of whole. Then the researcher analyzed the similarities and differences of data from individuals and documents. It emphasized the current piano teaching process, the condition of teaching and learning piano in Yangon and teaching problems, obstacles and obstructions in Yangon, Myanmar.

### **3.4 Data Presentations**

The data will be presented into four parts as follows:

#### 3.4.1 Current piano teaching process

- Piano lesson schedule
- Private and group lesson
- Classifying of piano level
- Notes reading method
- Teaching method
- Supplementary musical activities/ materials

#### 3.4.2 Condition of piano teaching in Yangon

#### 3.4.3 Problems, Obstacles and Obstructions of piano teaching in Yangon

#### 3.4.4 Summary, discussions and suggestions

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **THE RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH**

The research case study exploring piano pedagogy Yangon, Myanmar was conducted by qualitative method by in-depth interview. Eight piano teachers were selected from different music schools, churches and independent teaching. All teachers are currently teaching piano and they all have at least 10 years' experience on piano teaching. The total list of piano teachers is as follows:

1. One piano teacher from Gitameit Music Center
2. One piano teacher from Kachin Baptist Church
3. One piano teacher from Karen Baptist Theological Seminary
4. One piano teacher from Legacy Music Academy
5. One piano teacher from Myanmar Institute of Theology
6. One piano teacher who teach at students' home
7. Two independent piano teachers who teach at their home

Eight piano teachers were interviewed on the following days

Teacher A, personal communication, November 20, 2014

Teacher B, personal communication, November 23, 2014

Teacher C, personal communication, December 4, 2014

Teacher D, personal communication, December 10, 2014

Teacher F, personal communication, December 11, 2014

Teacher G, personal communication, December 20, 2014

Teacher H, personal communication, January 2, 2015

In this chapter, the researcher will not be mentioning a full citation as above. All the information, data and suggestions are only from personal interviews. Therefore, the researcher will cite the reference such as Teacher A (2014), Teacher B (2014) and Teacher C (2014) or (Teacher A: 2014), (Teacher B: 2014) and (Teacher C: 2014).

#### **4.1 Background of Piano Teachers**

1. Mrs. Htay Htay is a 71 year old independent piano teacher. She only teaches piano at her own house and does not work permanent or part-time teaching at other music schools. The classes open daily. She learned piano since she was very young. She was taught by only one teacher in her life. She got a bachelor degree B.Sc. (Hons) Chemistry at Yangon University. She also partially studied piano at Associate Trinity College of Music, and she has passed the grade- eight theory exams from the Royal School of Music (ABRSM). She also studied at Kyoto University of Textile and Dyeing. In the past, she used to have piano recitals for her students once a year. Now, she has been teaching piano for 37 years already.

2. Mr. Marip Naw San is a 49 year old piano teacher, and currently working as an assistant music director at Yangon Kachin Baptist Church (K.B.C). In the past, he used to teach at student's houses as an independent piano teacher. He holds a bachelor degree B.E (Mechanical) from Yangon Technological University. Not only teaching at K.B.C, he also given piano lessons at his home studio. Although he already has experience in teaching piano since at the age of 20, his music teaching career seriously started about 11 years ago.

3. Mr. Moe Naing is 48 years old. He finished his bachelor degree B.Sc. (Geology) from Yangon University. At first, he was a keyboard player, and later he had a chance to study at Payap University and received his first music certificate (Certificated in Music Study and Piano Performance). He also holds other diploma such as Diploma in Applied Geology, Diploma in English. His other music certificates are Certificate in Orchestra Conducting (Baton Technique), Certificate in Choir Conducting and Choir Arrangement. He is a co-founder of Gitameit Music Center and also a director of Gitameit Music Center and Principal at Legacy Music Academy. He also teaches piano playing and has given Music Appreciation Courses at International Language and Business Center (I.L.B.C). He plays not only classical but also pop and jazz music as well. He has been teaching piano for 12 years.

4. Mr. Myoe Naing is 65 years old. He is a very famous pianist and independent piano teacher in Myanmar. He has his own piano studio at his home. Now, he has been teaching piano for 35 years. He started learning piano when he was young. He learned piano by self-studying by reading books and asking his seniors. In

addition, he sometimes sings a song by playing piano at the concert and, sometimes plays accompaniment for other famous singers. He also makes music arrangements.

5. Mrs. Nant Mauleen is 61 years old. In the past, she was a full time piano teacher at Yamaha Music School in Yangon. Now she is an independent piano teacher and she teaches at students' houses. She started learning piano when she was 15 years old. She graduated her degree B.Sc. (Chemistry) from Yangon University. Now, she has been teaching piano for 40 years.

6. Ms. Naw Peh Paleh is 50 year old. She holds a bachelor degree, B.Sc. (Mathematic) and Master degree (Master of Divinity). She holds a bachelor degree of Church Music (B.C.M), Graduate Diploma in Church Music (G.D.C.M), Master of Church Music (M.C.M). Myanmar Cristian Preaching Training College (M.C.P.T.C). She is currently teaching as a lecturer at Karen Baptist Theological Seminary (K.B.T.S). She has experience in piano teaching since she was young, and now she has been teaching piano about 30 years already.

7. Ms. Nyein Lynn Phyu (Olive) is a 30 year-old piano teacher and is head of piano department at Gitameit Music Center. She started to play piano at the age of 16, with Mr. Moe Naing and, later Mrs. Kit Young. Besides, she has taken many piano lessons and workshops from guest pianists and musicians who have come to Myanmar. Since 2004, she began offering piano lessons. Not only teaching piano, she also played accompaniment and performances with foreign guest performers such as duets, trios, quintets and ensembles. She completed her first bachelor degree B.A (English) from University of East Yangon. She passed ABRSM grade 5 theory in 2007. In 2010, her trio ensemble won second prize at the 3rd Singapore Performer's Festival and Chamber Music Competition at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music.

8. Mr. Saw Yawshu Myat Zaw is a 35 year-old piano instructor, conductor and lecturer. He graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Science in 2002 from Yangon University. In 2006, he also received a Certificate of Ethnomusicology. In 2007, he finished his master degree, Master of Arts in Christian Studies (M.A.C.S) from Myanmar Institute of Theology Myanmar. In 2011, he graduated Master of Music in conducting from Silliman University in the Philippines. Now, he is a full

time lecturer at Myanmar Institute of Theology (M.I.T). His piano teaching experience is about 16 years already.

## **4.2 Current piano teaching process**

### **4.2.1 Piano lesson time and schedule**

According to the interviews, it was found that four piano teachers teach their students for one-hour lessons. But the other four teachers teach less than one hour, for example: 30- minute and 45- minute lessons. One of the teachers teaches the students for one-and-a-half hour lessons for those who are advance level. According to the study, depending on student age, some teachers teach only a 30-minute lesson for young beginners and a one-hour lesson for adult beginners. The research found that most of young beginners are taught only 30 or 45 minutes because those young beginners cannot concentrate for one hour straight in a lesson.

From the interviews of eight piano teachers, four piano teachers teach two lessons per week and eight lessons per month for each student. The other four teachers teach only one lesson per week and four lessons per month. The lesson schedules are made up by the teacher and student when they are free and available, but some teachers and students have a fixed schedule for the lesson time and date.

Teacher E said “There is no class limitation for the curious students”. He teaches some students as an informal piano class for those who are very interested in music and very curious in piano learning. Those students do not have a fixed lesson for piano learning but they can ask anytime they have questions and they are allowed to practice piano at school anytime.

According to the interviews, it can be concluded that all piano teachers teach piano lesson for one hour long for adult students. But for very young students, teachers only teach 30 minutes or 45 minutes, depending on their concentration. Most of teachers have problems in making a lesson schedule. Teachers cannot make a fixed lesson schedule because most of students are very busy with their school. Even in international school students, they spend most of their time at school. According to the school policy, students also have to take extra classes like language class, and sport

activities at school. When the school makes up an extra class, students tend to choose that class rather than a piano lesson. Then the piano teacher has to re schedule lesson time for the student. It is suggested to make a fixed lesson schedule for both teacher and student.

#### **4.2.2 Private piano teaching and group piano teaching**

According to interviews, four piano teachers, (Teacher B, C, G: 2014, Teacher H: 2015) do not teach a group lesson but private lesson. The other four piano teachers (Teacher A, D, E, F: 2014) used to teach both a private lesson and a group lesson but a group lessons are rarely taught nowadays. Teacher B (2014) said, "It is difficult to teach students with different ages in group lessons because older students are mostly brighter than younger students". Teachers have a problem even they want to do group lesson because it is difficult to find the right level of students and age to do a group lesson. Teacher G (2014) explained that even when she wants to teach group lessons, students are not able to come at the same time. Moreover, it is very difficult to have the same age and same intelligence.

Teachers (Teacher A, C, F, G: 2014, Teacher H: 2015) agree that teaching a group lesson is very beneficial for the student. Students can both see and hear when another is playing songs. It helps the students to be familiar with the songs although they have not played it yet. Moreover, it is a good practice for those who feel discomfort to perform in front of audiences. It is not only making them confident to perform in public but also they can also learn from each other while teaching group lessons.

According to interviews of all the piano teachers, it can be concluded that some of them want to teach a group piano lesson, but it is difficult for all students to come at the same time for group lesson because all students are busy with school and extra tuitions. In contrast, some piano teachers do not have knowledge about group piano lessons and they misunderstand about group piano lessons, because they think that students must have the same age and piano level for group piano lessons, and they think that group piano lessons are duet playing and ensemble playing. It can cause lack of motivation and inspiration in learning piano for the students, and lack of

competence in each other. If there was no class participation but only private lesson, student lose interest and bore on private lessons and quit learning piano a year later.

#### **4.2.3 Classifying students' piano level**

From the interview of eight piano teachers, it was found that majority of piano teacher categorized the students' level by how he or she can play a solo piece and their musical experience. The teacher checks student hand position, technique and sight reading skill while playing the solo pieces. Then teachers decide what the student's level is, and what method book should be assigned to the students. Students' music level will not be the same as their education level because most children did not have as much of a chance to learn music in the early years as the children in other countries. Usually, there is no reason to assess students' level because most of them are beginners. Some students are in the age range from twenty to forty years old but they are just beginner level.

Moreover, it was discovered most of transfer students' level are considered to be lower than the level they claimed. For instance, some transfer students said they already play from the level IV book, but they cannot even play the level II book (Teacher F: 2014, Teacher H: 2015). The reason is some piano teachers are not qualified to teach piano (Teacher H, 2015). Their competence as a piano teacher is unsatisfactory, and they do not have enough knowledge to teach piano. Some piano teachers even cannot play advanced piano repertoires, but they are giving piano lessons. Therefore, when there was a transfer student from another teacher, it is very tricky for the teacher to categorize the students' level, because most of transfer students play with the wrong hand and body positions, rushing, wrong technique and some cannot even play scales steadily although they are playing book V or advanced pieces. When this problem is encountered, both teacher and student are very disappointed, because the student wants to continue their piano level by playing advanced method books and advanced pieces, but the teacher wants them to play easy repertoires by correcting their bad habits of playing since the student does not have a basic piano skill such as hand position, body position, proper piano technique and musicality.

Teacher E (2015) believed that adult beginner students can absorb more than young learners because their intellectual level is higher than the children. In Myanmar society, most of the people believe that music cannot be learned when the student is already grown up. Although some teachers agree that adult beginners cannot learn the piano, some teachers do not agree with that. Even some teachers asserted that if the teacher teaches them how to read music notes and the students have enough skill at reading notes, adult beginner students can also play piano as well as other piano students. Moreover, adult beginner students pay more attention and concentrate more than young beginner students while teaching.

In conclusion, for categorizing students' piano level in Yangon, it was found that most of the students usually start learning music after they have matriculated and age between 16 and 20. Most of the students complete high school first, and then they start to learn music. Since there was no music in the curriculum in both local and government schools, almost all of the students start to take music lesson at the age of sixteen and twenty years old. There are also some young students between five and ten years old and most of them are from international school.

In addition, there is no differentiation with a student's education level when teaching piano. Therefore, the level of student cannot be categorized by either their age or their standard of education. Most of the students are zero level. It is because, in Myanmar, music is not a part of the curriculum in school; no one has a chance to learn a proper music education from kindergarten to high school. In Yangon, some international schools have a music curriculum, but some do not have it. Therefore, it can be said that music education has not been successfully employed in Myanmar yet.

Teachers are also advised that music should be part of the basic curriculum from elementary school to high school curriculum in both government schools, private schools and international schools. And children should start music lessons from an early age. If the children have a chance to learn music since they were young, categorizing students' piano level would be easier and teachers could also differentiate by their education level or age.

#### **4.2.4 Teaching procedure and lesson plan**

According to the interview of eight piano teachers from Yangon, the use of teaching procedures and teaching plans and their opinions on piano teaching are:

Teacher A (2014) teaches the student how to read notes. The first step is for the student read the note and clap to understand rhythm. The next step is teacher explains about the song and its title, composer and musical period. For the beginner students, they have to read notes before they play piano. For some difficult songs, students have to play with one hand (it may be left hand or right hand) first, and then play with the other hand. After have practiced enough, they have to play the song with both hands.

Teacher B (2014) teaches the students how to read musical notes. The next step is teaching them about timing, and after that, dynamics and expression are taught. Occasionally, an audio CD is used for listening for advanced students. Sometimes the teacher sings the melody while the student is playing piano. Moreover, the teacher explains musical terms for students.

Teacher C (2014) teaches the student how to read notation, time signatures, and key signatures first. Moreover, articulation signs are explained while teaching. When the student makes a mistake while playing, the teacher asked the student to stop and let him correct and play again. Because, the more the student play wrong notes again and again, the more habituation will developed by wrong playing. Listening to the record or CD is not encouraging, because most of the students rely more on their ears. When they listen to the record, they are less concentrated on their skills such as sight reading, technique, finger numbers and hand position.

Teacher D (2014) teaches the students how to read music notes, rhythm and music theory first. The teacher teaches music theory to the student since the very first time of the lesson, in order to know the meaning of articulation signs when signs are appearing in the score. Firstly, the student must have learned enough note reading skills, and then the articulations such as dynamics and crescendos are taught as a second priority. The teacher believes that melody, harmony and rhythm are the most important musical elements when teaching music and should be taught first, and then the expression and interpretation are taught later. When student plays wrong notes, the teacher asks the student what key he/she is playing and makes them correct by

themselves. Since the students had already learned basic music theory, they are able to understand major or minor keys. In addition, the teacher explains about the composer and the title of the pieces while teaching. Sometimes, the teacher helps by playing together with the student. But, recently, the teacher does not play with the student because students are more focused on their ears without looking for the music score.

Teacher E (2014) taught students by using the piano method book in the beginning. The teacher sits next to the student and corrects all the mistakes. The teacher assigns some easy repertoires for those who are bright and learn quickly. Sometimes, the teacher assigns piano duet pieces to the students to play together. For intermediate students, the teacher plays the song for the student, to be able to know the style of the song, tempo and dynamics, etc. Moreover, the teacher helps the student count the rhythm and explains mood and corrects the mistakes. Depending on the students, sometimes the teacher explains and theoretically analyzes the song for the student.

Teacher F (2014) taught the students music theory as a first step. When the lesson begins, warming up comes first and letting students play what they have practiced comes second. If the teacher is not satisfied with what the student plays, the new lesson will not be taught. When giving a new song to play to the students who know theory well, it is not demonstrated. The main reason is to form a habit of self-studying and self-analyzing in them. When they have played the song, the next step is correcting. Once they have played it well, emphasizing on expression and technique is undertaken. At that time, if students need demonstration of the piece, demonstration is provided by the teacher. Moreover, when teaching young beginners, the accompaniment part is played to make them happy. Depending on students, they are being commented on necessary parts when they are practicing.

Teacher G (2014) teaches the students how to read notes first. After that, students play the song in the class and teacher corrects their mistakes. Sometimes, teacher plays the song for the student if they cannot play by themselves. Sometimes, teacher has to remind the students when they forgot to play articulation signs. Furthermore, chords, arpeggios and scales are undertaken during the lesson time.

Teacher H (2015) teaches the beginner students about white keys and black keys. After that, the teacher explains musical alphabets on piano. Students have

to learn five-finger hand exercises as a first lesson. Then, the teacher shows how to place the fingers on the piano, hand positions, and body posture. Hand position is very important for piano playing and teacher still needs to check hand position of some students who have already been learning piano about five years. For finger technique, the teacher taught them how to play precisely, such as finger must not lift early and must not lift late. The fingers must press and lift at the right time. Moreover, the teacher uses the Dozen a Day piano mini book for beginner level students. Some young students can play only one exercise in a week although the exercise is only two or three notes. The reason is students do not practice the exercise at home. There are twelve exercises in a group in the Dozen a Day piano book. The teacher assigns students to play at least two times or many times until their hand position is correct.

In the lesson time, Teacher H (2015) continued, students have to play the most recent lesson that has been teaching currently from method book, and they also need to play previous lessons as a revision. When the student makes mistakes while playing, he/she needs to practice the mistake part for two or three times until they can master it. If the student cannot play it well and it is too difficult for them, the teacher demonstrates for students.

For expressions, teacher taught students after they have understood the notes value and dynamic signs. Sometimes, articulation signs are taught while the student is playing. In addition, teachers taught major and minor scales to some adult students who interested in music theory. But, mostly teachers do not teach theory. Sometimes, teachers want them to play duet songs for fun, but they do not have enough skill to play duet songs.

For piano teaching procedures and teaching plans, it can be concluded that all teachers taught notes reading first by using piano method books according to the method book procedures. Some teachers (Teacher A, E, G: 2014, Teacher H: 2015) added by using extra books that can help the student, based on their own teaching experiences. And dynamics, expression and interpretation are taught later when students can read notes well. The majority of teachers used criticism, demonstration and inspiration teaching methods, but there is a lack of analysis in their teaching. The teachers should also teach the student how to analyze the songs such as finding keys, harmonic progression and chord, what period and form, rather than teaching run-

through playing. But most of teachers do not have a teaching plan and they teach students based on their own experience.

Furthermore, Teachers B, C, D, F (2014) believed that music theory should be taught, from the very beginning of the lesson or before giving a piano lesson. They said that once students know music theory well, they understand the meaning of the signs and it is easy to play the articulation signs straight away so they can easily play the song. In this case, some of the teachers (Teacher, B, C, D: 2014) misunderstand about note reading teaching and music theory teaching. They claimed that music theory should be taught before giving a piano lesson, but they only mentioned note-reading skills such as note values, time signatures, key signatures, articulation signs and dynamic signs. They did not really mention about advanced music theory such as triads, seventh chords and inversions, cadences, phrases, circle of fifths and form, etc. This is because some of the piano teachers did not graduate in the field of music. But some piano teachers were graduated from the study of music and some have music certificates in music, but those degrees and certificates are not as a study of piano major or piano pedagogy. Some of them learned piano from local piano teachers and self-study. Therefore, they did not have the opportunity to learn classical piano in a systematic way with foreign classical pianists.

In addition, from the interview of piano teachers, it was discovered that most of students' level are presumed to be only beginner level and pre-intermediate level students. Because all the teachers explained only the early process of piano teaching and how they teach note reading, counting rhythm, definition of articulation signs, songs from piano method books, body postures, hand positions and very basic theory knowledge. None of them explained how they taught advanced students and advance repertoires.

#### **4.2.5 Notes reading method**

Using a method book is one of the most important beginning steps in learning piano. Every teacher taught notes reading in a different way and used different method books. According to interviews, teachers' opinions of teaching notes reading, the use of method books are as follows:

Teacher A (2014) teaches note reading by using method books. For young beginners the “Hal Leonard Piano Book” is used, and the “Alfred Basic Piano Course” for adult beginners. Using those books only cannot improve the students’ sight reading skill. Therefore, the teacher used “Easy Classic to Modern” which contains a variety of musical eras from baroque to romantic, composers and genres. This book is used as a supplement to improve students’ sight reading skills and musicality. Moreover, students are assigned to play duet pieces.

Teacher B (2014) teaches note reading by using piano method books such as John Thompson, Alfred’s Basic Piano Library and Leila Fletcher Piano Course. Using only one method book is not enough for students because some method books have a lot of gaps. Therefore, the teacher uses a variety of method books to cover everything.

Teacher C (2014) teaches notes reading by using piano method books such as John Thompson’s Grade I to V, and W.S.D. Mathews’s Standard Graded Lesson 1 to 10. The teacher prefers to use the books which contain many pictures for very young beginner at the beginning, while the Standard Graded Lesson Book is used later. The teacher explained that he uses a different piano method book depending on the student. For instance, for those who want to be a good church pianist, the teacher uses Wright’s “Smallwood’s” piano books. Once a student has played grade 2 or 3, he/she is allowed to play music like gospel and hymn songs that are used in church. The teacher also assigned those students to play classical repertoires as a supplement. Different teaching aids are used for those who want to study abroad.

Teacher D (2014) teaches note reading by using different method books. Currently, the “Bastien Piano Book” and “The Older Beginner Level 1 and 2 Book” are being used. But, Bastien’s Hymn Books is used for those who majoring in church music. In the past, the teacher used John Thomspon, Standard Graded Course of Studies, The Wright Piano Forte and The Small Wood Piano Book for piano teaching. Moreover, the teacher also assigned pieces like sonatas, sonatinas, Bach’s inventions, preludes and fugues to the performance students. Since the teacher came back from studying abroad, the teacher thought that students should play as many books as possible in order to develop their notes reading skill.

Teacher E (2014) teaches note reading by using the Alfred Piano Course and Hal Leonard Solo Book. For those who are weak at sight-reading skill, the teacher assigned them to use almost four books in order to improve students' notes reading skills. But for the quick learners, one method book for a level is enough. The teacher also has other piano method books, but not a complete set. For Hal Leonard and Alfred Books, complete set are available. Among these two method books, Hal Leonard is more professional because of dissonant sounds, hand position and fingering changing. With Hal Leonard method book, the higher the students' level, the harder it is for the student to play from it. Then the student becomes less interested in the lesson. Therefore, the teacher used the Alfred method book that is pleasing to the ear, which is based on I-IV-V chord progressions for those who are less interested students.

Teacher F (2014) teaches note reading by using James Bastien's piano method books for adult beginners. Moreover, the teacher also used the John Thompson and Alfred piano method books. To make students familiarized with both white and black keys, they are taught about it since they start learning notes. Apart from method books, Hanons, scales and arpeggios are also given to practice for technique skill.

Teacher G (2014) teaches note reading by two or three kinds of method books in the beginning. Whether more or less method books are used for proficient notes reading skill depends on the student's ability. Bright students progress quickly no matter what kind of book they use. For that kind of student, some books are very easy and waste their time. In the beginning, the teacher used Yamaha Piano Method Books. For very young beginner students, the teacher used Alfred's "All in One Course". Adult and bright students have to learn Michael Aaron's grade 1 and John Thompson piano book 1. But, since John Thompson grade 1 is based on five fingers position, some lazy students play just looking at fingers and do not look at the music score. Besides, John Thompson grade 1 is easy for student but grade 2 is difficult for them. Therefore, the teacher rarely uses John Thompson method book. The teacher recommended that the Michael Aaron piano method is the best to use for notes reading teaching. Since it is not too easy and not too difficult, students can learn step by step. In addition, the teacher also used John W.Schaum's notes writing books to improve note reading.

Teacher H (2015) teaches note reading by using piano method books such as John Thomson, W.S.B. Mathews, Wright Piano Forte, Alfred Piano Book, John W.Schaum Piano Course, Hanon finger exercise book.

According to the interviews, all teachers taught note reading by using many different piano method books. The list of piano method books is as follows:

- 1) John Thompson, Easiest Piano Course
- 2) James Bastien, Older Beginner Piano Course
- 3) James Bastien, Hymn Favorites
- 4) Hal Leonard Piano Lesson
- 5) Hal Leonard Piano Solo
- 6) Alfred Basic Piano Library
- 7) Alfred Basic Piano Course
- 8) Alfred Basic Adult All-in-One Course
- 9) Easy Classic to Modern
- 10) The Leila Fletcher Piano Course
- 11) W.S.B. Mathews, Standard Graded Course of Studies
- 12) Wright, Smallwood's Pianoforte
- 13) Wright, Smallwood's Piano Tutor
- 14) Yamaha Piano Course
- 15) John W. Schaum, Piano Course
- 16) Michael Aaron Piano Course
- 17) Sonata and Sonatina,
- 18) Bach's Invention and Sinfonia
- 19) Bach's Prelude and Fugue
- 20) Hanon
- 21) Christian Hymn books and other gospel song books

The above books list is the piano method books that all teachers have been using to teach note reading from the past until now.

Regarding with note reading, there are enough piano method books to teach notes reading now (Teacher F, 2015). Teacher E (2015) also said that he has different kinds of piano method books, but only Hal Leonard and Alfred Books are available in the complete series of books in the schools, where he lectures.

Teachers explained that there were not enough piano method books in the past and teachers had to let students use their books (Teacher, C, D, H: 2015). Furthermore, piano books are very rare and difficult to buy even in Yangon. Teacher C (2015) explained that all these issues are only concerns in Yangon. In other places, it is still difficult to buy piano method book. Teacher C continued, in Myanmar, the teacher used one piano book to teach four or five students. In other countries, students used their own original piano books and the teacher records every detail about the lesson in that book. Therefore, he assumed that this may be one reason why Myanmar students did not have the enough pianistic skill to reach an international standard.

According to interviews, it was discovered that all of the piano teachers used at least two kinds of method books to teach note reading. And they claimed that students must learn as many books as possible to be able to proficient at note reading (Teacher A, D, E: 2015). Apart from piano method books, students are assigned to play duet pieces to be proficient at note reading skill (Teacher A, 2015). But, Teacher B (2015) explained that some students learn piano not because they are interested in playing piano, but their parents want them to learn piano. And, some students learn notes reading just to play songs by themselves.

To conclude, regarding the use of piano method books in Yangon, all teachers need more updated piano methods that include current popular songs (Teacher A: 2015). This can help to motivate students to play piano. According to the interviews, they do not have a full set of piano method books because none of them said they have a full set of piano method books, and they only mentioned piano lesson books and some technique books. They need to have variety of different piano method books in a full set.

#### **4.2.6 Piano techniques and sight reading teaching**

From the interviews, it was found that all of the teachers taught piano technique and sight reading. Some teachers have lesson plans for piano technique and piano sight reading but some do not have it and they teach randomly. The results from the interviews are as follows:

Teacher A (2014) teaches technique for 15 minutes during one hour lesson. The teacher used the Dozen a day piano technique book, Hanon and other

exercises such as five-finger exercise, short scales, and arpeggios. However, Hanon is rarely used. In addition, 15 minutes of one hour lesson is used for teaching sight reading. For sight reading, there is no specific book for teaching sight reading. However, Yamaha method books are mostly used. To teach sight reading, students have to read piano method books which are lower than their current level. For example, if the student is learning book 3, he/she has to read book 1 or book 2 which are different method books that he/she has never played before. When teaching sight reading, continuous reading is more focused. Even for their first time of reading, students have to play without stopping whether they make mistakes or not. As a result, students' sight reading skills will improve after many times of practice. The teacher also assigns them to play piano duet pieces to improve their sight reading skill.

Teacher B (2014) teaches piano technique and sight reading sometimes, but teacher does not have a specific time for them. Moreover, it also depends on the students' situation. For instance, if a student's fourth and fifth fingers are not strong enough, he/she has to practice the technique that can improve those fingers. Most students are weak at sight reading and technique because they do not practice well enough. Some students even do not practice after the lesson.

Teacher C (2014) teaches piano technique by his experience and no specific book is used for teaching piano technique. For piano sight reading, students are taught theory first. For instance, if there is one sharp in the music, students know that they have to play F sharp, because they are already taught theoretically first about why they have to play F sharp when they see F. Moreover, the teacher teaches what the student needs while giving a lesson.

Teacher D (2014) teaches piano technique and sight reading by using the ABRSM book. Moreover, teacher uses the Hanon book for piano technique skill. For piano sight reading, the teacher assigns students to read church choir sheet music to improve their sight reading skill. Depending on the student, the teacher makes her own teaching technique and sight reading schedule for each student. Sometimes the schedule does not work when the student did not practice the previous lesson.

Teacher E (2014) tries to cover everything in a one hour lesson. The teacher uses method books to teach piano technique and sight reading. Most of the method books are completed with the technique exercises and theory exercises in the

lesson book. If the students are more interested to learn more on technique, then the teacher teaches Dozen a Day, Hanon hand exercises and other finger exercises. Sometimes, the teacher creates a special technique exercise for the students when the students face technical problems. Sometimes, teacher teaches more technique for those who are good at sight skill but weak on technique. Moreover, if there is a technique exercise in the piano technique book, that can help to the student to improve his/her fingers, then the teacher teaches that technique exercise to the student to improve his/her technique skill.

Teacher F (2014) uses method books to teach piano technique and sometimes the teacher demonstrates for the student. The Hanon finger exercise book is used for technique. Moreover, hand exercises such as hand shaping and hand lifting and wrist exercises are given to practice to improve their hand strength. For sight reading, most of students are good at sight reading. Even when they play a new piece for the first time, they can play it themselves without teacher showing them how to play it.

Teacher G (2014) teaches the student to play as many books as possible to improve piano technique and sight reading skill. The students have to play four or five books, according to their skill. Some students can play only two kinds of book. For sight reading skill, the more they play by sight reading, the more they improve their sight reading skill. For piano technique, the students have to play the Hanon technical exercise after level 3. And then they have to play Michael Aaron book. After that a short classical pieces, popular songs, Czerny and Sonatinas also need to be played.

Teacher H (2015) teaches piano technique first. The technique is taught for 15 minutes in every lesson. The teacher teaches hand positions to the students at the beginning of the lesson and students have to learn from how teacher plays. For sight reading, although the teacher wants to teach sight reading, they do not have enough time for it. The teacher uses the Dozen a Day, John Thompson and Step by Step Piano Course books are used but the teacher does not have full series of method books. In addition, students have to play junior hymn books to improve their sight reading skill.

According to interviews, it was found that all the eight piano teachers teach piano sight reading for 15 minutes in each lesson by using piano lesson books and some teachers (Teacher C, D: 2014) used Christian hymn books. They used piano

lesson books for sight reading practice that are lower than their actual level. No one was using piano sight reading teaching method books to teach sight reading skill. Some piano teachers, they do not teach sight reading regularly because they do not have enough time for sight reading. Moreover, the research found that teacher A, D, F(2014) have teaching plans to teach sight reading, but teacher B, C, E, G( 2014) and teacher H (2015) do not have it. They randomly teach sight reading depending on the student and the lesson time span.

Teacher H (2015) said the reason they could not make teaching plans for sight reading is because the time is very limited. Sometimes, the student did not practice the previous lesson, and then the teacher would let the student play warm up and practice the previous piece. Therefore, sometimes the teacher even does not have enough time to work on the new piece. Furthermore, it was found that all the piano teachers do not use any teaching aids for sight reading, and some piano teachers even do not have a systematic plan for sight reading. Most of them cannot explain the process of teaching sight reading. Some teachers cannot give a systematic guideline to practice sight reading for the students.

From the interviews, it was revealed that most of the teachers used Hanon finger exercise books, Yamaha and Michael Aaron, Dozen a Day technique book used for teaching piano technique. Besides, based on their teaching experiences, teachers assigned students to play major and minor scales, arpeggios and other finger exercises that can help for finger dexterity and strength. According to interviews, some teacher could not undertake all requirements for technique. Some teachers did not explain how they teach piano technique in detail. They seemed to teach only basic techniques such as scales and arpeggios. Moreover, most of them do not have a teaching plan for piano technique such as beginning piano technique, intermediate piano technique and advanced piano technique. They randomly teach technique depending on student and lesson time.

#### **4.2.7 Supplementary musical activities**

According to the interviews, it was found that most of the piano teachers tried to undertake supplementary subjects such as music theory, ear training, music history and harmonization and improvisation and ensemble playing, as much as they

can during lesson time. But some piano teachers did not undertake all those subjects but only some.

From the study, Teacher A (2014) teaches ear training often, such as whole interval, half interval, fourth interval and fifth interval. For music theory, theory books are used but the teacher does not teach too much about it. For improvisation, the Hal Leonard Book is used. In the Hal Leonard Book, there is a lesson named “my own song” for improvisation. Students have to improvise the melody while the teacher playing chords. Some students are good at improvisation, but some students do not want to improvise, although they enjoy playing lesson songs. Ensemble playing is not taught to every student. Only some students who are interested in playing ensemble and student who are good at sight reading student are taught ensemble playing. But some students prefer to play only solo pieces and they do not want to play with others. For that reasons, teachers cannot insist that those students play ensemble playing. Hence, ensemble playing is taught depending on the students.

Some piano teachers often teach ear training during lessons. During the ear training, students are trained to be able to recognize notes by listening to those notes. For instance, the teacher plays music notes on piano and student has to tell whether it is C or D or E without looking. However, there is no proper ear training class. For improvisation, only advanced students are taught and music theory is taught using theory books. Sometimes, the teacher teaches major, minor, blues scales and dominant chords from the songs being played.

In every semester, at the college of MIT (Myanmar Institute of Theology), students have to play accompaniment for violin and flute. Moreover, the teacher assigns to students to play duets and trio pieces with another student. The accompaniment skill will be counted as a grade for the ensemble playing. In addition, students are assigned to play accompaniment at church as an ensemble playing. Harmonization is not undertaken in teaching because it is assumed that is not included in classical piano teaching. But simple improvisation is taught, in case, student can improvise when they play hymn songs at church. In theory, the students have to learn once a week because theory is a compulsory subject at the college.

The teachers try to cover everything as much as possible while teaching. Regarding ensemble playing, the teacher assigns the students duet pieces and two

pianos (eight hands) playing. Firstly, students have to learn their parts before they play all together. It is better if two persons in a family learn piano. But it is difficult to teach the students which are not from the same family. Some teachers taught ensemble playing to the students who have enough skill to play it. The students, who have enough sight reading and technique skill, can join with the school music band. But there is no obligation for the students to play ensemble, because although some students have good sight reading skills they do not have enough confidence to play in ensembles.

In music theory, the teacher explains about the advantages of learning music theory to the students who already finished grade 10. Among them, the teacher taught music theory to the students who interested in music theory. In addition, students learn listening, music history and sight singing in the lesson time. But harmonization and improvisation are not able to teach to every student. Harmonization and improvisation can only be taught students who had learned music theory. Students have to learn sports, play and other activities after lesson time. In contrast, students have to come to the piano class only once a week and they only play piano at that lesson time. Students normally do not have time to practice at home. Therefore, the teacher does not push the students to play ensemble playing. The teacher assigned only students who have time to play and can play ensemble.

According to the interviews, it was found that teachers randomly teach those subjects by their own experiences and the time span. They do not have fixed lesson plans for those subjects and the subjects are not separated with private piano lessons. Since there is only one hour for the lesson time, students are not taught well in each subject. In addition, it was discovered that all of the piano teachers teach only basic levels of ear training by their own experience and no one used ear training method books.

Music theory is taught by systematically by using theory books but most of them teach only basic and intermediate level of theory. Advanced level of music theory is not undertaken because most of students are not interested in music theory and the teachers do not have enough time to teach theory during lesson time. For improvisation, only two piano teachers teach improvisation but very basic

improvisation. Some teachers tend to think that harmonization and improvisation are different study of fields and not related with classical piano teaching.

#### **4.2.8 Piano practice suggestions for students**

The interviews of eight piano teachers and their practice suggestions and instructions for their students are as follows:

Teacher A (2014) assigned the younger students to practice at least 30 minutes per day. Most students do not have much time to practice piano because they need to do their homework from school. However, some adult students practice regularly. While the teacher is teaching a new song, students have to play slowly with each hand. They have to clap when they are learning difficult rhythm. The teacher also guides them how to search composer and genre of the songs they are playing from dictionary or on the internet.

Teacher B (2014) explained body position and hand position to the students to apply when they are practicing during or at their home. The teacher suggests them to practice 15 minutes after lessons and 15 minutes before they go to bed. Moreover, the teacher suggests the students to practice with the rhythm box from the keyboard by choosing a drum beat.

Teacher C (2014) insists that students practice in the lesson room and also at church. Some students are not interested in music, but they are taking piano lesson because of their parent. For these kinds of students, the teacher persuades them to play at music competitions at church. But some students are talented and the teacher does not need to push them to practice piano.

Teacher D (2014) explains to the student not to misunderstand treble clef and bass clef. Especially, timing is more important. Some students do not have a sense of timing. Sometimes, students are assigned to write timing on the score and let them practice with metronome. Mostly, students make more mistakes in rhythm than notes. Although classical music is very pleasing to the ears and easy to understand, students do not know that they are playing wrong or not.

Teacher E (2014) explained that each student has different individuality. Some students practice a lot but they play like a machine. For these students, the teacher demonstrates for them and let them listen to a recording to understand the

music. Mostly, every student makes different mistakes. Based on the teacher's experience, the common problem that is found among Myanmar piano students is that, all the students play piano by force and the piano sound is like striking or percussive sounds.

The other problem is most of the student's hands and wrists are rigid and immobile. The reason is that students practice with the keyboard or electric piano at home. Although keyboard and electric piano do not have a big difference in touch, it is very different on piano. Most of the students have touch problems and teachers have to change their habits. Another problem is that some students are good at listening but weak in sight reading. Those kinds of students want to play only solo pieces and the teacher forces them to play more sight reading. For the student with rigid hands, the teacher asks them to practice without looking at the music score to concentrate more on their hands to relax.

For the repertoire, the teacher assigns the students to play as many different repertoires as they can, instead of practicing a song to become perfect. Some students practice a song again and again without correcting their mistakes. Later they are habituated with the pieces, and they can memorize it. For these students, the teacher suggests them to practice more in the section with mistakes instead of playing run through from the beginning to the end again and again. And the teacher suggests about practicing, playing the run through again and again is just wasting the time and they should practice only the section that is needed to be fixed.

Teacher F (2014) suggests the student to practice 6 hours per week for those who do not major in piano (piano minor students). For students who continue their piano studies after they have graduated, they are told to practice at least for 12 hours to 16 hours per week. Tips and tricks for memorization are also given to them. In addition, students are asked to analyze their song such as form and which chords are used in the piece. Sometimes, students have to do Roman numeral analysis to be familiar with music theory and also aid in memorization.

Teacher G (2014) suggests the students to practice regularly. First of all, students have to play Hanon hand exercises five times. Then they have to play it in different ways such as different rhythm, playing forte, playing very soft, staccato, fast

tempo and then play normal tempo. After that, the teacher teaches their performance piece or lesson book. Sometimes students are assigned to practice with metronome.

Teacher H (2015) explains to the parents about piano practicing for their children. Some parents do play piano, but some parents do not play piano. Parents who play piano can guide their children well. For those parents, the teacher explains how the student should practice at home and before the student come to the piano lesson.

According to the interviews stated above, all eight piano teachers have different practice suggestions for their students. Although some piano teachers give a good practice suggestion for their students, some teachers answered irrelevant answers. Some teachers did not understand well what the question is about.

From the interviews, most teacher suggestions for practice hours are not enough, if the students are intermediate or advanced students. Intermediate and advanced students need to practice more depending on their repertoires. Furthermore, it was discovered that all the suggestions that given by the piano teachers mainly suggested for beginner and intermediate students, such as hand positions, body positions, note reading, timing and rhythm. Practice suggestions for advanced students are not well answered in the interviews.

### **4.3 The current condition of piano teaching in Yangon**

According to the interviews, Teacher A and D (2014) said the condition of piano teaching and learning is developing more than the past years. Teacher A (2014) continued that until the last five years, Western classical music was not that popular in Myanmar. But now, more of Myanmar students are studying Western classical music more than before. In addition, the other reason why Myanmar students are studying classical music is that as students from international schools have to learn a musical instrument to study abroad, so they are learning how to play an instrument from a young age. Teacher F (2014) also compared the current piano education and the piano education to 10 years ago, saying it can be assumed that the piano teaching has improved. Teacher D (2014) explained about piano teaching that piano learning became a social trend recently and parents are also competing with each other and

widely use of media are also part of the reason that piano teaching and learning has developed. And the country is more and more open than the past years.

In contrast, Teacher C, G (2014) and teacher H (2015) said that the condition of current piano teaching was not satisfactory. Teacher C (2014) continued that there are many necessities in piano learning and teaching. Firstly, none of the music schools can support full facilities for the students. Although there are some potential students, but they do not have the opportunity to fulfill their potential because they do not have a piano to practice at home. Besides, both music schools and students have financial and instrument problems. Secondly, there are some states that require for teachers and students. Although the piano lesson is one hour long, some teachers do not teach well to the students the lesson.

In addition, Teacher G (2014) revealed that it is sad as a piano teacher because learning piano is the last priority in Myanmar society. Moreover, although some parents understand learning piano is important for their children and try to have time to learn piano for their children, most parents do not understand about learning piano and they do not think it is important for their children.

Furthermore, the education system in Myanmar is also a factor in piano teaching and learning piano. Students are very busy with not only with the school but also tuitions. In Myanmar, it is not enough with the school; students need to take extra tuitions before the school or after or at night. In addition, international schools also try to keep the children in the school as much as possible. Students have to learn sport like activities after the lesson. When they come to the piano class, they cannot pay attention to the lesson and cannot fully concentrate what the teacher said because they are too tired already. Therefore teachers cannot force them to play piano since even they do not have enough time with school. Moreover, Teacher D (2014) stated that teachers are faced with frequent absence of the students because of tuition and other extra classes.

According to the interviews, it was found that music education was not encouraged in Myanmar society until recent years, but now it seems to be starting to develop since the country has changed. Therefore, the current condition of piano teaching and learning can assume as it has started to develop since recently. But there are some problems like teachers cannot offer enough teaching material such as piano,

private lesson room and private practice room. The most encountered problem for the teachers is most of the students are absent from the piano lesson due to the school extra classes and extra tuitions. Parents are suggested to make free time for their children.

#### **4.4 The Problems, Obstructions and Teachers' suggestions**

##### **4.4.1 Problems, Obstacles and Obstructions of piano teaching in Yangon**

According to the research interviews, the problems, obstacles and obstructions of piano teaching and piano teachers' suggestions can be concluded into three basic factors as follows:

###### **4.4.1.1 Typical problems and obstacles encountered in teaching piano in Yangon**

There are three main problems, mostly found in teaching piano. The first problem is that some students learn piano not because of their interest but their parents force them to learn music. Therefore, students lack interest in learning piano and cannot fully concentrate on piano playing (Teacher A, C: 2014).

The second problem is most of the students start learning music, only after they have matriculated (Grade-10). In Myanmar, most parents do not know that children should start to learn music from an early age. Most of the students start to learn music when they are adults (between 16 and 20 years old). As a result, hand stiffness and non-relaxing wrists are problems in teaching the adult beginners (Teacher A: 2014). Moreover, students are from different backgrounds, so that it has to take a lot of time for teaching procedures, such as hand position, technique and to change that the way the student thinks about piano learning (Teacher F: 2014).

The third problem is the current education style. The current education style is very different from the past education system. There were no tuitions in the past education system. At that time, tuitions were only for students who are not bright enough and who were absent from the lesson because of unhealthiness. In the past

education system, the students had time to play piano when he/she came back from the school. But, nowadays, students are very busy with tuitions. For instance, students attend not only piano class but also other classes like language classes and sport classes after school. Therefore, they are too tired and they cannot fully concentrate when they learn piano (Teacher A, B, C, G: 2014, Teacher H: 2015).

Furthermore, Western classical music is not popular in Myanmar. There were no conservatories and music school in the past; Myanmar people had very few opportunities to learn Western classical music in the past until now. Even for children interested in music, there were no concerts like an orchestra, trio and quartet in the past years. But, since recently, it has been found that some music groups and good string groups are performing in Yangon. In addition, many private music schools are opening and most international schools also have music programs. Recently, people are more aware of music education than the past.

Another problem is that students quit learning piano and change teachers. Some students think learning piano is very difficult, and people around them say it is already late to learn piano because they are adults. Then students stop learning piano and quit learning piano. And teachers often face students who want to change teachers. Teachers despair when the student changes to another teacher, because since the beginning of the lesson, the teacher tried to foster the student according to the teaching procedure, such as hand dexterity, sight reading skill and theory. But students are not patient to finish this basic teaching procedure. Then they change to the other teacher who teaches them to play a song that they like regardless of the student's ability (Teacher E: 2014, Teacher H: 2015).

Financial matters also a factor in teaching piano for some students. Although some adult students are interested in music they cannot afford it for a long time. But for some students, especially adult beginners, they cannot study for a long time because they have work and they do not have enough time to learn piano (Teacher B, C: 2014).

From the interviews, Teacher D (2014) said that students lack talent in music. And the teacher believed that music cannot be learned no matter how much they are interested in music if they do not have the talent. Teacher E also said some students are good in school education, but they are not good at music. In contrast,

some students are poor in the school education, but they are good at music. Teacher D (2014) believed that talent is the main factor when learning music. A student who lacks talent takes a lot of time to achieve even intermediate level. If the student does not have talent, no matter how much he/she tries or the teacher teaches them, they will not improve.

In Myanmar, it is believed that people were less aware of music education in the past years (Teacher A, B, E, F, G: 2014). Because of political conditions, the music education level was left behind from other countries. Now the country is more open than the past years and everything seems easier and faster in these days. But, students tend not to practice well and their parents are not supporting them to practice, too. Most of students stop learning music after one or two years of studying. This is because Myanmar people tend to choose grade school education over music education. People are not aware that music is one of the educations. Hence, time is not well-spent during lessons.

However, diplomatic students in Myanmar, tend to practice piano. Even their parents are pushing them to practice harder. For a particular student, the improvement is dramatic within only 3 or 4 months of piano studies. In earlier years, not many people learned the piano, but now many people are learning piano. It means musical awareness is also improved. Moreover, there are more concerts than the pasts and many students are inspired by these concerts (Teacher F: 2014).

#### **4.4.1.2 Typical problems between student- teacher and teacher- parent**

##### **1) Student- Teacher**

One common problem with students when teaching piano in Myanmar is that most adult students face problems like hand stiffness, non-relaxing fingers-wrist and non-relaxing body posture, as they have not learned it since they were young. Another problem is that some students cannot memorize even though they try hard as they are not good at using their visual, aural and kinesthetic senses. Some students do not need fingers dexterity although they need to listen, while some students need finger dexterity but not listening (Teacher A, E: 2014).

Furthermore, that most of the students are not willing to practice piano after lesson is also problematic in teaching piano. Some students only practice during lesson time. They do not practice at home. Teacher always have to remind both students and parents to practice at home. Moreover, the young learners cannot concentrate on piano playing. In lesson time, especially young students, do things such as drinking water, talking, rest for a toilet so many times rather than playing piano. Because, most of them learn piano because of their parent, they are not really interested in music. Thus they cannot concentrate on playing.

Some students practice piano although they are busy with school because they are interested in music and they are willing to practice piano regularly. Those students do not need to ask for practice and it is easy to teach them. In contrast, some students learn music because their parents force them to learn music, but they are not interested in music. These kinds of students' improvements are just satisfactory and the other kinds of students are just amateurs. Besides, some students are addicted to network games and internet like Facebook; therefore it is difficult to teach such kinds of students (Teacher D, G: 2014).

In addition, Teacher D said that when a student reaches an advanced level, they need a better teacher. Although there are many teachers who can teach beginner and intermediate level student, but there was no international standard teachers, music school or conservatories that can support the student to achieve high performance standards or get involved in performance competitions in Western art music. Teacher F also stated that students who have commitment are rare in Myanmar. This is because they do not have former role model who they can look up to and get inspiration from, and there are not so many music concerts in Myanmar.

## **2) Parental involvement, support and problem**

From the interviews, Teacher A, E, G (2014), and Teacher H (2015) have problems with parents. Some parents used to interfere during lessons. The parent sits in the teaching room and talks about less progress of their children and blames their children. Sometimes, teachers taught young students for 20 minutes or 30 minutes because young children cannot concentrate for an hour long, but parents want their children to learn for an hour long. Some parents even complain about that cost that

they pay for an hour, but the teacher gives a lesson for only 30 minutes. Moreover, the child wants to play a song that is higher than his/her level, but the teacher does not let him play it. Then the parent does not know the students' level and they want the teacher to teach what their child wants to play. Then the teacher has to explain about the student level. Although some parents understand the teacher's explanation, some parents do not.

Besides, most students never prepare for the lesson and they do not practice the previous lesson. Therefore, the teacher cannot teach a new lesson and teachers have to repeat the previous lesson many times for the students. Then the student plays an old piece in every lesson, and the parent complains about their children's improvement. Since the children learn for a long time, it seems children are not improving in playing piano for them. But parents do not know the problem is their children do not practice regularly piano apart from lesson time.

Some parents want their children to learn music, but they cannot support enough. For instance, they cannot buy instruments for their children and they can only buy keyboard or electric piano. Therefore, students cannot play very well in the lesson though they practiced hard with their keyboard at home. This is because of the difference between keyboard touch and piano touch. There is another problem with parents that some parents used to ask how much time is needed to be able to play piano well. Some parents think that their children can play piano well after their children have learnt 3 or 4 months. Therefore, the teachers have to explain to them that it all depends on the students.

In addition, most parents want certificate and they want their children to learn quickly with less tuition fees. And they also want their children to perform on the stage. Parents do not understand their child's level, for instance; the student level is Level B and they want him/her to play the song "Fur Elise". These parents insist that the teacher teach the song which is very difficult for their children's level. Then teachers usually have to fulfill the parents' wish. But, the student cannot play because it is very demanding for them. Later the student gives up playing the song and quit playing piano. Moreover, the parent does not realize the students' level and less practicing of their children and complains to the school to change to another teacher.

They complained that the student made no progress with the current teacher (Teacher E: 2015).

### **3) The use of materials, resources and aids in teaching piano**

Teaching materials are also one of the problems in teaching piano in Yangon. One of the most encountered problems in teaching piano is, students not having a piano. Although the teacher uses piano when he teaches students, students do not have a piano and they practice by using keyboard or electric piano at home because pianos are very expensive in Myanmar and most people cannot afford to buy them. Only rich people can afford piano for their children. As a result, some students do not understand how to use pedal on piano.

In addition, regarding the piano maintenance, most of the pianos have not been tuned for years. Even some piano teachers are using a piano that is out of tune, to teach the students. It is very important that the piano be in tune. The pianos always need to be in tune at least once a year. Piano tuning is a problem because it is very rare to find someone who can tune the piano very well in Myanmar.

In addition, it was very difficult to buy music books and musical instruments in the past years. Until ten years ago, in Yangon, there were very few music shops that sold musical instruments and music books. And it was very expensive to buy them. In the past years, piano teachers had to order books from someone who goes abroad. Moreover, some teachers did not have a full set of method books. For instance, a teacher has Alfred piano method book level 1 to 3, but level IV and V are missing. Some only have Hal Leonard theory books, but do not have sight reading books. Incomplete set of method books and other piano books are still factors in piano teaching. Nowadays, there are some music shops and stores opening in Yangon. People can buy instruments easily, but music books are still very rare until now.

There was one problem with adult beginners in piano teaching. Most adult beginners do not want to play piano method books because those method books are designed for children. Piano method books are illustrated by cartoon and child songs. Therefore, adult beginners seem shy to use these method books. Although there are some method books that designed for adult learners, teachers do not have them.

Besides, not only the adult beginners but also the young beginners want to play current popular songs, but there are no up-to-date books in Myanmar. Buying that up-to-date book is not easy in Myanmar since there is no proper music book shop in Yangon (Teacher A: 2014).

According to interviews, all teachers except teacher B and E (2014) do not have private teaching rooms. They are teaching the student in the living room or an open room that can leak the sound. Moreover, there are many distractions that occur during the lesson time and practice time. People were passing here and there during the lesson time. Many noises from outside can cause less concentration for both student and teacher.

#### **4.5 Offering Innovative approaches, to remove barriers and promote new piano teaching**

Based on the suggestions of eight piano teachers, there are four main factors that need to be promoted, remove barriers and are necessary to improve piano teaching in the future. These four main factors are as follows:

##### **4.5.1 Piano teacher**

According to interviews, teacher A and H suggested that piano teachers need to upgrade themselves by practicing regularly and they should at least hold piano qualifications or degrees in piano pedagogy by studying abroad so that they can support music students in Myanmar. And, since there were few classical concerts, piano teachers need to play piano concert by themselves once a month or once every two months. There was a problem in Yangon that some teachers do not practice regularly, but teaching students with the knowledge that they had learned in the past. Some teachers even teach songs that they have never played and learnt before. If the teacher does not know about the repertoire very well, the student will not meet the knowledge that he/she should have from the piece. Moreover, teachers should prepare and make lesson plans when they have chosen repertoire for the student. Otherwise, students will not improve if the teacher does not upgrade the way they teach.

The research has suggested that for those who want to be a piano teacher or open a new music school, there are some facts they need to consider about piano teaching in Yangon. Since most of students are adult learners and the country is an under developed country, the piano teachers need to know the situation of piano teaching in Yangon and the condition of piano teaching in Yangon. Therefore, teachers need to do a survey first as a precaution before they teach or open a new music school (Teacher C: 2014).

#### **4.5.2 Piano student**

First of all, teacher F suggested piano students should have a commitment to piano playing. And there should be role model who can inspire for the students in Myanmar. Until now, there was no remarkable pianist in Myanmar. Students also need to watch live classical concert or DVD as much as they can. There should be piano competitions for the students (Teacher B: 2014).

Student should practice only with piano not keyboard. If the students practice with piano, it will help in improving his/her piano skill. And students need more time for practicing piano and they need to practice regularly and make their own practice schedule (Teacher A, C, E: 2014, Teacher H: 2015).

#### **4.5.3 Parental involvement, teaching materials, tools and equipment**

Parental involvement is crucially important when learning music. Parents need to support the student financially. Parents let their child learn music since they were young, so that it is more natural and easier to teach. Moreover, parents should be in the teaching room and they also need to learn what the teacher teaches to the student, so that they can instruct when their child plays wrong or make mistakes at home. For some students, a parent needs to ask their children to practice regularly (Teacher A, C, E, F, G: 2014, Teacher H: 2015).

Pianos are needed for every teacher and child and they should use piano both in lesson and practicing. Moreover, both teachers and students need to have practice rooms. In the current situation, both teachers and students were distracted by other sounds while teaching and practicing (Teacher A, C, D, F: 2014). And most of

pianos need to be repaired and tuned. Furthermore, there should be more classical audio CD, DVD, books and more music stores in Yangon.

For the method books, Teacher C (2014) suggested, it is better to have the original edition of music books because children love to use colored books rather than black and white copies books. Teacher A also suggested that Myanmar method books which include Myanmar songs are needed. Some students with poor education background cannot understand musical signs and terminology though they are talented. It is very difficult to make them understand music theory also. For these students, method books and theory books should be in the Myanmar language.

#### **4.5.4 General requirements in teaching piano**

From the research and teachers' interviews, all of the teachers said people do not know about classical music, so promoting classical is necessary to help people understand it. While some students are playing classical songs, they do not even know what kind of genre they are playing. In addition, in Myanmar, music should be part of the school education curriculum like other countries. In other countries, students learn music at school as part of curriculum such as ensemble playing, musical instruments and choirs. In Myanmar, only a few Myanmar traditional songs are taught and Western music is not being taught at all. If government schools and international schools or private schools have music curricula, children would be aware more about Western music and they would appreciate music as they grow older. However, most of Myanmar students tend to start learning music when they have already matriculated.

Furthermore, there should be more classical concerts to promote classical music and listen or watch for the public, not only in Yangon but also other urban areas. Some people in Yangon know about classical music as it is the business city of Myanmar and it is where many classical music events are undertaken. And international schools and private schools teach music as part of schools' curricula and are used to perform at the school. However, in urban areas, many people do not know about classical music. Therefore, if the government schools have music curricula, all children would know more about music and they would be more interested in music in the future (Teacher C: 2014).

In addition, the study showed that musicians need a place that can apply their musical experience for their income, and music students should have applicable place or career jobs for those who choose music as a life career, because sometimes, students have questions and considerable concerns about how they can apply this study for their life, even though they have studied piano.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION**

This research, a case study exploring piano pedagogy in Yangon, Myanmar, examines the condition of current piano teaching, piano teaching process in Yangon/Myanmar and focus on the piano pedagogy employed by contemporary Myanmar piano teachers. The purpose of this research is 1) to study piano teaching in Yangon/Myanmar, 2) to study and gain a comprehensive understanding of current piano teaching pedagogies, and 3) to study the challenges and obstacles of piano teaching and learning in Yangon/Myanmar. To conduct this research, the researcher collected the data from interviewing of eight piano teachers who have at least 10 years' experience in piano teaching in Yangon, Myanmar. The researcher analyzed the data and concluded this research into three groups: 1) Current piano teaching process in Yangon, 2) Condition of current piano teaching and learning in Yangon, and 3) Problems, Obstacles and Obstructions of piano teaching in Yangon.

- 1 Summary of the research results
- 2 Discussion of the research

The discussion section will contain following heading:

1. Current piano teaching process in Yangon
2. Condition of current piano teaching and learning in Yangon
3. Problems, Obstacles and Obstructions of piano teaching in Yangon
4. Solutions for typical problems and obstacles encountered in teaching piano in Yangon

#### **5.1 Current piano teaching process in Yangon**

According to the case study exploring piano pedagogy in Yangon, the researcher interviewed eight piano teachers who have at least 10 years teaching

experience in piano teaching and also currently teaching in Yangon. The summary of this research is summarized by the following:

### **5.1.1 Piano lesson time and schedule**

All piano teachers teach 1 hour lesson for each student. The students are taught by one to one (private) lesson with their piano teacher. The lesson time and schedule is arranged by teacher but sometimes the lesson time had to change if the student has school or extra class and examination. Based on student level and age, young students (between 5 to 10) are taught less than 1 hour (about 30 minutes) depends on student's concentration. In contrast, some teacher teaches one and a half hours for those who did not practice the previous lesson or home work.

Most of the piano teachers have problems in making fixed piano lesson schedules because most of the students are very busy with their school. The teachers said that in Myanmar, apart from government school, students have to take extra classes in the morning or evening. Some students even have extra class at night. When the tuition makes up an extra class, students choose tuition rather than piano lesson.

### **5.1.2 Private piano teaching and group piano teaching**

It was found that four of the piano teachers do not teach a group lesson and only teach private lesson. The other four piano teachers used to teach private lessons and a group lesson but group lessons are rarely taught nowadays.

All of the eight piano teachers want to teach group piano lessons and know that teaching group piano lessons is very beneficial for the students and it can also save time. But the problem is that students cannot able to come at the same time.

### **5.1.3 Classifying students' piano level**

To classify students' piano level, the majority of the piano teachers categorized the students' piano level by their musical experiences. Students' piano level cannot be categorized by their education level, since there was no music program in education curriculum from kindergarten to high school. Therefore, to classify students' piano level, the teacher let the student play a solo piece that they can perform well and practiced recently. Then the teacher checked students' hand position,

technique, hand flexibility, and sight reading skill. After that the teacher decided what the students' level is, and what method book should be assigned to the students.

Most of the transfer students' actual levels are considered to be lower than the level they claimed. It was found that some piano teachers, who are currently teaching in Yangon, are not qualified to teach piano and their competence as a piano teacher is unsatisfactory. Teachers do not have enough knowledge and skill to teach piano. Some piano teachers even cannot play advanced piano repertoires and sometimes teachers assigned repertoires to the students that they have never played before. Therefore, when there was a transfer student from another teacher, it is very tricky for the teacher to categorize the students' piano level. A majority of students' piano level are lower than the level they claimed.

The classification of students' piano level can be summarized that mostly there is no need to assess students' level because most of the students' levels are beginners' level. Even at the age range from twenty to forty years old, students are beginners' levels. Moreover, most of transfer students are considered to be lower than the level they claimed. Students' piano level cannot be differentiated by their education level because most of new students' piano levels are zero except for transfer students.

#### **5.1.4 Teaching procedure and lesson plans**

All of the piano teachers teach note reading first and demonstration is provided when it is needed. Most of the teachers play demonstrations for the student and the student has to imitate what the teacher plays. One teacher disagrees with demonstration for the student because the teacher worries that the student would copy his/her playing.

All of the teachers followed according to the method book content. Depending on the student, some teachers used different method books when they teach students. Teachers teach body posture, hand positions, rhythm and counting using by piano method books. When students can read notes, articulation signs are taught later. After that, expression and interpretation are explained. Most of the teachers believed music theory should be taught first before teaching piano playing.

From the interviews, the majority of teachers used criticism, demonstration and inspiration method, but lack of analysis method, for instance, analyzing the song, such as keys, harmonic progression, chord and form, etc. According to the interviews, a majority of students are beginner level and intermediate level students because all teachers did not mention how they teach advanced students and advanced repertoires.

### **5.1.5 The use of notes reading method books**

All of the piano teachers used different method books for teaching piano. But teachers do not use the same method books. All of the teachers assigned to the student two or three different piano method books for each level.

It was found that all of the piano teachers did not have enough piano method books in the past years. Moreover, piano method book and repertoires books and sheet music were very rare and difficult to buy in Yangon. Teachers had to let the students use their books. But now, they have a lot of piano method books and sheet music. Regarding piano method books, they have different opinions about method books. Some teachers said they have enough method books to teach the students. But, the other teachers said although they have many piano method books, they do not have updated piano method books and a complete set of piano methods. Some teachers assumed that the lack of piano books and piano method books may be one reason why Myanmar students did not reach international standards.

### **5.1.6 Piano techniques and piano sight reading teaching**

From the interviews, it was found that a majority of the piano teacher do not have fixed lesson plans to teach piano technique and sight reading. There are only two piano teachers who teach piano technique and sight reading teaching for 15 minutes in every lesson. They used duet pieces and lesson books for sight reading exercises and fundamental piano technique exercises such as scales, arpeggios, Hanon finger exercises and other easy exercises for finger dexterity. But the other piano teachers randomly teach piano technique and sight reading but not every lesson. Moreover, some teachers think their students have enough sight reading skill.

Furthermore, it was discovered that there was no procedure and teaching process in teaching piano technique and piano sight reading. And most of them do not

regularly teach piano sight reading teaching and piano technique, they focus more on teaching songs. Besides, some teachers misunderstand what sight reading teaching is, because they only mentioned note reading teaching process when they answered for sight reading teaching. To summarize piano technique and piano sight reading teaching, teachers are not well undertaken and they do not have teaching plans and procedures. Some teachers do not even know the benefits of teaching piano sight reading teaching and piano technique.

### 5.1.7 Supplementary musical activities

According to interviews, the supplementary musical activities such as music theory, ear training, music history, harmonization, improvisation and ensemble playing can be summarized as follows:

**Table 5.1 Supplementary musical activities**

<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Supplementary Musical Activities</b>
Music Theory	<p>MIT and KBTS taught music theory as compulsory subjects but other teachers teach music theory but they do not have fixed lesson schedules.</p> <p>A majority of teachers only teach basic and intermediate level theory.</p> <p>Some teachers do not undertake music theory because students are not interested.</p>
Music History	<p>Only teacher A and F teach music history but very basic knowledge of music history</p>
Ear Training	<p>Only teacher A and B teach ear training but very basic knowledge such as whole and half interval.</p>
Harmonization	<p>None of the teachers teach harmonization because they think it is a different field of study and does not relate with classical piano music</p>

**Table 5.1 Supplementary musical activities (cont.)**

<p>Improvisation</p>	<p>Four teachers ( Teacher A, B, D, F) teach sometimes but very basic because student are not interested</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The other four teachers do not teach</li> <li>- One of them ( Teacher D) thinks students can improvise if he/she knows theory</li> </ul>
<p>Ensemble Playing</p>	<p>Three piano teachers (Teacher A, C, E) teach ensemble playing such as duet and accompaniment. But only students who are good at sight reading are taught.</p> <p>At MIT and KBTS, piano students have to play accompaniment for other instruments and church.</p>

According to Table 1, it was discovered that the piano teachers are not well undertaken for supplementary musical activities. Moreover, they do not know that supplementary subjects are requirements in piano teaching. They tend to think that those subjects are not important. In addition, a majority of teachers and students do not have enough time for those subjects. Some of them used to try to teach supplementary subjects, but they do not have teaching plans and teaching procedures.

**5.1.8 Practice suggestions for the students**

According to the interviews, it was found that all piano teachers give practice suggestions by their own experiences. Although some piano teachers can give a good practice suggestion for their student, some teachers cannot give a good practice suggestion. The summary of teachers’ piano suggestions for the students is as follows:

**Table 5.2 Teachers' practice suggestions for the students**

No	Practice suggestions
1	For young beginners ( at least 30 minutes per day )
2	Slow practice with each hand and clap when they see difficult rhythm
3	Teachers teach how to search for composer biography, genre from dictionary and internet
4	Practice with metronome
5	Before lesson, students play technique exercises, and play as many ways as possible ( staccato, legato, very soft and loud )
6	Body position and hand positions
7	Assign to listen recording to be able to understand the music
8	Teacher F assigns his student to practice 6 hours per week for minor students, and 16 hours per week for piano major students
9	Giving tips and tricks for memorization
10	Teacher suggests the student to do Roman numeral analysis to become familiar with theory and aid in memorization

According to Table 2, the piano practice suggestions are enough for the beginner and intermediate students but there was lack of piano practice suggestions for advanced piano students, because teachers only answered practice suggestions such as counting, rhythm, notes reading and articulation sign meaning, but gave no suggestions for advanced level students. According to teachers' piano practice suggestions, it can be assumed that there were no advanced students or teachers cannot provide effective practice suggestions for their advanced students.

## **5.2 Teacher views of current piano teaching and learning conditions in Yangon**

There are two different perspectives on current piano teaching and learning. Teacher A, B, D, E, F said the condition of piano teaching and learning is much improved compared to the past years. In contrast, teachers C, G and H said they

are not satisfied with the current piano teaching and learning in Yangon. The teachers' views of current piano teaching and learning conditions in Yangon can be summarized as follows:

**Table 5.3 Teachers' views of current piano teaching and learning conditions in Yangon**

Developing then the past years	Unsatisfied
1. Children take piano lessons more than before 2. Music is a requirement in international schools 3. Music became a social trend recently 4. Parents are competing 5. Wide use of media 6. Country is more open	1. Music schools cannot support enough facilities, instruments, teaching and practice room, etc.) 2. Most of teachers are unqualified 3. Music is the last priority in Myanmar society 4. Most parents do not know the value of music 5. The education system in Myanmar is a main factor because students do not have time and are always busy with class and extra classes (tuitions) 6. Frequent absence because of tuitions

According to Table 3, the conditions of piano teaching and learning in Yangon, is still unsatisfactory. The main problems are facilities and the education system which is called tuitions. According to the interviews, most of students do not have time to learn and practice piano is because of tuitions. Although there are some obstacles in teaching piano, but there is also some potential to improve piano teaching and learning because music became a social trend recently and the country is also more open than the past.

## **5.3 The problems, obstructions and teachers suggestions**

### **5.3.1 Typical problems and obstacles encountered in teaching piano in Yangon**

There are three main problems in teaching piano in Yangon. The first problem is students are not really interested in music. The second problem is most of the students start to learn music after they have matriculated (Grade 10). The third problem is the education system in Myanmar which the students have to attend not only school but also extra class before and after school.

There are some obstructions that are encountered in teaching and learning piano in Yangon. In the past years, Myanmar people did not have a chance to learn Western classical music such as competitions and concerts until recently. Therefore, Myanmar people were less aware in music education and Western music education level in Myanmar was behind other countries. All teachers face many difficulties and obstacles such as student quit learning piano, changing teachers and absences from piano class very often. Financial problems and the government school system are most problematic for both teachers and students.

### **5.3.2 Typical problems between students and teachers, teachers and parents**

The common problems that are encountered between piano teachers, students, parents and the need of teaching materials and aids are summarized as follows:

**Table 5.4: Problems found between student and teacher, and teaching materials**

<b>1. Problem found between teachers and students</b>	<b>2. Parental involvement, support and problem</b>	<b>3. Material, resources, aids in teaching and learning piano</b>
1. Hand stiffness, non-relaxing fingers-wrist-body (mostly adult learner ) 2. Lack of practice 3. Young student cannot concentrate on playing piano ( age 5- 8 ) 4. Student are not interested in music (by parent force) 5. Need advanced level teachers 6. Students do not have commitment and no role models in Myanmar	1. Parents interfere during piano lesson 2. Parents want their children to play an advanced piece 3. Parents cannot support piano for their children 4. Parents want certificates	1. Students do not have piano because it is very expensive 2. Lack of piano maintenance and most pianos are out of tune 3. Difficult to buy music books and instruments because there was no music store 4. Adult beginners feel shy to play method books because they think those piano methods, which are illustrated with cartoons, are designed for children 5. No private teaching rooms

**5.4 Teachers’ suggestions for offering innovative approaches, to remove barriers and promote new piano teaching**

According to teachers’ suggestions, there are four main factors that need to be addressed with promoting piano teaching and learning, and the requirement for the future. The four main factors are as follows:

### **5.4.1 Teachers**

Piano teachers need to upgrade themselves and they should have at least a piano qualification certificate or degree. Teachers also need to practice regularly and should give public performances.

Piano teachers must know about the piano repertoire that is assigned to the students. Moreover, teachers should prepare and make lesson plans when they have chosen repertoire for the students.

The research has suggested that for those who want to be piano teachers or who want to open a piano studio or music school, they need to survey first about the condition of piano teaching and learning in Yangon.

### **5.4.2 Students**

Piano students should have a commitment on piano playing. They need role model who can inspire them. Students need to listen to classical music such as DVDs, mp3s or live classical concerts. Piano competitions or recital performances are required for piano students.

Students should practice only with piano rather than keyboard and student need to practice regularly and should have their own practice schedule.

### **5.4.3 Parental involvement, teaching materials and tools**

Parent need to support their children. They should be in the teaching room while giving piano lesson to the student, so they are able to teach and correct their children when children play mistakes or practice at home.

Piano method books that use Myanmar folk songs are needed. Moreover, a theory book that is translated into Burmese language also needed for those with poor education.

Piano must be in tune always.

Good environments and sound-proof lesson rooms and practice rooms are required for both teachers and students.

#### **5.4.4 General requirements in teaching piano**

Western classical music needs to be promoted in Myanmar, to be able to understand the value of music education. Moreover, music should be part of schools' curriculum. Besides, musicians need a place to perform and apply their study, and also jobs to have an income for their career.

### **Discussion of the research**

The discussion of a case study exploring piano pedagogy in Yangon, Myanmar is categorized as follows:

## **5.5 Current piano teaching process in Yangon**

### **5.5.1 Private piano lesson time and schedule**

In terms of piano lesson time and schedule, it was discovered that teachers have difficulty with making fixed lesson times and schedules. Depending on student age and concentration; there are four types of private lesson: thirty minutes lesson, forty-five minutes lesson and one hour lesson. This is similar to the three types of private piano lessons of Bastien (1988:29) which have been stated in Chapter II.

Normally one lesson a week is enough for the piano student. But according to the situation in Myanmar, the researcher recommended to make two lessons a week because the majority of students do not have a piano at home, and they do not have free time because most of students are very busy with school and extra classes. If teacher teach two lessons per week, students will have more opportunity to play piano. Therefore, the researcher recommended two lessons a week is one way for the teachers that can make their students spend more time on playing piano, for both students who have a piano and who do not have a piano at home.

### **5.5.2 Private piano lesson and group piano lesson**

In the interviews, teachers were complaining about problems like students quit learning piano and students do not fully concentrate and lack interest in piano playing. Group piano teaching can be a solution to these problems, because Maydwell (2007:49) stated that teaching group lessons is a great benefit such as motivating one another for students and students can also listen to one another and give critical feedback. Besides, students have fun in the class because they have peer group and enjoying by playing for their friends. Moreover, they have some audience when they play piano and can learn one from another. Therefore, group piano lessons are required for the students, to avoid quitting piano learning, being too bored to come to the piano class and those who lose concentration while teaching.

From the study, some teachers know the benefits of teaching group lessons, but some teachers are not sure what group piano teaching is. Some teachers are confusing teaching group lessons and playing duets, trios or accompanying other instruments. And some teachers want to teach group piano lessons because teaching group piano lessons would save their time more than teaching one to one private piano lessons. According to the current situation of piano teaching and learning in Yangon, piano teachers can teach two types of group piano lessons depending on students' age and piano level.

The first type of group piano teaching is for young beginners (between ages 4 to 10). In this group piano lesson, two or more students (up to 5) are taught at the same time. The teacher gives instructions and every student plays the same song together or one by one. Sometimes the teacher can make class room competitions like games for the students. This will motivate the students to play piano and have fun with his/her peer group during the lesson time. But the group piano class duration will be longer than private lesson.

The second type of group piano teaching is for adult and old learners. In this group lesson, three or more students (at most 5) are taught at the same time. The lesson duration will be longer than private lesson time. Students' repertoires are not the same, and each student plays their practice piece. While someone plays in the class, other students listen to his /her playing. After a student finished his/her playing, the teacher criticizes and teaches the student, and gives lecture to all students when

needed. And other students, who listen to the performance, can also give suggestions for the performance such as asking questions to the teacher, and answering questions from the teacher.

But in this case, it will be difficult to ask the students to come at the same time. And parents will complain about teaching their children with other students because they might think that the teacher will care less in group teaching than private teaching. Therefore, the teacher needs to explain about the benefit of teaching group piano lessons and some weaknesses of private piano lessons to the parents. For the group lesson schedule, the lesson can be once a week, twice a week, or once a month; it depends on the teacher and the condition. But it should not be only group piano lessons because group piano lessons cannot teach as much detail as private piano lessons. Therefore teachers are recommended to teach both private and group piano lessons.

### **5.5.3 Classifying student piano level**

In terms of classifying student piano level, it was discovered that most of students cannot be classified by their age and education level. All students are classified their piano level by their musical experiences. Almost all new students' level is zero level because they started to learn music after they have matriculated.

It is because of the Myanmar education system. From the interviews, all of the piano teachers complained about the education system. In Myanmar, students have to attend school almost the whole day. But although students attend class the whole day at school, it is not enough for them to be able to understand the study. Therefore, students have to take tuitions before school and after school and some even take classes at night.

There are two kinds of students, which are students who start to learn piano after matriculating examination (between ages 16-17) and students who started learning piano lessons at a younger age (5-8). Neither student age nor education level can help classify students' piano level. In this case, the researcher agrees with teachers suggestions. Teachers said music should be part of the basic curriculum from elementary school to high school curriculum in both government schools, private schools and international schools. Classifying students' piano level by students'

education level or age is not possible because there is no music curriculum in school. Therefore, classification by musical experience is the only way to access students' piano level.

#### **5.5.4 Teaching procedures and lesson plans**

In terms of teaching procedures, teachers used piano method books and follow the content. Most of them teach note reading first to the student while rhythm and articulations are taught later. According to Walter Robert (as cited in, Nararak, 2006:16), which was stated in Chapter II, there are four kinds of piano teaching methods which are criticism, demonstration, analysis, and inspiration. According to the interviews, teachers used criticism, demonstration and inspiration methods when they teach students, but there was a lack of using the analysis method. And most of them do not have a teaching plan for the lesson; they teach students based on their own experience. Some teachers have lesson plans but it is very difficult to apply because students are very busy with school and they cannot give enough time for practicing piano.

In addition, it was discovered that most of the teachers did not graduate in the field of piano teaching. Some teachers have a certificate in music, but not in the field of piano. Therefore, although teachers applied these methods which are criticism, demonstration and inspiration methods, it is debatable whether or not the teachers teach accordingly. Furthermore, it was found that all of the teachers do not record student playing especially audio recording. Teachers should record student playing and let them listen how they play and what they need to fix. As stated in Chapter II (Agay, 2012) teachers are recommended to use the criticism method that was developed by violinist Carl Phels. In this criticism method, the teacher writes every single detail in a note book or on music sheet by writing or illustration while the student is playing. After that the teacher explains how the piece should be played and how the teacher noted on music sheet, so that student can practice as the teacher suggested until next lesson. Nowadays, it is easier because teacher can also use mp3 or the student's phone for audio recording of the student's playing and his/her suggestions.

To succeed in piano teaching, teachers are suggested to use all methods, which are the criticism, demonstration, inspiration and analysis methods to be able to understand and cover what students need. Besides, teachers should train the students how to analyze and criticize their playing by themselves, so that they can criticize their playing even when they practice alone. And audio recording is highly recommended for the students.

### **5.5.5 Note reading method books**

From the interviews of eight piano teachers, there are varieties of piano method books that are currently used for teaching note reading. Every teacher uses at least two kinds of piano method books to teach note reading. But most of them said that they do not have a full set of method books. Some teachers said they have enough method books, but some teachers said although they have different kinds of method books, they need more updated books that designed and included a current famous movie song or a pop song, because the majority of students are not familiar with the songs from the method books.

In terms of teaching note reading, teacher should also use the most update piano method book that contains current popular songs. And they should have a full set of method books which include current popular songs or movie songs to help and motivate the students to play piano. Moreover, teachers are recommended to use two or more different piano method books from the beginning until intermediate level.

### **5.5.6 Teaching piano technique and sight reading**

#### **1) Teaching piano technique**

In terms of piano technique, it was found that a majority of the piano teachers do not have correct planning and teaching plans for technique. According to Bastien (1988), there are many kinds of techniques for each level and each year that should be undertaken from beginner to advanced level students. But in the interviews, there was no technique teaching procedure and planning for each level. Moreover, the use of piano technique books are very limited, and in the interviews they only mentioned some easy piano technique and method books like Hanon, Dozen a day and

Czerny. But advanced technique pieces, etudes and technique books are not mentioned. Most of the teachers tend to think those teaching scales, arpeggios and some easy technique are enough for the students. It seems teachers are not emphasizing on teaching piano technique and they rather pay more attention to teaching pieces rather than technique.

In order to succeed in teaching piano technique, teacher must have teaching plan for piano technique in each lesson. Furthermore, both teacher and student need to understand how piano technique is important in piano playing. Teacher should spend at least 15 minutes for teaching piano technique and varieties of piano technique books are required in teaching piano. Method books alone cannot be fulfilling the students' technical skills. Teachers need to assign the student not only pieces but also technique pieces such as Czerny, Moszkowski and Chopin etudes, when student reach advanced level. For the young and beginner students, there are many technique books series that are designed for small hands and beginner level. Teachers are suggested to use those technique book series to improve students' technique skills.

## **2) Teaching piano sight reading**

Most of the teachers think that sight reading skill is the ability of the student, and it depends on the individual. Some teachers do not know that sight reading can be trained. And some of them are confuse note reading teaching with sight reading teaching. A few of them thought that their students' sight reading skill is enough and they thought they do not need to teach sight reading. From the interviews, only one teacher has a teaching plan for piano sight reading in every lesson and teaches systematically, and knows that piano sight reading is very important for the students.

Piano teachers said that most students quit piano learning after few months later. This is coherence with Edward Darling's idea which stated in Tasangari's research (2010:13), that the most reason why students drop out from learning piano is because they cannot play pieces by sight. A student, who has a good piano sight reading skill, can learn new music quickly and this ability makes them proud and

motivates them to play more pieces. Therefore, playing by sight is very important for the student.

In order to succeed in sight reading teaching, teachers and student need to know that piano sight reading is crucially important for learning piano. Teacher must have a systematic teaching plan and approach for sight reading teaching. Moreover, teacher must have a full set of the most updated sight reading teaching books, and should prioritize sight reading teaching as important as pieces teaching in each lesson.

### **5.5.7 Supplementary musical activities**

According to the interviews, supplementary musical activities are music theory, music history, ear training, harmonization, improvisation and ensemble playing. From the interviews, it was discovered that some teachers are not well covered in those subjects. Even though some teachers want to teach those subjects, students lack interest in those subjects, and teachers do not have enough time. Furthermore, some teachers think that except from music theory and history, the other subjects are not related to piano teaching.

#### **1) Music theory**

In terms of music theory, Bastien (1988:199) suggested that a systematic music theory teaching should be instructed, to make the student musically literate. Moreover, by learning music theory, students are able to analyze the song by themselves, become at piece memorization and theory is also helpful in improvisation, dictation, modulation and harmonization. Therefore, first of all, both teachers and students need to know how important music theory is, and music theory should be studied as a compulsory subject when learning piano. It is suggested that teachers must teach music theory from beginner level to an advanced level whether the students are interested or not.

Additionally, piano teachers are suggested to teach music theory to all level of students, to achieve an advanced level in music theory. Furthermore, teachers also need to enhance their music theory knowledge since they are not systematically trained piano teachers like in other developed country. Therefore, piano teachers are

strongly recommended to explore more about their career and enhance their musical knowledge.

## **2) Music history**

In terms of music history, it was discovered most of the teachers do not teach music history except for at MIT College. Some teachers teach music history but have no teaching plan for students; they just talk about basic knowledge of music history when needed. The other thing is that most of the teacher did not study at a music school or music conservatory, therefore they might not know much about music history or they may think that music history is not important. All piano teachers should teach music history to their students, to know the history behind the music era and genre.

## **3) Ear training**

In terms of ear training, Fisher (2010:121) stated that ear training is an essential element and important for both students and musicians, since music is an aural and a language that is perceived by ear. So that student can learn pitch, duration, intensity and quality of song by ears, Monroy (2011) also recommended that children must play piano by ear without notation in order to emphasize sound before symbol. In contrast, according to the interviews, there was a lack of such ear training teaching to enhance students' musical knowledge and maturity.

In terms of ear training, it was discovered that most of the teachers do not teach ear training. A few teachers teach ear training but they only teach very basic knowledge of ear training such as whole interval and half interval. Moreover, the teachers teach ear training by his/her own experience rather than using ear training method books. To succeed in ear training, teacher must have a systematic ear training teaching plan or procedure by using ear training teaching books.

## **4) Harmonization**

All of the piano teachers do not teach harmonization and they tend to think that harmonization is not related with classical piano teaching or they do not know that harmonization is needed in piano teaching. Some teachers are assuming that

harmonization is a different field of the study and they do not need to teach harmonization to their students.

To nurture a well-rounded musical education for the student, harmonization teaching is required for every student. According to Jacobson (2006:9), teachers need to consider the expectations of both parents and students. Bastien (1988:101) also suggested that piano teachers need to put emphasis on the needs of students today. By teaching harmonization, students are able to find chords by ear and they can play a song that they heard from somewhere. Through harmonization, students can get benefits such as creativity, chord progression and harmony, and students can apply the knowledge that they learned from music theory class.

To teach harmonization, the teacher chooses a single and short melody from any songs or creates his/her own melody and lets the student choose a potential chord that harmonizes with the melody and asks the student to play it. For advanced students, teachers can assign the student key transposition which is transposing from the original key to another key. To teach harmonization, the teacher needs to explain to the student how chords are related to melody, and general knowledge of music theory should be done before harmonization teaching. Teachers are strongly suggested to explore more about teaching harmonization and its teaching procedure.

### **5) Improvisation**

Improvisation is as important as harmonization in piano teaching. But from the study, most of teachers do not undertake improvisation, because they tend to think that improvisation is different study of field like Jazz music and it is not related to their teaching. This caused a lack of creativity for the students. To nurture a well-rounded musical education for the students, improvisation is needed for all students. Teachers are also recommended to explore more about improvisation to teach the students.

### **6) Ensemble playing**

Except from MIT College, a majority of the teachers do not undertake ensemble playing. Sometimes, some teachers assigned their students to play ensemble but were not seriously conducted. As Fisher (2010) suggested, playing ensemble can

provide limitless benefits of music making possibilities to the pianist. Moreover, Jacobson (2006:261) also stated there are many advantages by playing ensemble, such as aural skill (melody, harmony), helping to keep the rhythm more steady and general musicianship for the student and social interaction.

According to Fisher and Jacobson, students are not able to possess these benefits and advantages, since the majority of teachers do not assign ensemble playing to their students. To become well-rounded students, teachers must assign their students to play ensemble playing as a compulsory subject in piano teaching. According to the students' level, teacher should assign duet pieces or accompaniment for other instruments. If student do not have a partner to play ensemble, the teacher can be a musical model for the student when teacher and student play together. Jacobson (2006:261) also said ensemble playing is a great opportunity for all ages of students that can nurture their aural skill, keeping the rhythm steady, harmony, general musicianship and social interaction. Therefore, teachers are suggested to make lesson plans for ensemble playing, whether are students interested or not.

### **5.5.8 Practice suggestions in teaching piano**

In terms of piano practicing, it was discovered that most of the students do not practice enough. Even if they want to practice, they do not have enough time to practice piano, and another reason is most of students do not have a piano at home. In terms of piano practicing, students should have more time to practice as their piano level is higher. According to the students' level, the teacher needs to give systematic practice suggestions to the students. From the result of interviews, some teachers give suggestions such as practice slowly, counting aloud while playing, clapping first when they see difficult rhythm, hand separate practice, correct body position, correct hand position, practice with metronome, and students are insisted to search the meaning of articulation, genre, and composer biography. These facts are similar to Bastien's (1988:124) practicing suggestions that have been stated in Chapter II. But it was found that only a few give these systematic practice suggestions.

According to the teachers' suggestions, there was a lack of practice suggestions for advanced students, because all of the teachers' suggestions refer to beginner and intermediate level students. According to Bancroft's (2004) practice

suggestions, there was a lack of analyzing parts, organizing priorities, creating action plans, making assumptions, and reacting to realities and limitations. First of all, the teacher needs to explain to the students that playing in the private lesson alone is not enough for them and how practicing is important for all musicians. And teachers are suggested to play the piece and explain how to practice correctly, and demonstrate the piece. Moreover, the teacher needs to explain the piece and demonstrate what are wrong practices compared with correct practicing.

## **5.6 Current piano teaching and learning conditions in Yangon**

According to the interviews, it was found that music education is not well developed in Myanmar yet. But piano teaching and learning has started to develop recently. Compared to ten years ago, piano teaching and learning is more developed. There are many international schools and private schools are opening. Students from international and private schools need to learn a musical instrument and choir singing. Therefore, students are taking private music lessons, and parents also want their children to play some instruments to get a good grade in music in the school. Moreover, piano learning has become popular and a social trend among international and private school students and parents.

Myanmar has been under military rule since 1962. But after 2010, several important changes have taken place in the country, such as the constitution provides the freedom of speech and the press, and the country is more open than before. This becomes a good opportunity to make business for foreign investors in Myanmar. Now, the music organizations from other countries are trying to open music school and teaching center in Yangon. Therefore, the researcher assumed that the condition of piano teaching and learning will be improved in the near future.

## **5.7 Solutions for typical problems and obstacles encountered in teaching piano in Yangon**

### **5.7.1 Suggestions in terms of problems between students and teachers that were mentioned in the research**

1) The suggestion for those who do not listen when they play music, and their hand, wrist and fingers are not relaxed. Students need to practice slowly by listening carefully to what they play. For beginner students, teachers can help the students by singing the melody, to be able to hear what he/she is playing, or students sing and play at the same time. For the hand, wrist and finger stiffness, students should practice slowly since they start to practice a new piece. Maydwell (2007) suggested that teachers need to choose the repertoire that is suitable and in accordance with student musical maturity, hand size and technical level. This means if student with small hands play advanced technical pieces, student will get hand injuries, wrist and hand stiffness, and moreover, students will focus more on struggling with his/her technical problem rather than listening to his playing.

Moreover there is one thing that all teachers need to be careful about when assign new pieces to the students. A majority of the teachers used to assign an advanced or difficult piece for their student as a challenge. They think this might be helping the student to get motivate to play piano. But on the other hand, playing an advanced piece can make the student feel depressed, tense and lack interest in what they are playing. Some students may quit playing piano when they face such problems. Therefore, choosing repertoire for the student is very important, and the teachers' role is very important in this case.

2) For those students who do not practice at home and practice only at lesson time, piano teachers need to consult with both students and parents, and let them know how practicing is important and playing in lesson time alone cannot be fulfill their expectations. Watching a musical video, listening to songs and watching a live concert inspires the student to be a musician and motivates students to practice more.

From the research, except at MIT College, there was a lack of piano examinations and tests. This caused a lack of motivation to practice piano for the students. Furthermore, teachers are recommended to make piano examinations, piano competitions or piano recitals, which every student must perform as a requirement. Giving rewards and certificates can also be an incentive for those who do not want to practice piano. Moreover, teachers are recommended to teach group piano lessons, because group piano lessons can make the students feel more enjoyable than private piano lesson. By teaching group lessons, students will have some positive peer pressure to practice piano.

3) Teacher should have a special teaching plan for young learners (between ages 5 to 8) who cannot concentrate on piano playing. Offering incentives, playing music games and making competitions for the students are encouraged. The lesson should be as enjoyable as possible for young learners. For young learner, teaching them as group piano lesson and using teaching equipment or tools would make it more interesting and enjoyable for them.

4) For those who play piano because of their parents, and who are not interested in playing piano, teachers are recommended to make the piano class more enjoyable and let the student play in group lessons or ensemble playing with other students, rather than teaching them alone.

5) For the lack of role models in Myanmar, the teacher can be a role model for the student. Teachers need to give a regular piano recital and let the student join the concert. Moreover, if there was a concert happening in Yangon, teachers should insist the student watch a concert, and parents should take the children to the concert.

### **5.7.2 Parental involvement, support and problem solutions**

1) Parents who interfere during lesson and complain about students' progress, lesson time, and they want their children to play advanced pieces. In this case, teachers should make a rule and regulation form and let the parents and students read it and follow the instruction since they are enrolling for piano class. In the rule and regulation form, it will contain a rule or discipline such as how to behave before a piano lesson, during piano lesson and after piano lesson.

2) For those who cannot buy a keyboard of electric piano for their children, teacher should consult with the parents and ask them to find free time for their children after school, and insist the students come to the school and practice piano as much as possible.

3) From the research, it was discovered that parent want certificate of piano level. The researcher recommended to all teachers that they should give certificate to the students, after the students finished playing some level, such as piano level 1, level 2 level 3 etc. This can be motivation for the children to try and want higher level of piano skill.

### **5.7.3 The use of materials, resources and aids in teaching and learning piano**

All piano teachers need to update teaching materials such as piano, method books, flash cards and practice rooms. If teachers cannot afford to buy a piano, they should buy an electric piano or keyboard which is cheaper than a piano. Moreover, teachers should have most recently updated books for children that include current famous songs, movie songs and well known folk songs. If there is no music store or music shop, teachers are suggested to find music sheet and music books online. Furthermore, sound proof practice rooms and good environment is needed for piano teaching.

## **5.8 Solutions for offering innovative approaches, to remove barriers and promote new piano teaching**

The researcher has suggestion for both teachers and students to promote piano teaching and learning, and the requirements for the future. The four main factors are as follows:

### **1. Teachers**

Teachers need to learn piano pedagogy and they should make a systematic teaching plan and lesson plan that fits with current piano teaching condition of their own. Making a video record or audio record is recommended while teaching. Teachers

are encouraged to teach not only piano lessons but also supplementary lessons, such as ear training, dictation, improvisation, harmonization, music theory, music history and ensemble playing.

According to interviews, most of the teachers did not graduate in the field of majoring in piano music, so therefore they are recommended to explore more about piano teaching and learning. Teachers need to understand about choosing repertoire for each level of student; the repertoire should not be too difficult or too easy. If repertoires are too difficult for students, student may feel depressed and may quit from piano learning. If repertoires are too easy for students, students may feel bored and less challenged.

Moreover, teachers are recommended to use the four piano teaching methods that were mentioned in chapter II, which are criticism, demonstration, analysis and inspiration methods. They should explore more about other piano teaching methods. Not only should these four piano teaching methods be used but teachers should also create their own teaching methods by their experiences that can help in their piano teaching or their career.

## **2. Student**

Students must have commitment to playing piano and need to practice piano regularly in a systematic way. Although they have school and many classes, they should try to find time to practice piano and set practice time by themselves. Furthermore, students are recommended to watch classical concert to get inspired from international musicians. But, since there were few classical concerts in Myanmar, students need to listen to audio recordings and watch videos to become familiar with classical music.

Playing at recitals and in public is highly recommended for the students. Moreover, playing piano duets and playing accompaniments are crucial important for their musicianship. Besides, since the music education is still underdeveloped in Yangon, Myanmar, all students are recommended to explore more about music online such as reading music articles, journals, music history and piano tutorials or piano master class videos.

### **3. Parental involvement, teaching materials and tools**

Parental involvement is very important in piano teaching. Parents often need to consult about the condition of their children with piano teacher. Parents, the same as piano teachers, also have a responsibility to ask their children to practice regularly when children are at home. If teachers allow parents to stay in the lesson room, parents should be in the lesson room and note what the teacher taught to the children without disturbing anything. Then when children are at home, parents can guide and correct the children playing when they play with wrong body or hand positions and the way they practice.

According to the interviews, teaching materials and tools are unsatisfactory and have many requirements. Most of the teachers do not have a sound proof teaching room, or a good environment for teaching. Besides, most of home teaching students do not have pianos and are using keyboards and electric pianos. In addition, there was a lack of teaching tools for children when teaching music or piano, all teachers just use method books. From the research, furthermore, method books and music books that are translated into Burmese language are needed, because students with a poor educational background cannot understand musical terms and terminology, music theory, music history and musical signs, etc. For the sake of those students, music books that are translated into Burmese language are required.

### **4. General requirements in teaching piano**

According to the interviews, there are many requirements in piano teaching in Yangon. From the study, one of the most encountered problems in teaching piano is making a fixed lesson time and lesson plan. Although the teachers often cannot make fixed lesson time and lesson plans because of the situation in Myanmar education, piano teachers should try to think about the ways they can make it better.

Parental involvement is very important in piano teaching and learning. Therefore, teachers need to discuss with the parents about their children's piano skill and practice routine, and let the parents know how important their role in piano teaching and learning is, and convince them that they can also help to improve their children's piano skill by supporting and giving time to practice for the children.

Teachers are recommended to find new ways of teaching that make students feel more happy and willing to play piano for students, who lack interest and quit learning piano. Another reason why students quit from learning is a majority of people do not know the value of music education and do not know how to appreciate music. It is because music education is not well developed in Yangon, Myanmar, and Myanmar society not aware of music education and its value. Therefore, firstly it is very needed and important to promote music education in Myanmar.

To promote and establish music education in Myanmar, the government education system is a very important factor, because music teaching is not involved in the Myanmar education curriculum. Music should be part of school education curriculum in government school, because with no music curriculum from elementary to high school level students, all student levels are zero in music although they finished matriculated level. If music can be part of the Myanmar education curriculum, musicians can get jobs in government school around the country and there are more hopes for those who are interested in music.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDY**

Based on these research interviews, there should be more research about Western classical music in Myanmar. Since there were no conservatories, researches or articles about Western classical music and Western classical in Myanmar is extremely scarce, there should be many researches, journals and articles about Western classical music in both Myanmar language and English in Myanmar. The current research is only focused on a general pedagogical view of teaching and learning piano in Yangon. Therefore, the researcher recommended continuing research about piano teaching and learning for future research. Especially:

- 1) The development of current Western classical music in specific regions or areas, and how to develop music education in Myanmar.
- 2) Curriculum of music in private or government schools.
- 3) Research about piano teachers' teaching methods in specific regions or areas.
- 4) Research about teaching piano sight reading, articulation, repertoire, ear training, improvisation, harmonization, music history and music theory in specific regions in Myanmar.
- 5) In terms of student piano level and age, what piano method books or teaching methods are used in piano teaching
- 6) Parental involvement in piano teaching and learning.

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## **APPENDICES**

## **APPENDIX A**

### **INTERVIEWEE PERSONAL INFORMATION**

**Mrs. Htay Htay** is a 71 year old independent piano teacher. She only teaches piano at her own house and does not work permanent or part-time teaching at other music schools. The classes open daily. She learned piano since she was very young. She was taught by only one teacher in her life. She got a bachelor degree B.Sc. (Hons) Chemistry at Yangon University. She also partially studied piano at Associate Trinity College of Music, and she has passed the grade- eight theory exam from the Royal School of Music (ABRSM). She also studied at Kyoto University of Textile and Dyeing. In the past, she used to have piano recitals for her students once a year. Now, she has been teaching piano for 37 years already.

**Mr. Marip Naw San** is a 49 year old piano teacher, and currently working as an assistant music director at Yangon Kachin Baptist Church (K.B.C). In the past, he used to teach at student's houses as an independent piano teacher. He holds a bachelor degree B.E (Mechanical) from Yangon Technological University. Not only teaching at K.B.C, he also given piano lessons at his home studio. Although he already has experience in teaching piano since at the age of 20, his music teaching career seriously started about 11 years ago.

**Mr. Moe Naing** is 48 years old. He finished his bachelor degree B.Sc. (Geology) from Yangon University. At first, he was a keyboard player, and later he had a chance to study at Payap University and received his first music certificate (Certificated in Music Study and Piano Performance). He also holds other diploma such as Diploma in Applied Geology, Diploma in English. His other music certificates are Certificate in Orchestra Conducting (Baton Technique), Certificate in Choir Conducting and Choir Arrangement. He is a co-founder of Gitameit Music Center and also a director of Gitameit Music Center and Principal at Legacy Music Academy. He also teaches piano playing and has given Music Appreciation Courses at International

Language and Business Center (I.L.B.C). He plays not only classical but also pop and jazz music as well. He has been teaching piano for 12 years.

**Mr. Myoe Naing** is 65 years old. He is a very famous pianist and independent piano teacher in Myanmar. He has his own piano studio at his home. Now, he has been teaching piano for 35 years. He started learning piano when he was young. He learned piano by self-studying by reading books and asking his seniors. In addition, he sometimes sings a song by playing piano at the concert and, sometimes plays accompaniment for other famous singers. He also makes music arrangements.

**Mrs. Nant Mauleen** is 61 years old. In the past, she was a full time piano teacher at Yamaha Music School in Yangon. Now she is an independent piano teacher and she teaches at students' houses. She started learning piano when she was 15 years old. She graduated her degree B.Sc. (Chemistry) from Yangon University. Now, she has been teaching piano for 40 years.

**Ms. Naw Peh Paleh** is 50 year old. She holds a bachelor degree, B.Sc. (Mathematic) and Master degree (Master of Divinity). She holds a bachelor degree of Church Music (B.C.M), Graduate Diploma in Church Music (G.D.C.M), Master of Church Music (M.C.M). Myanmar Cristian Preaching Training College (M.C.P.T.C). She is currently teaching as a lecturer at Karen Baptist Theological Seminary (K.B.T.S). She has experience in piano teaching since she was young, and now she has been teaching piano about 30 years already.

**Ms. Nyein Lynn Phyu (Olive)** is a 30 year-old piano teacher and is head of piano department at Gitameit Music Center. She started to play piano at the age of 16, with Mr. Moe Naing and, later Mrs. Kit Young. Besides, she has taken many piano lessons and workshops from guest pianists and musicians who have come to Myanmar. Since 2004, she began offering piano lessons. Not only teaching piano, she also played accompaniment and performances with foreign guest performers such as duets, trios, quintets and ensembles. She completed her first bachelor degree B.A (English) from University of East Yangon. She passed ABRSM grade 5 theory in 2007. In 2010, her trio ensemble won second prize at the 3rd Singapore Performer's Festival and Chamber Music Competition at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music.

**Mr. Saw Yawshu Myat Zaw** is a 35 year-old piano instructor, conductor and lecturer. He graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Science in 2002 from Yangon University. In 2006, he also received a Certificate of Ethnomusicology. In 2007, he finished his master degree, Master of Arts in Christian Studies (M.A.C.S) from Myanmar Institute of Theology Myanmar. In 2011, he graduated Master of Music in conducting from Silliman University in the Philippines. Now, he is a full time lecturer at Myanmar Institute of Theology (M.I.T). His piano teaching experience is about 16 years already.

**APPENDIX B**

**THE FROM OF INTERVIEW FOR A CASE STUDY EXPLORING  
PIANO PEDAGOGY IN YANGON, MYANMAR**

**The purposes**

1. To study piano teaching in Yangon, Myanmar. To study and gain a comprehensive understanding of current piano teaching pedagogies.
2. To study the challenges and obstacles of piano teaching and learning in Yangon, Myanmar.

**Interview questions will be divided into 3 parts as follows:**

1. Personal data sheet of interviewee
2. Current piano teaching process
3. The obstructions, problems and suggestions

**Part 1- Personal data sheet of interviewee**

Date----- Month----- Year-----

Name -----, Surname-----, Age-----years old  
Gender - male / female, background of education-----  
-----  
-----

The music degree or certificate-----Others  
(e.g. Certificates & Diplomas) -----  
-----

Current Teaching Place/School/Institution -----  
Position-----, Piano Teaching Experience -----years

Email address-----

Office phone number-----Mobile phone number-----

Home Address -----  
-----  
-----

**Part 2- Current piano teaching process**

▪ What is your lesson schedule and lesson time for each student?  
-----  
-----

▪ Do you teach private lessons or group lessons or the combination of private and group lesson?  
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-----

▪ How do you categorize the level of piano student? By their age or their musical experience?  
-----  
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- How do you teach the students?

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- How do you teach notes reading and what method books do you use? Are students having sufficient skill at reading notes?

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- Do you teach technique and sight reading? How do you teach them?

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-----

- Do you teach other musical activities such as ear training, music theory, harmonization, improvisation and ensemble playing? How do you teach them?

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- What are your practice suggestions and instructions for your students?

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- How do you think the condition of teaching and learning piano is in Yangon/Myanmar?

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**Part 3- The obstructions, problems and suggestions**

- Are there any obstructions or problems in teaching piano?

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- What are the problems found in teaching piano?

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- Do you have problems or obstructions between students and parents?

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- How do you plan to improve piano teaching in the future?

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- Do you have any suggestions relating to this research?

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## **BIOGRAPHY**

<b>NAME</b>	Mr. Aung Chan Nyein
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