

# **Tracking a Transformative Experience: Impressions of Students and Teachers in an Adult Group Piano Class**

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## **From recent studies, we have learned...**

### *Characteristics of Older Adult Music Learners*

- They benefit from:
  - Defining their own needs, goals and motivations
  - Engaging in problem-solving applications
  - Self-directed learning
  - Being aware of cognitive and physical changes
  - Drawing from their own life experiences and backgrounds
- They want to know they will be competent at the task at hand
- They value being autonomous
- They want to develop camaraderie and have external forms of motivation

### *Working with Older Learners in Community Music Making*

- It's a rewarding endeavour
- Facilitators gain personal fulfillment
- Facilitators may also encounter challenges such as:
  - Adapting to a diverse range of students
  - Helping participants to try new things
  - Engaging in significant preparation
  - Finding others to help with classes
  - Dealing with lack of training opportunities

### *Intergenerational Music Learning in Community and Schools*

- Younger and older participants learn from each other
- Learning becomes less intimidating in these settings
- Individuals from different generations learn to interact with each other

### *Older Learners and the Piano*

- Adult students are more interested in skill-based improvements rather than social benefits
- They still strongly value personal benefits

## **Purpose of FSU's University Musical Associates Adult Group Piano Class**

- 1) A way for our students to show gratitude to those who support the College of Music
- 2) A form of community engagement
- 3) A venue for pre-service teachers to gain pedagogical skills

## **Benefits of an Adult Group Piano Class – Connections to Recreational Music Making, Community Music and Piano Pedagogy**

- 1) Provides a new and unique opportunity for older adults to take up piano studies
- 2) Group environment can be more appealing and less intimidating
- 3) Social interaction
- 4) Students feel that they can contribute to the class
- 5) Provides a new experience for student teachers where they can also learn how to approach facilitating physical coordination
- 6) Student teachers learn to develop administrative skills
- 7) Serves as a reminder about the purpose and joy of music
- 8) Helps all parties to set realistic expectations
- 9) Teachers learn from students
- 10) The intergenerational blend fosters an amicable learning environment

## **Recommendations for Starting an Adult Group Piano Class within the College Learning Environment**

- use the set up of a lead teacher with 1 or 2 assistants. This is ideal especially if there are varying levels in the class
- help inexperienced student teachers gain confidence
- incorporate repertoire sharing sessions (less intimidating than a recital)
- choose an adult method to help give students teachers structure
- ensure there is a lot of variety
- encourage student teachers to incorporate listening activities
- choose the lead teacher for this setup carefully
- search for students:
  - donors – turn this into a way for students to say, “Thank you!”
  - Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI)
  - local assisted living center

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