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Pedagogical practices in a Yamaha Music School were explored using ethnographic techniques to collect data during one semester of instruction. Two groups of participants served as informants in this study: (1) children 4–6 years of age, who were enrolled in the Yamaha Junior Music Courses, and (2) their teachers and parents in the setting. Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) guidelines as published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children were the theoretical grounding for the study. The following question guided the investigation: In what ways are the events and interactions in a Yamaha music class congruent or incongruent with DAP guidelines? Congruent events and interactions were the pace and variety of instructional activities, recognition of individuals, involvement of parents, and inclusion of dramatic play. Incongruent events and interactions were the approach to two-hand playing, fixed accompaniment tempos, minimal peer interactions, and fixed curricular goals.

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Developmentally Appropriate Practice in a Yamaha Music School

Parents have the choice of many optional educational experiences for their children outside of those available in schools. One option is music instruction offered by Yamaha Music Schools. The Yamaha Corporation has a worldwide reputation for manufacturing pianos and electronic keyboard instruments. Because of Yamaha's prominence in the marketplace, there is a common association of the trade name with keyboard and piano instruction, although proponents of the Yamaha schools claim that the instruction offered is more comprehensive (Yamaha Corporation, 1994). However, since the materials used in the Yamaha method can only be obtained from the Yamaha corporate headquarters *after* families enroll in the program, it is difficult for parents and educators to ascertain what constitutes education in this setting.

The Yamaha Music School originated in Japan in 1954 as an experimental music class (Kawakami, 1977). In 1965, the schools were expanded to include overseas locations. The Yamaha philoso-

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phy is that "music is a common language that unites people across international boundaries" (Yamaha Corporation, 1994). In a 1973 address to the First National Junior Course Teachers' Symposium, Genichi Kawakami, founder of the Yamaha method, urged Yamaha teachers to "bring enjoyment of music to mediocre children, and develop children who possess superior talent. The contents and the methods for each group will naturally differ" (Kawakami, 1977, p. 21). The ultimate goal of the method is to produce superb performers, composers, and audience members: "All signs lead to the collective learning mode supported by parental co-learning and co-practicing ... and well-educated young children may finally become the dream students of the masters, or just as well, conscious and present music audiences" (Looney & Kavakov, 1985, p. 18).

At the 1984 National Conference on Piano Pedagogy, a national director of Yamaha Instruction presented the Yamaha approach as a system established on developmental, psychological, and musical principles (Looney & Kavakov, 1985). One of the tenets of the method is that the sharp aural perceptions of children between the ages of 3 and 7 create an optimal window for learning in which children absorb rhythm, pitch, and harmony in a manner similar to language acquisition (Looney, 1985; Yamaha Corporation, 1994). In an article titled "Ear before Eye: The Yamaha Method," Wagner (1985) explains that "listening leads to imitation, imitation leads to application and ultimately, application leads to creation" (p. 11). The emphasis on singing and playing by ear in the Yamaha method is based on this belief. Solfège, which a Yamaha teacher in the present study described as a "fluent language," functions in the Yamaha method as a means of aural communication between the teacher, children, and parents. Singing is a critical component, and a fixed-*do* system is used to cultivate absolute pitch (Looney & Kavakov, 1985; Wagner, 1985).

During the last two decades, the education of young children has become a growing concern among various organizations and researchers. In 1987, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) published *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs* (Bredekamp, 1987). The authors detailed specific guidelines for those who work with young children. Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) served as a response to a growing movement toward formalized practices in early childhood programs nationwide—practices that NAEYC viewed as contrary to child development. DAP does not represent one theoretical view of early childhood education; rather, it is an interwoven tapestry of several views.

The guidelines were revised in 1997 in response to emerging research. The 1997 revision contained the official NAEYC position statement on DAP and specific guidelines for implementation. Although many criticisms were addressed in the revision, early childhood specialists continue to debate the universal validity of DAP (Charlesworth, 1998; Lubeck, 1998). Arriving at a definition of DAP

is complicated by the varied presentations of what DAP means in the literature. The following three principles, offered by Kostelink, Soderman, and Whiren (1993), are given for the purpose of this study:

> 1. Developmentally appropriate means taking into account what is known about how young children develop and learn and matching that to the content and strategies they encounter in early childhood programs.
>
> 2. Developmentally appropriate means approaching children as individuals, not as a cohort group.
>
> 3. Developmentally appropriate means treating children with respect—understanding children's changing capacities and having faith in children's continuing capacity to change. (pp. 32–33)

Bredekamp, editor of the 1987 and 1997 NAEYC publications, in an interview defined DAP as "a set of guidelines to encourage a way of teaching that's informed by child development knowledge, knowledge of the children as individuals, and the children in their social and family contexts" (S. Bredekamp, personal communication, November 13, 1999). Since the earliest discussions of developmental appropriateness, music educators have incorporated DAP guidelines into their recommended practices (e.g., Andress & Walker, 1992; Kenney, 1997; Sims, 1995). The NAEYC has also published materials on music by leading music educators (e.g., Andress, 1985; McDonald, 1979).

Instruction provided by the Yamaha Music Schools is available to all ages. The primary resources for information on the method are either self-published documents or reports from national conference presentations. Specific research on Yamaha practice is not available in refereed sources. In particular, no research has examined Yamaha instruction in the context of extant literature and thinking on DAP. The purpose of this study was to explore pedagogical practice in the Junior Music Course (JMC), a four-semester program for beginning students who were 4 to 6 years old. The following question guided the investigation: In what ways are the events and interactions in a Yamaha music class congruent or incongruent with DAP guidelines?

METHOD

The Site

The site selected for this study was a Yamaha Music School in the suburbs of Phoenix, Arizona. The current owner and director founded the school in 1986. The East Valley Yamaha School is housed in the corner of a typical suburban strip mall at a busy commuter intersection. I asked a parent how she found the school, and she replied that a friend had told her about the program. The school director confirmed that the majority of the parents come to the school through referral. The school has an enrollment of approximately 500 and offers classes for students who range in age from 3 years through adult. Private instruction is available for selected pupils.

The physical site consists of a waiting area, an office, a teaching studio for private instruction, and two classrooms. A door connects the waiting room with a large classroom, which was the primary observation site for this study. The initial impression of the large carpeted classroom is that it is an inviting, colorful, and child-friendly place. At the level of a young child's eyes, the walls have a stenciled border of small robin-like birds with music notes around their open beaks. A bright red clock and two large lithographs of Mother Goose scenes decorate the room. Yamaha electric keyboards are spaced in groups of twos and threes along three of the walls facing the center of the room, and folding chairs situated behind the keyboards provide seating for parents and siblings. The teacher's Yamaha Electone keyboard, acoustic piano, and rolling chalkboard are spread across the front wall, leaving a large, center area for group activities.

The Participants

Two groups of participants informed this study: the children enrolled in the Yamaha Junior Music Class (JMC), and the adults in the setting. Miss Judy, one of the East Valley Yamaha School teachers, served as a primary informant due to her direct involvement with the children. However, the parents and school director also provided information about the Yamaha program.

Children enrolled come from a variety of educational backgrounds. For children who attend public or private schools in which music is a part of the curriculum, Yamaha instruction is a supplemental educational experience. However, the school director explained that the East Valley Yamaha school also provides a "home-schooled music course," by which she meant that for home-schooled children, Yamaha instruction may be their only group music experience.

The participant children were enrolled in two different levels of the JMC. The classes were chosen based on two criteria: the students' age, and beginner status in the Yamaha program. Two classes, taught by the same instructor, were selected from a list of classes available at the East Valley Yamaha School. Both met once a week for 1 hour at a time. An initial observation was arranged to assess the appropriateness of these classes for the study and to establish permission and access for longitudinal observation.

The first class observed was a group of twelve 4- to 5-year-old children who were beginning their first semester on the evening of my initial visit. The second class was a group of twelve 5- to 6-year-old children who were beginning their third semester in the course. Both classes met for an hour once a week in a late-afternoon time slot.

Miss Judy, who had been the children's only instructor, with the exception of a few transfer students, taught both classes observed in the program. Miss Judy began her teaching career in the East Valley Yamaha School after "surviving" [her term] compulsory exams and

completing five days of training for the JMC at the Yamaha Corporate headquarters in Orange County, California. At the beginning of the study, Miss Judy had accumulated 3 years of experience in the program and was pursuing additional Yamaha certification.

Data Collection and Analysis

Observations at the East Valley Yamaha School were conducted during the fall of 1998. Data collection involved ethnographic techniques, including classroom observations, field notes, audio and video recordings, formal interviews, informal conversations with parents and other adult teachers at the school, and collection of artifacts. The bulk of the data was collected through observations in two classes over one semester of instruction. I observed weekly classes, a parent meeting, and two performances. When observing, I took field notes from several positions, typically from one of the seats along the wall. This provided a good location from which to record classroom activities and observe teacher and parent interactions with children. Permission was obtained to videotape both classes and the fall recital. Although Yamaha supervisors and administrators videotape classes periodically, some of the children seemed distracted during the sessions that I videotaped. Therefore, I determined that field notes would be the least intrusive means of data collection in this setting.

Throughout the observations, I engaged in parent-initiated conversation as opportunities presented themselves. The children looked in my direction from time to time, but never inquired directly about my presence in the room or the notes that I was writing. During the third week of observation, I introduced myself to parents as an observer from the local university. Several parents seemed relieved that I was not there to evaluate Miss Judy, and one parent confided, "Every now and then they (Yamaha supervisors) will drop in and observe or videotape a class—but they never come two weeks in a row so we were a little worried. We like Miss Judy, and we were concerned there might be a problem."

Field notes included three types of information: descriptions of the site and participants; class activities and materials used; and interactions among Miss Judy, the children, and the parents. Field notes were transcribed as close to the observation time as possible. Field note and interview transcripts, videotapes, and audiotapes were used in analysis. Data were coded using general developmental categories from DAP guidelines (physical, social/emotional, cognitive) and musicianship categories (piano, aural skills, singing) found in the Yamaha curriculum. Analysis also revealed the specific DAP categories of individuality and cultural context.

Several techniques were used to establish trustworthiness in the final report. I examined the data for disconfirming evidence. The viewpoints of several individuals apart from the researcher were sought within the setting, including Miss Judy, several parents, the school director, and a peer observer. Drafts of the report were given

to Miss Judy and the school director for review and comment. In addition, a group of peer researchers outside the East Valley Yamaha School conducted periodic debriefing sessions.

SELECTED STORIES: THE YAMAHA MUSIC CLASSROOM

During my initial visit to the site, I expected to observe two group piano classes, since the traditional perception of the Yamaha method is that it consists of piano instruction. Indeed, for a portion of every class meeting, the children played their Electone pianos. However, in addition to keyboard time, 30–40 minutes of each JMC class was devoted to activities that often resembled those in a general music classroom. The following two narratives, one from each class, illustrate the variety of activities observed.

Vignette I: Class Begins

It is 5:00 p.m., and the 4- and 5-year-old beginners are settling at their keyboards with their parents. Miss Judy begins at the closest keyboard, greets Shannon, and puts a sticker on her "homework" page (teacher term for practice songs assigned the previous week). She proceeds around the room, greeting each child while checking for completed homework. Miss Judy calls all 12 children (many bring their parents) to form a circle in the open center of the carpeted room and leads them in steady beat movements to a three-part (ABA) instrumental recording. The A section repeats, and everyone opens hands and arms "alligator-mouth style" at the end to close with a final big clap on the cutoff. The children giggle and smile with expressions of pride (they all got the cutoff). "Great job, you guys!" (Big smiles all around in response. They sit.)

"What about TAHN TAHN TAHN? Who remembers what that looks like?" Miss Judy immediately holds up a flash card of a quarter note and sings (to the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb"): "Draw a circle and color it in, color it in, color it in. Draw a circle and color it in, and add a stem for a quarter note." The class moves to the white board in front corner of the room. Miss Judy draws a circle and fills it in as they sing, scribbling very fast to fit the tempo of the song. Children take turns three at a time drawing quarter notes on the board as Miss Judy praises each child's work. The children return to the center of the room and sit down.

Miss Judy passes out magnet boards. She leads the children in "writing" *do*s on their boards to make ten in all. She says, "What if I want to make the train song? How many *do*s will I need?" Rachel immediately answers, "Three!" They sing the train song and then Miss Judy asks, "Who brought their thumb today?" All the kids respond with laughter. They practice *do-do-do* on the floor with their thumbs. Miss Judy asks, "How am I going to find *do*?" She answers her own question with a whispered chant, "Two black keys and *do* is white." The chant is repeated several times as the children join in.

As Miss Judy sends the children to their keyboards, she says, "Who remembers the magic word? I say SWITCH and you say ON." Some children turn their keyboards on, and Miss Judy continues, "John—ready to go? Switch off. Okay, when I say go, you put your hand on *do*. SWITCH ON!"

Vignette II: Kings and Queens

Miss Judy is at her Electone keyboard, and the 5- and 6-year-old beginners are just finishing a song at their keyboards. She calls out, "Show me your straight rows." She begins to count down, "10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, ..." and the children hurry over to her keyboard. She says, "Close your eyes. Is this *sol* ?" She plays the note G three times in a row. Some of the children start to sing *sol-sol-sol.*

Miss Judy says, "Okay, Kings and Queens," and they sing "London Bridge" (key of G major) in solfège starting on D (fourth line): *re-mi-re-do-ti-do-re, la-ti-do, ti-do-re* (etc.). The children's singing has a piercing quality as they review the melody. Individual children sing short fragments in solfège as an echo response to Miss Judy. The whole group sings the song in solfège again. Miss Judy suddenly moves the melody down one octave for a few phrases. "Now sing it in your G-major voice," she says, moving back to the upper octave. "Okay, Kings, it's your turn," and the boys echo. "Queens, it's your turn," and the girls also echo.

As they finish "London Bridge," Miss Judy calls out, "Target practice," and the children move into a two-line formation at her piano. She draws an archery-like target with four zones on the whiteboard. Miss Judy asks, "How many points if we sing here?" pointing to the outer zone. ("Bull's-eye" evidently means accurate pitch.) "How about 250 points. What about if we get here? Let's say 500 points. What if we get here? That would be 1000 points. What if we hit the bull's-eye? I think that would be a hundred million points! High *do* is the target. Stand on your tiptoes. Queens, it's your turn." The girls sing with soft voices. They are near, but not matching the pitch of the "London Bridge" melody. "Ok, Kings." Some of the boys match the pitch, one of the boys sings with a low, gravel-type voice. Miss Judy says, "Good job!"

The children move back to their keyboards. Miss Judy leads a two-chord pattern from the accompaniment for "London Bridge," with her Electone keyboard set to keep a drumbeat for the tempo. She divides the class into two groups, one to play the chords and one to play the melody. Miss Judy calls out chord patterns as they play the song, and several parents help with the children's hand positions and notes. She calls out, "Switch" (from melody to chords) halfway through the song, and the children try their new parts, but the melody seems lost. The song ends.

She calls the class to the carpet area and asks, "Who has found the bumps in the road?" (She is referring to an instrumental motive in a listening piece.) They to act out a portion of the *Alice in Wonderland*

story to an instrumental piece from one of the Yamaha recordings. Miss Judy says, "I have a surprise for you. What could it be?" Immediately several students reply, "Homework!" Miss Judy passes out homework sheets and closes with the "Goodbye to Yamaha" song. She says, "Adiós, amigos," and class is dismissed.

YAMAHA JMC AND DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE

The purpose of this study was to determine in what ways the events and interactions of a Yamaha music class are congruent or incongruent with DAP guidelines. There are several interpretations of the term "developmental" among early childhood specialists. NAEYC acknowledges individual and cultural influences on development, while recognizing generalized similarities across age ranges. In fact, DAP guidelines state that "individual and cultural variations are the norm, not the exception" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 118). Discussion of the data is aligned with the DAP areas of child development and learning, children as individuals, and social and cultural contexts. Quotations in the discussion below will be restricted to the DAP guidelines (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997) for children, ages 3 through 5, and identified by corresponding page number, unless otherwise noted.

Child Development and Learning

Sensitivity to the young child's physical development and need to actively move in the classroom is one component of DAP. "Requiring too much sitting is at odds with young children's characteristic mode of learning through activity" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 103). The pace of the Yamaha instruction kept the children moving every 5 to 7 minutes. A typical class involved several transitions from children's keyboards to the carpet, Miss Judy's acoustic piano, or her Electone keyboard. Various standing and floor activities characterized the class time in the open area. Early childhood teachers attend to various stages of children's physical development.

At the East Valley Yamaha school, the older children exhibited more advanced and developed fine motor skills than those in the younger class. Several could play melodic phrases with ease at the keyboard. However, the curricular requirement of playing the keyboard with both hands was difficult for some students, as documented in field-note transcripts:

> As Miss Judy makes her way around the room, helping several children coordinate their hands, a parent comments, "If the piano could be played with the right hand, no one would have any troubles." I hear Miss Judy say to another parent, "Because of their developmental stage, boys take longer to put two hands together, but they get there when they're ready."

According to a 1990 Yamaha conference report, "The materials and developmental sequences designed in Japan ... have proven to be

difficult for average learners here [in America]" (Jones, 1990, p. 370). In the vignette above, Miss Judy communicated an "awareness of individual differences" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 124) appropriate to DAP. However, as typified in the Kings and Queens vignette, problems surfaced as Miss Judy called out the solfège for left-hand chords (whole note rhythm) while the children's right hands played a melodic line. DAP addresses this type of inappropriate practice: "Curriculum expectations are not well matched to children's intellectual capabilities ... so children do not understand what is being taught" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 130). The children had difficulty completing this task not only because of the physical coordination challenge, but also because of the cognitive challenge present by the multiple tasks.

Physical and cognitive challenges often overlap. In several classes, Miss Judy led the children in continuous steady-beat patterned movement to instrumental selections. She referred to this as the "rhythm step." Her primary objective was to engage the children in continuous beat movements for the duration of a song (usually 2 to 3 minutes). At the same time, she often framed the activity in the context of a story. Stories and dramatic play are encouraged in the DAP guidelines to support "children's language, cognitive, and social development" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 110).

The use of solfège as a "second language" is consistent with DAP guidelines: "The early childhood years are also an optimal time to acquire fluency in a second language" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 104). While use of diatonic fixed-*do* solfège is not typical of American general music instruction, I noticed differences between the first- and third-semester classes. By the third semester, the children were able to associate syllables with tonal patterns, indicating that they were able to attach some meaning to the system.

Preschool children tend to have verbal outbursts in which they use their own voice to think out loud or control their behavior. Termed "private speech" by Vygotsky (Cole, John-Steiner, Scribner, & Souberman, 1978), this characteristic is an integral component of children's cognitive development. A part of DAP is to understand children's outbursts within the context of their development: "Teachers of young children need to understand which aspects of children's speech do not need correcting because they are developmental [such as private speech and overgeneralizations]" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 109). I recorded this interchange during one of the 5:00 classes:

> The children move to the piano to sing "Mary Had a Little Lamb." Miss Judy begins to say, "Imagine you are on a big stage ..." John interrupts and belts out, "Mary had a little man, little man, little man." Miss Judy says to John, "Did you know you have two voices—one for the playground and one for singing. Let's look inside and find your singing voice."

Miss Judy's response to John's outburst was to redirect rather than correct.

In addition to the physical and cognitive issues noted above, the DAP guidelines list several considerations for social and emotional development (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 115–118, 123–135). The importance of peer interaction is a critical component of DAP: "From their experiences and interactions, children discover that other people have different points of view, which challenges and begins to break down their egocentrism" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 114). I observed that the majority of social interactions took place between Miss Judy and the class, Miss Judy and individual children, and the individual parents with their children. Instruction was highly teacher-directed and whole-group structured. Opportunities for independent or small-group exploration were not observed. In the Yamaha classroom, the children may be *in* class together, but they are not *interacting* with each other in peer relationships. However, the fact that "parents are always welcome in the program" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 134), whether at the keyboards or as participants in other class activities, is one aspect of the Yamaha approach that is congruent with DAP guidelines. Miss Judy encouraged the parents to be active participants with the children in the first few weeks of class with the goal of encouraging independent participation for portions of the class session. By the sixth week, all of the children joined her on their own for group circle activities. The Yamaha curriculum also includes a parent meeting during the seventh week of the semester, in lieu of the regular class session, so that the teacher and parents can discuss the program.

DAP guidelines also remind teachers to "be aware of each child's self-concept and self-esteem at this point in development" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 118). One of the teaching practices of the Yamaha method is to set an accompaniment pattern with the teacher's Electone instrument (heard as a rhythm section) to keyboard and solfège exercises. Miss Judy consistently began with a slow to moderate tempo and increased the tempo on successive repetitions of the exercise. While some of the advanced children found this an appropriate challenge, others exhibited frustration in their facial expressions or just stopped playing altogether. According to DAP, it is inappropriate to "move all children though the same subskills in the same time frame" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 124), although some children may be ready to do so. The developing self-esteem of children, combined with their frustration if they cannot complete a task, is an issue for consideration in the Yamaha program.

Children as Individuals

The recognition of individuals within a group context is a critical component of DAP. Analysis of the data revealed the importance of this issue within the Yamaha program. The DAP guidelines caution that "tremendous individual variation exists between children of the same age, and different patterns of development occur within any one child" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 119).

In the same way that DAP recognizes the importance of children as individuals, teachers are also individuals who impact the learning environment. Miss Judy is a woman in her thirties who exudes energy and excitement while projecting a professional image. She chose a career as a legal assistant after completing a degree in piano performance and balances her business career with her teaching because it provides a place for her to use her musical training while maintaining financial security. However, DAP guidelines cite a "lack of early childhood professional preparation" and "teachers with no specialized training in working with 3- through 5-year-old children" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 134) as inappropriate practice, even if the teachers have certification or training for other age levels. Miss Judy uses material from one undergraduate college course in educational psychology combined with student personality profiles compiled by the East Valley Yamaha School staff to guide her teaching practice. When I inquired about her first teaching experience, she shared, "My first teaching was okay, but I came here from a courtroom mentality and had never taught." Miss Judy found teaching a challenge at first, but it is now one she enjoys. She refers to the children with particular pleasure, commenting, "Hands down, the kids are the best thing about being here." She uses teaching practices congruent with DAP guidelines such as showing patience, "realizing that not every minor infraction warrants a response," and "modeling and encouraging expected behavior, redirecting children to more acceptable activities, and setting clear limits" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 129).

Miss Judy also uses teaching practices not congruent with DAP guidelines. Use of praise is not restricted in the DAP guidelines, provided that "teachers use verbal encouragement in ways that are genuine and related to an actual task or behavior" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 129). In Vignette I, Miss Judy appropriately congratulated the children on their recognition of the cut-off, demonstrated by their "alligator-style clap." However, praise can be incongruent with DAP if "Teachers constantly and indiscriminately use praise so that it becomes meaningless and useless in motivating children" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 129). For example, in the "target practice" portion of Vignette II, the girls did not match pitch, and some of the boys were not using a singing voice, yet they received praise.

According to DAP, teachers engage in inappropriate practice when they "frequently group children or set up competing teams by age, gender, or other ways that diminish children's sense of their being part of a whole group" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 125). Miss Judy's use of competitive gender groupings was inconsistent with DAP guidelines. This strategy was frequent throughout the semester, but seemed to come from a lack of awareness.

Two examples of individual children illustrate the importance of individuality: a current Yamaha student named William, and a former Yamaha student named Linda. William, who participated in the

older class, is nearly seven years old. His mother shared "how much better this class is for him than the other class he used to be in." She explained that he needed play, and that "Miss Judy really knows how to talk to the children and play with them." Miss Judy is indeed playful as she teaches. When I asked her to tell me about William, she noted, "William has been through every teacher, shipped around from class to class during his first year. He is a boy with a great deal of energy and just needs the right environment to channel his energy in a productive manner." DAP suggests that teachers design learning experiences where children "can succeed most of the time, and yet be challenged to work on the edge of their development" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 124). I observed a boy who was focused and followed the lesson with success.

William's mother demonstrated a high degree of interaction with him during classes. In a similar fashion to the other parents, she leaned forward and pointed to notes, sang along, and followed his playing carefully. He seemed anxious to participate and interacted with Miss Judy throughout the class. William's mother is glad that her child is seen as an individual within the class setting. Miss Judy's interactions with William are an example of recognizing children as individuals, congruent with DAP.

As I observed the children in Miss Judy's JMC classes, I found that most were active and participated with enthusiasm. As the importance of individuality continued to appear throughout the data, I examined the setting to look for children who did not seem to be engaged in the class instruction. A few children in the beginning class were young 4-year-olds, and the hour-long format was difficult for them. If "requirements of children repeatedly exceed their developmental capabilities" (Bredekamp & Coppple, 1997, p. 124), then practice is incongruent with DAP. In this case, the hour-long format is dictated by the Yamaha class schedule. I observed the parents and Miss Judy deal with the young 4-year-old children as individuals, and they participated when they chose to do so.

Individuality is not a generalizable theme for all children at the East Valley Yamaha School. I did not observe other teachers and classes in which different practices may occur. Linda's story, which follows, provides a perspective of one older beginner who had a different class experience.

As the fall progressed, a professional contact referred me to Linda's family and suggested that I talk with them about their experience in the Yamaha program. I arranged an interview with Linda's mother. Linda had completed three semesters of study at the East Valley Yamaha School. She was an older beginner who started the program at age 7 and by her second semester was a top student. Her mother observed that she "could memorize everything they gave her, but she didn't understand it. There was no connection of the notes on the staff with her brain."

At the beginning of her third semester of study, Linda's teacher recommended that she move into a more advanced class. She noted

that Linda was about 1 year older than the rest of the children (because of her late start), and that she was handling the material so easily that an advanced class might be a more appropriate challenge. Linda's mother explained that this was when the problems began: "Linda couldn't sight-read the songs, and they needed to be able to do that and play it as a solo." Linda fell behind and, according to her mother, was often in tears during the class. Her parents debated what to do, as they had made a large financial investment in the program (lessons, books, recordings). She explained that they liked Linda's teacher and believed that she was doing a good job. However, "Linda didn't fit in and couldn't do the work." They eventually pulled Linda out of the class and enrolled her in a traditional private lesson studio. Linda's experience illustrates an incongruent practice in which "the curriculum and environment are essentially the same for each group of children that come through the program" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 124). Linda was moved to a different class primarily because of her age—she did not match the prescribed norm. Her teacher may have had the best of intentions, but her lack of consideration for Linda's individuality within the larger context was incongruent with DAP.

Social and Cultural Contexts

The recognition of social and cultural contexts in the learning environment is an important aspect of DAP. As the semester progressed, the director and Miss Judy made it a point to stress two specific aspects of the Yamaha program that point to contexts specific to the culture of Yamaha: *their* comparison of Yamaha to Suzuki, and comprehensive musicianship.

The uniqueness of the Yamaha approach, as perceived and emphasized by the director and Miss Judy, emerged in the course of the study. During an interview, the director frequently compared Yamaha Music Schools and Suzuki violin programs in America, explaining that the Suzuki program is "larger than ours." She continued, "We are not wide-open. We can't sell our materials to outsiders, and not just anyone can teach the method—you have to go through our certification and training program." However, the only teacher training facility in the United States is located at the Yamaha headquarters in California. She explained that the tightly monitored training and materials serve as a quality control for the method. Miss Judy, who had begun Suzuki violin as a young child, also compared Yamaha and Suzuki in respect to performance. In contrast to the formal style of Suzuki recitals, she favors the casual "in-class" performance parties for the parents. These aspects of the Yamaha culture were important to the director and Miss Judy.

Comprehensive musicianship forms a part of the Yamaha culture. In fact, the director proposed an edit to a draft of this article to change the phrase "serves the function of providing *piano instruction*" to read "serves the function of providing *comprehensive music eduction.*"

The concept of comprehensive music education is a part of the Yamaha materials as well.

A flyer published by the Yamaha Music Education System lists the following curriculum components: hearing (listening), singing, playing, and creating. Still, analysis of the data by musicianship categories revealed that whether the class was engaged in a solfège exercise, listening and movement piece, or chant, the instructional content was always tied to a keyboard song. Instructional content was also test driven, in that children were tested by additional Yamaha personnel each semester in order to assess the success of the teacher in covering the curricular content. It is incongruent with DAP guidelines to use testing to measure young children against an established norm rather than "provide information about children's degrees of understanding or progress" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 133). "Comprehensive musicianship" as used by the Yamaha personnel is meant to convey a well-rounded course of musical instruction. However, the musical content in the Yamaha JMC course is actually determined by fixed curricular goals.

CONCLUSION

The Yamaha Music Schools offer specialized musical training. The expectation for individual children to achieve similar skills throughout the semester is a strong component of the program. However, DAP emphasizes children's individual and social construction of knowledge. Congruence with DAP does not preclude teacher-directed activities (as observed in the East Valley Yamaha school), as long as teacher-directed activities are incorporated within a child-centered program.

The crux of the issue is that DAP advocates an approach that allows young children to explore concepts and construct understanding rather than follow a predetermined and fixed plan. The JMC course is structured so that the students complete one book per semester, covering specific musical content. Children in the first semester class rarely explored or constructed understanding on their own, but by the third semester several demonstrated conceptual understanding, though how this was accomplished was unclear. I am aware that activities such as composition are included in Yamaha private instruction or later semesters; these activities were not observed in the JMC. An area for further study would be the apparent dichotomy between a student-centered learning approach as outlined in DAP and the curricular-centered music content of the Yamaha Music Schools.

Miss Judy was committed to her students and created a climate that fostered many events congruent with DAP, such as pace and variety of instructional activities, recognition of individuals, involvement of parents, and inclusion of dramatic play. These events were under Miss Judy's control as a teacher. However, I also observed several aspects of the program that seemed incongruent, such as the

approach to two-hand playing, use of fixed accompaniment tempos, minimal peer interactions, and emphasis on fixed curricular goals. Most of these aspects are dictated by curricular requirements and are out of her control.

Music instruction at the East Valley Yamaha School, while multifaceted, is directly shaped by the piano instructional method. This was a localized study, and the results cannot be immediately generalized to all Yamaha music programs. However, this study can inform further research in many programs that teach young children.

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