

CASE STUDIES OF THE PRACTISING BEHAVIOUR OF MUSIC STUDENTS WITH DIFFERING REASONS FOR MUSICAL STRIVING

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Background

Research in the 1990s delineated the crucial role of deliberate practice for the acquisition of expertise in playing a musical instrument. Work in academic domains has meanwhile investigated the associations between motivational beliefs, self-regulated behaviour, and learning outcomes.

Aims

This study seeks to investigate the links between motivational beliefs and self-regulated practising behaviour in children and adolescents.

Method

The paper presents findings from the second stage of a longitudinal study. In stage one, 678 candidates in graded performance examinations completed a questionnaire assessing motivational beliefs and practice behaviour. In stage two, 20 of these participants were recruited one year later, in order to observe their final preparation for the subsequent annual examination. The participants were selected on the basis of their high or low scores on five factors emerging from an adapted version of Ryan and Connell's *Self-Regulation Questionnaire*. These factors consisted of motives to strive in music learning: internal, social,

external, shame-related, and exam-oriented. The observations consisted of one videotaped practice session in each participant's home. Immediately afterwards, the recording was reviewed to obtain verbal data concerning remembered cognitions that had occurred while practising. The behavioural and verbal data were analysed using the software program *The Observer*, in order to investigate behaviours and cognitions related to each participant's motivational orientation.

Results

Analysis of the large data set is ongoing, so the conference presentation will take a case-study approach to illustrate some of the emerging themes. Preliminary analysis confirms findings in the academic domain that higher levels of intrinsic motivation are associated with higher levels of cognitive engagement and use of self-regulated learning strategies.

Conclusions

The mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods used in the study has uncovered a rich body of information that begins to clarify the complex motivational and behavioural nature of young people practising a musical instrument.