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Exploring the "secret garden": Instructional communication in one-to-one instrumental lessons
Desvendando o "jardim secreto": A comunicação entre professor e aluno no ensino individual do instrumento

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to present a discussion on the existing paradigm of instructional communication in one-to-one instrumental lessons. Some authors described individual lessons as something like a 'secret garden' compared with the scrutiny given to classroom behavior in schools. In such lessons, to communicate and express ideas about musical meaning has been established as one of six instrumental/vocal teacher roles. However, the overall studies reported that one-to-one instrumental teaching has mostly followed a model characterized by one-way communication from teacher to student. In addition, the literature outlined that instrumental teachers used a specific pedagogical vocabulary to explain and demonstrate a skill. Some strategies for communicating this vocabulary effectively were highlighted and discussed in this article. Regardless of the insights here discussed, the literature review presented indicated few studies focused on instructional communication in one-to-one instrumental lessons. Although this field of research is increasing, some authors claim that the research in instrumental teaching is not following up the current demand for this practice.

Keywords: *One-to-one instrumental teaching; instructional communication; teacher and student interactions; communication strategies; teaching cues.*

Resumo

O presente artigo discute o estado da arte referente à comunicação de instruções no ensino individual do instrumento. Alguns autores descreveram a aula individual como um "jardim secreto", em comparação com o escrutínio científico dado às aulas de música em grupo. A partir da investigação já feita sobre esta temática foi possível verificar que a comunicação de ideias relacionadas a um significado musical tem sido estabelecida como um dos seis papéis do professor de instrumento/canto. No entanto, a grande parte dos estudos reportam que o ensino instrumental tem seguido, na sua maioria, um modelo caracterizado pela comunicação unidirecional do professor para o aluno. Além disso, a literatura existente tem apontado que os professores de instrumento usam um vocabulário pedagógico específico para explicar e demonstrar uma competência. Algumas estratégias para comunicar este vocabulário de forma efetiva foram destacadas e discutidas neste artigo. Com base na literatura levantada foi possível verificar uma lacuna de estudos focados na comunicação de instruções em aulas individuais de instrumento. Alguns autores sugerem que, embora esta área de investigação esteja aumentando, a investigação no ensino instrumental não está acompanhando a demanda atual da prática.

Palavras-chave: *Ensino instrumental; comunicação de instruções; interação entre professor e aluno; estratégias de comunicação; pistas pedagógicas.*

Introduction

Unlike most musicians, I started 'teaching' violin before I had a formal violin lesson. My first contact with learning an instrument was with the piano, which was when I was seven years old. Some time passed after my first piano class until my younger sister, at the age of three, started

to learn violin by the Suzuki Method[2]. At that moment, I assumed the position of 'parent', according to the Suzuki's tripartite model, and thus my journey teaching a musical instrument started. My responsibilities with my sister included all activities concerning violin practice. In order to help her to learn new pieces, I had to use different strategies such as demonstrations and metaphors and sometimes even I played a given passage on her small violin in order to demonstrate a point. This experience was the main reason I gave up the piano and started to learn the violin.

My first formal experience as a violin teacher started quite early, after only six years of violin practice. Ever since then, I have realized how difficult it is to make instructions clear to students. Such difficulty encouraged me to attend several teacher-training courses in order to improve my teaching skills. Despite my willingness to develop such skills, it was only in recent years that my interest in understanding the process of communication in one-to-one instrumental lessons has started to arise. Such interest emerged from those teacher-training courses as well as from my experience in teaching violin. In my career it was not uncommon to listen to my peers to try to find out answers to the following questions: 'How do you teach vibrato to your students?', 'How do you approach the shifting?' or even discussion as 'Why, for some students, do I need to repeat some instructions so many times?' and 'Why, sometimes, do the students not remember what I have said in the last lesson?' Such discussions seemed to emerge from an apparent need to find the "best" strategy for teaching students; I had felt the same needs many years earlier. The scenario described so far is reported here in order to illustrate how my journey shaped the definition of the research topic approached in this article: *instructional communication in one-to-one instrumental lessons*, i.e. the communication established between teacher and students taking into account a pedagogical content.

The importance given to instructional communication in one-to-one instrumental lessons has been recognized in the literature. This importance resides on a common scenario of instrumental lessons where teachers need to use technical vocabulary in order to explain and demonstrate a skill (Duffy and Healey, 2013; Duke, 2014; Hallam, 2006; Lennon and Reed 2012; Mills 2007). Sometimes, technical vocabulary contains many words applied to concepts totally unrelated to the technical concept meanings (Novak, 2010). If the instruction is too complex, students may become confused; they might not remember all the details involved (Petrakis and Konukman, 2001). Following this line of thought, one of the teacher's challenges while teaching

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[2] In the Suzuki Method, the parents are one of the central parts of the pupil's learning, so he or she (or both) must attend the pupil's lessons.

an instrument, mainly in early stages of learning, is to approach complex content (shaped by a specific vocabulary) using effective, creative and clear communication, which can be understood and recalled by the student later. Based on this, it seems of paramount importance discussing the process of instructional communication in one-to-one instrumental lesson. Therefore, this article presents a *conceptual literature review* (Jesson, Matheson, and Lacey, 2011) which aims to synthesise the conceptual knowledge of the general process of instructional communication and the particularities of this process in one-to-one instrumental lessons.

The General process of instructional communication

Instructional communication is a process through which teachers and students "stimulate meanings in the minds of each other using verbal and nonverbal messages" (Mottet and Beebe 2006, p.149). Such a communicational process is a particular type of interpersonal communication. This means that "one participant in a social interaction receives a verbal or nonverbal communication from another, interprets its meaning, construes its implications, and then decides how, if at all, to respond to it" (Wyer and Gruenfeld, 1995, p. 7).

According to Wyer & Gruenfeld (1995), interpersonal communication is based on different objectives (e.g. to inform; to cause a good impression; to persuade the recipient to adopts one's point of view; to understand the issues being discussed), which in turn shape the generated response. The information conveyed could involve the exchange of ideas, feelings, intentions, attitudes, expectations, perceptions and commands by speech, gestures, writings and behaviours (Leathers and Eaves, 2008).

Founded in such theoretical assumptions, instructional communication has been analysed taking into account three main components (i.e. the learner; the instructor; and the meanings). Based on these components, two theoretical approaches have been identified in instructional communication (i.e. *relational* and *rhetorical*). Relational approach assumes teachers and students share information and ideas, producing common meanings and understandings through a positive relationship. The final aim of such process is generating simultaneous learning (Mottet and Beebe, 2006). While relational approach considers both, teachers and students as source and receivers of information, rhetorical approach assumes that teacher is the person primarily responsible for creating messages. This approach considers that teachers select and stimulate meanings in students' minds. Such a linear process accepts that the teacher is the primary source of information while student is the receiver. In fact, this perspective is being recognized as a teacher-controlled model (Mccroskey, Valencic, and Richmond, 2004; Mottet and Beebe, 2006;

Waldeck, Kearney, and Plax, 2001). According to McCroskey et al. (2004), rhetorical approach "is considered to be the 'traditional' approach to instruction and is widely employed throughout the world" (Mccroskey, Valencic, and Richmond, 2004, p. 198).

Although the growing interest in collaborative learning in educational settings, most instructional contexts are still based on the model described above (Myers, 2010; Preiss and Wheeless, 2014; Walton, 2014). Thus, this scenario does not contribute to negotiation of concepts and meanings in teaching and learning environments (Novak, 2010). The rhetorical model of instructional communication can be considered an example of a "banking" metaphor of education, which was further discussed and critiqued by Freire (1970). Such a type of education becomes an act of positing, in which students are depositories while teachers are the depositors (Freire, 1970, p. 72).

Instructional Communication in one-to-one instrumental lessons

The context of one-to-one instrumental lessons reflects a scenario where individual teachers and students are isolated from researchers (Burwell, 2005). Some authors described individual lessons as "something of a 'secret garden' compared with the scrutiny given to classroom behaviour in schools" (Young, Burwell, and Pickup, 2003, p. 144). The dyad of teacher and student can demonstrate the complexity of human interactions and cultural evolution, including "the use of language, symbol systems, tools and many aspects of human psychology" (Kennell, 2002, p. 243). Moreover, challenges such as the nonverbal nature of the artistry, teachers' blindness concerning professional issues, the skills involved and the variety of existing teachers' approaches to instrumental lessons are some of the reasons that constrain the study of this phenomenon (Burwell, 2005).

In addition, one-to-one instrumental teaching has mostly followed the master-apprentice model (Creech and Gaunt, 2012). Such a model is characterized by one-way communication from teacher to student (Lehmann, Sloboda, and Woody, 2007; Young, Burwell, and Pickup, 2003). Since this model is still a core activity in western classical instrumental teaching and learning (Creech and Gaunt, 2012), the quality of teacher's instructions has been recognized as a key factor which distinguishes expert teachers from their less-expert counterparts (Colprit, 2000; Duke and Henninger, 2002).

To communicate and express ideas about musical meaning has been established by the *'Polifonia' working group for instrumental and vocal teacher training in Europe* (2007-2010) as one of six instrumental/vocal teacher roles (Lennon and Reed, 2012). This particular role concerns the

development of pedagogical skills, which are required to assist students to develop their artistry (Lennon and Reed, 2012). The main body of research that investigates interactions between teacher and student has led mainly observational studies focused on behavioural components of instrumental teaching and learning (Burwell, 2010; Hallam, 2006; Rosenshine, Froehlich, and Fakhouri, 2002). One of the main contributions of such studies has been the categorization of common behaviours in instrumental lessons. Table 1 shows some examples of the main categories identified by different authors.

Hepler (1986)	Siebenaler (1997)	Burwell (2010)	Creech (2012)	Zhukov (2012)	Simones et al. (2015)
Teacher and student behaviours	Teacher behaviours	Teacher and student behaviours	Teacher and student behaviours	Teacher and student behaviours	Teacher behaviours
Student Performance in medium Teacher conceptual statements Teacher Unclassified Lesson-Related Statements Teacher Technical Statements Teacher Performance in Medium Teacher Vocal Performance Outside of Medium Teacher Positive Vocal Appraisal Teacher Body, Movement Teacher Negative Vocal Appraisal Teacher Expressive Statements Teacher Conceptual Questions Inactive Off-Task Teacher Unclassified Lesson-Related Questions Student Unclassified Lesson-Related Statements	Clap/Sing Play Play/Talk General Directive Specific Directive Questions Music Talk Specific Approval General Approval Specific Disapproval General Disapproval Approval Mistake Disapproval Mistake Off-Task Inactive	Spatial behaviour Performance behaviour (rehearsal, preparation, practice, exercise, piano) Verbal behaviour (information, elicitation, coaching, feedback)	Pupil play (tuning, playing alone and accompanied) Teacher talk (direct, diagnose, attributional and non-attributional feedback) Teacher scaffolding (model with playing or singing, play along, hands-on practical help, accompany pupil) Teacher questioning (open question, seek agreement, check understanding) Pupil talk (agree, disagree, contribute own idea, self-assess, choose what to play) Pupil tunes own instrument	Verbal behaviour Teacher joke Student joke Student disappointment Teacher disappointment Student excuse Teacher sympathy Teacher social Student social Non-verbal behaviour Deceit Doubt Dominance Restraint Evaluation Boredom Courting Interest	Giving information Giving advice Giving practice suggestions Asking questions Giving feedback Demonstrating Modelling Listening/ observing

Table 1 - Behaviours categories in one-to-one instrumental lessons based on the literature (Burwell, 2010; Creech, 2012; Hepler, 1986; Siebenaler, 1997; Simones, Schroeder, and Rodger, 2015; Zhukov, 2012).

The table above describes two main categories: (i) teacher's patterns of interaction and (ii) teacher and student's patterns of interactions. Among the categories presented is possible to identify different approaches used by the authors to analyse the same object. While some approaches have focused on detailed behaviours (e.g. Zhukov, 2012), others have been more generalised in their approaches (e.g. Burwell, 2010). Despite the differences between terminologies used, it was possible to observe four main broad behaviours in one-to-one instrumental interactions (Burwell, 2010; Creech, 2012; Hepler, 1986; Siebenaler, 1997; Simones, Schroeder, and Rodger, 2015; Zhukov, 2012):

- Student bodily action - tuning, playing alone and accompanied, performing
- Student verbal action - agree, disagree, contribute with their own idea, self-assess, choosing what to play, student joke, student excuse and student talking on non-musical matters
- Teacher hands-on - modelling, scaffolding, demonstrating, accompany pupil, listening/ observing, performing, vocal performance, teacher body movement
- Teacher verbal action - giving direction, problem solving, advice, coaching, music talk, teacher conceptual statements, teacher technical statements, attributional and non-attributional feedback, teacher joke, teacher disappointment, teacher sympathy, teacher questioning and giving practice suggestions.

The main findings of such investigations report a scenario where teachers mostly talk, technique is often emphasized and questioning represents a small proportion of time (Burwell, 2010; Creech, 2012; Hepler, 1986; Siebenaler, 1997; Simones, Schroeder, and Rodger, 2015; Zhukov, 2012). Furthermore, these studies emphasize that students' activity in the lessons is mainly about playing.

The scenario described above motivated research on verbal and non-verbal communication in instrumental teaching and learning. Four different modes of teacher verbal and non-verbal communication were identified by (Kennell, 1992): (i) verbal/declarative statements (e.g. *that phrase is forte!*); (ii) verbal/commands (e.g. *play that section forte for me*); (iii) verbal/questions (e.g. *what does forte mean?*); and (iv) nonverbal/gestures (e.g. accented fist gesture in the air). Kennell (1992) found that teachers have used declarative statement and nonverbal gesture when they assumed that the student understood the musical concept, or even when the student had acquired the required skill to perform the task (Kennell, 1992). Moreover, teachers used questions when they assumed that the student did not understand the concept. Finally,

commands were used when teachers needed to verify whether the students were able to execute a specific skill or not (Kennell, 1992).

Apart from the perspectives championed by Kennell (1992), other authors have explored verbal and non-verbal communication in one-to-one instrumental lessons (e.g. Duffy, 2015; Rostvall and West, 2003) Particularly, Rostvall and West (2003) conducted research on the content of teachers' verbal communication. The authors recognized five different educational functions behind speech and music during the lessons, namely: (i) testing/inquiring; (ii) instructional; (iii) analytical; (iv) accompanying; and (v) expressive functions. In such study, the authors explored how different patterns of interaction affect students' opportunities to learn. The main findings suggest teachers rarely play during the lessons, and interaction is distributed asymmetrically (Rostvall and West, 2003). According to the authors, such findings affect negatively the opportunities of students to learn (Rostvall and West, 2003).

The role of nonverbal communication in instrumental teaching has been also considerably discussed (Carlin, 1997; Gipson, 1978; Hepler, 1986; Highlen and Hill 1984; Kurkul, 2007; Levasseur, 1994; O'neill, 1993; Simones, Schroeder, and Rodger, 2015). Researchers identified that nonverbal behaviour has an important role in teaching expressivity in music performance. According to (Highlen and Hill, 1984) "nonverbal behaviour is a primary mean of expressing or communicating emotions (…) [and] give clues to a person's attempts at concealing emotions" (Highlen and Hill 1984, p. 368). Nonverbal communication in one-to-one instruction was systematically observed. Table 2 brings together the main categories recognized by some authors. Based on previous established categories (Gipson 1978; Hepler, 1986; O'neill, 1993; Levasseur, 1994; Carlin, 1997), Kurkul (2007) have summarized three main categories of non-verbal communication (see Table 2), namely: (i) Kinesics (eye contact, facial expression, hand gestures and body orientation); (ii) Proxemics (physical distance, touching); and (iii) Paralanguage (silence and voice quality). Recently a new categorization was established by Simones, Schroeder, and Rodger (2015) who classify nonverbal communication in two groups (see Table 2): (i) spontaneous co-verbal gestures and (ii) spontaneous co-musical gestures (Simones, Schroeder, and Rodger, 2015). According to Simones et al. (2015), teachers use both spontaneous co-verbal and co-musical gestures simultaneously. In some cases this use may also be independent of the desired outcome (Simones, Schroeder, and Rodger 2015, p. 117).

Gipson (1978)	Hepler (1986)	O'Neill (1993)	Levasseur (1994)	Carlin (1997)	Kurkul (2007)	Simones et al. (2015)
1. Teacher musical directing 2. Physical responding 3. Physical initiating 4. Physical requesting-performance 5. Musical responding 6. Musical initiating 7. Musical requesting-performance 8. Student/teacher musical response 9. Student musical response/teacher conducting	1. Performance in medium 2. Performance outside of medium 3. Body movement 4. Analysis 5. Positive non-verbal appraisal 6. Negative non-verbal appraisal	1. Voice tone – friendly 2. Facial expression – friendly 3. Physical contact – gentle 4. Eye looking at student's eyes/ face 5. Voice tone – unfriendly, tense, angry 6. facial expression – unfriendly, angry 7. Physical contact – authoritarian, rough	1. Facial expressions and eyes 2. Expressive movement 3. Posture 4. Touch 5. Duration and pacing 6. Space	1. Instructing 2. Coaching 3. Demonstrating 4. Playing 5. Other	1. Kinesics (Eye contact, Facial expression, Hand gestures, Body orientation 2. Proxemics (Physical distance, Touching 3. Paralanguage (Silence, Voice quality)	1. Spontaneous co-verbal gestures (McNeill, 1992, 2005) - Deictic, Iconic, Metaphoric, Co-verbal Beats 2. Spontaneous co-musical gestures (present authors) - Musical Beats, Conducting Style, Playing Piano, Mimic, Touch

Table 2 - Nonverbal behaviour categories in one-to-one instrumental lessons based on the literature (Carlin, 1997; Gipson, 1978; Hepler, 1986; Kurkul, 2007; Levasseur, 1994; O'neill, 1993; Simones, Schroeder, and Rodger, 2015).

The perspectives discussed here highlight that research on instructional communication has increased with growing interest into instrumental teaching effectiveness. Several authors presented here have emphasized the premise that "good communication" is a *sine qua non* element of effective teaching (Carlin, 1997; Colprit, 2000; Duke and Henninger 2002; Kurkul, 2007; Macgilchrist, Reed, and Myers, 1997; Siebenaler, 1997). In the same line of thought, the quality of a teacher's communication has been highlighted as a key factor that distinguishes expert teachers from novice teachers (Colprit, 2000; Duke and Henninger, 2002). According to Siebenaler (1997), effective teachers change behaviours more frequently and are more efficient in their verbalizations (Siebenaler, 1997, p. 7).

Effective instructional communication

Effective communication in one-to-one instrumental lessons is being characterized taking into account the clarity of verbal instructions and explanations of concepts, which are delivered without unnecessary interjections or asides (Lehmann, Sloboda, and Woody, 2007, p. 195). Such characteristics have been highlighted in studies that investigated the differences between experienced and novice teachers. In such studies, expert teachers were recognized as those who spent a short time talking (Duke, 1999; Goolsby, 1996; Goolsby, 1999; Tait, 1992). According to Lehmann et al. (2007), "excessive talking is almost an epidemic among novice or ineffective music teachers" (Lehmann, Sloboda, and Woody 2007, p. 195). Also, efficient teachers focus on specific priorities in their verbal instructions to students, namely: tone quality, intonation, style, and expression, while novice teachers address technique predominantly (Goolsby, 1997; Goolsby, 1999; Lehmann, Sloboda, and Woody, 2007; Young, Burwell, and Pickup, 2003).

Findings from Lennon and Reed (2012), highlight the importance of choosing pedagogical strategies and approaches to communicate effectively the ideas intended (Lennon and Reed, 2012). According to the authors, instrumental/vocal teachers need to develop eleven competences to communicate effectively with their students (Table 3). The authors discuss these competences, from the creation of educative learning situations to the use of technology as an aid to instrumental/vocal teaching and learning (see Table 3).

(i) Create educative learning situations that engage students in musically meaningful ways that expand and develop their musical skills, knowledge, understanding and imagination
(ii) Communicate effectively with individuals and groups, using language in creative and imaginative ways in promoting student understanding and responsiveness
(iii) Verbalise, articulate and explain technical, musical, theoretical and artistic concepts and skills, using imagery, analogy, questioning and discussion as pedagogical tools
(iv) Musically demonstrate technical, musical and artistic concepts and skills
(vi) Use constructive feedback strategies in creative ways and, where appropriate, incorporate peer learning into the process
(vii) Use a variety of methods, resources and materials appropriate to the needs and learning styles of students, to nurture and develop students' technical and interpretative abilities, alongside their reading, aural and performance skills, and their creativity and imagination
(viii) Facilitate the development of good habits in relation to technique and posture in a way that enables students to use their bodies in an efficient and healthy way
(ix) Help students develop effective and appropriate practice and rehearsal strategies
(x) Incorporate improvisation and composition in the teaching and learning process
(xi) Use technology creatively as an aid to instrumental/vocal teaching and learning where appropriate

Table 3 - Required components to communicate effectively with students (Lennon and Reed, 2012, p. 297).

Another aspect that seems to shape effectiveness in instrumental/vocal teaching and learning is the relationship between teacher and students (Hallam, 1998; Manturzewska, 1990; Sloboda & Howe, 1991; Sosniak, 1990). According to Lehmann et al. (2007), teacher and student interactions can be observed and analysed through the systematization presented in this context. Yarbrough and Price (1989) have identified three sequential patterns of instruction in one-to-one lessons, namely: (i) teacher presentation of a task; (ii) student response and engagement with the task; and (iii) teacher feedback (i.e. related to the student response). According to the authors, the ability to complete these three sequential patterns of instruction characterize effective teaching (Yarbrough & Price, 1989).

Strategies to communicate effectively

Several strategies to communicate effectively can be found in the literature. Such strategies were mainly identified in studies on music expressivity. Tait (1992) suggests that such strategies are shaped by vocabulary choice and usage. Among the strategies discussed, Karlsson and Juslin (2008) highlighted the importance of metaphors. Other authors identified modelling and emphasizing emotion felt as effective strategies to communicate musical ideas around expressivity (Arrais & Rodrigues 2007; Barten, 1998; Brenner & Strand, 2013; Froehlich & Cattley, 1991; Gabrielson & Juslin, 1996, 2003; Karlsson & Juslin, 2008; Laukka, 2003; Persson, 1996; Sloboda, 1996; Watson, 2008; Woody, 1999; Woody, 2000).

Asides from the studies on expressivity in musical performance, other strategies to communicate effectively were recognized by Wood et al. (1976), namely: (i) marking critical features – this strategy emphasizes certain features of the task that are relevant; (ii) demonstration – this strategy exemplifies solutions to a task (e.g. listen to this); and (iii) frustration control – this strategy is characterized by the ways that teachers communicate to reduce student anxiety (e.g. I know this is hard, but just do your best) (for review see Kennell, 1992). Such strategies were identified as a distinguishing feature among expert teachers.

The use of teaching cues

In fields other than music there has been a concern to find means to improve instructional communication. Such studies explored the concept of *retrieval cues*, which are recognized as stimuli, e.g. pictures, objects, gestures or words that assist with information retrieval from long-term memory (Baddeley, 1999; Gleitman, Gross, & Reisberg, 2010). Retrieval cues have been used in sports education as a pedagogical tool which helps teachers to give instructions. This tool was refined and designated as *teaching cues* (Petrakis & Konukman, 2001). In physical education field, teaching cues were identified as a means to assist athletes in improving their attention, comprehension and information retention (Petrakis & Konukman, 2001).

Given the interpersonal and communicative features of instrumental teaching and learning, a pilot study was conducted to identify this tool in the context of instrumental lessons context (Foletto, 2013, 2016; Foletto, Carvalho, & Coimbra, 2013). The pilot case study aimed to identify what can be recognized as a teaching cue in one-to-one violin teaching. The positive results achieved from areas other than music motivated the exploration of such a tool as a means by which to optimize teacher and student communication in instrumental lessons. Data analysis revealed in one-to-one instrumental lessons that teaching cues were summarized information in a teacher's instructions used to alleviate the overload of information (Foletto, 2013; Foletto,

2016; Foletto, Carvalho, & Coimbra, 2013). These results corroborate the findings from physical education where teaching cues have been explored (Konukman & Petrakis, 2001; Landin, 1994; Rink, 1993). Four main characteristics proposed by these authors were taken into account in such identification (i.e. guide the focus during the performance; give a clear picture of the skill; be accurate; and be essential to the task presented). On the other hand, data analysis highlighted that teachers and learners might not be conscious that certain specific words or gestures they use may alleviate the overload of information.

In addition, the outcomes illustrate that teaching cues were present in both a teacher's verbal and nonverbal instructions. During the lessons observed, teaching cues were introduced after a detailed explanation of the content. The analysis verified that most teaching cues were verbalized. Particularly, such verbalization occurred when teachers focused on aspects related to technical and/or motor skills. Such findings corroborate previous studies, which indicate teachers mostly focused on technique skills during their lessons (Hallam, 2006; Tait, 1992; Kostka, 1984; Hepler, 1986; Thompsom, 1984). This focus on technique seems to be rather common in the early stages of learning (Hallam, 2006). Although these results corroborated existing perspectives in instrumental lessons, the use of teaching cues had not previously been described in this scenario yet.

Based on the results presented in this pilot study (Foletto et al., 2013) and previous studies which provided evidence of the use of short verbalizations as a means to effective teaching (Duke, 1999; Goolsby, 1996, 1999; Tait, 1992), teaching cues might be a useful means by which to reduce the existing gap between teachers' instructions and students' understanding (Lehmann et al., 2007). However, little attention has been given on the literature concerning this pedagogical tool, as described above. Thus, further exploration is still needed in order to refine the perspectives on the contribution of teaching cues for instructional communication.

The role of feedback in instrumental teaching and learning

Teacher feedback is being accepted as a crucial component of effective instructional communication in many disciplines (Duke & Henninger, 2002). Research on teacher and student interaction emphasizes the key role of feedback in instrumental and vocal teaching (Burwell, 2005; Duke & Henninger, 2002; Gaunt, 2008, 2011; Krivenski, 2012; Presland, 2005; Young et al., 2003; Zhukov, 2008). According to Duke (2014), teacher feedback serves two purposes: provide information and motivate behaviours. According to the author, feedback may inform the "learner the quality or accuracy of his/her work and impel him/her to take action or refrain from certain behaviour in the future" (Duke, 2014, p. 128). In addition, Duke (2014)

explains that feedback may vary from indications of correctness and accuracy to informative descriptions concerning the quality of performance.

The relationship between the quality of teacher feedback and teaching effectiveness has been also addressed in the literature. Duke and Henninger (2002) observed that expert teachers provided more accurate feedback than their less expert counterparts. Such difference was identified in terms of quantity, content and specificity. The most common particular feedback assignments used by expert teachers were to make detailed references to tone quality, intonation, expression, phrasing or articulation (Colprit, 2000; Duke & Henninger, 2002). In order to provide effective feedback, teachers need to give guidance to students on how to close the gap between the current and desired levels of performance in relation to a task (Sadler, 1989). In addition, other authors have argued that praise combined with physical prompts might be a positive and sustained form of corrective feedback in instrumental lessons (Salzberg and Salzberg, 1981).

Some authors defend the view that effective learning can happen when teachers combine evaluative and descriptive types of feedback (Eyers and Hill, 2004; McPhail, 2010). The nature of teachers' feedback is often reported in the literature as verbal (e.g. giving directions; asking questions; providing information; giving positive, negative, or neutral feedback; writing on the score; and off-task comments) and non-verbal (e.g. playing alongside the student; modelling; imitating the student's performance; making hand gestures; smiling, laughing, nodding, shaking, facial expression; and conducting or tapping the pulse) (Benson & Fung, 2005; Burwell, 2010; Hamond, 2013; Siebenaler, 1997; Speer, 1994; Welch, Howard, Himonides, & Brereton, 2005). Although positive feedback can benefit younger students (Duke, 1999; Lehmann et al., 2007), Duke and Henninger (2002) found that expressed criticism in lessons can also be useful.

Despite the growing interest in effective forms of feedback, little research has explored students' understanding of teachers' instructions. Burwell (2010) argues that effective communication between teacher and student depends on a shared understanding. However, there is evidence that suggests that sometimes students do not understand the meanings of teachers' instructions (Burwell, Young, & Pickup, 2004). Following the same line of thought, Woody (2002) defends students' need first to acquire the specific vocabulary and internalise the patterns to understand teachers' feedback. The author also posits that students must be involved in such processes, which may encourage them to express their ideas in the lessons (Burwell, 2010; Burwell et al., 2004; Woody, 2002, 2006).

Pedagogical vocabulary

Music teachers use a specific pedagogical vocabulary in order to explain and demonstrate a skill (Welch et al., 2005). Such vocabulary refers to the verbal language behind teacher-student discourse (Duffy, 2015; Kennell, 2002). According to Kennell (2002), teacher discourse in one-to-one lessons is spontaneous and directed to the specific student. However, such discourse is shaped by the student's level and the skill approached. The nature of this teacher-student discourse is a feature that distinguishes one-to-one lessons from master class or group lessons (Kennell, 2002).

Tait and Haack (1984) suggest three kinds of useful vocabulary in teaching music: professional, experiential, and behavioural (thinking, feeling and sharing). In such vocabulary Lehmann et al. (2007) distinguished verbal language distributed in two main categories: (i) metaphorical language; and (ii) procedural language. The first category (i.e. metaphorical language) is mostly explored when expressiveness is the focus (Lehmann et al., 2007, p. 195). Wood (2002) suggests teachers have a repertoire of metaphorical language to help students to develop their expressive performances. Such language may depend to "some extent on the cultural traditions behind the instrument and musical style studied" (Burwell, 2010, p. 73). Sometimes, owing to cultural differences, inappropriate use of this type of vocabulary may frustrate the student, who may not understand the meaning behind the words used by the teacher (Lehmann et al., 2007). The second category (i.e. procedural language) concerns the use of verbal language focused on concrete musical sound properties. This category addresses elements such as: note duration, tempo, intonation, dynamics, and articulation (Lehmann et al., 2007). Such a kind of verbal language can be more useful when approaching technical and expressive aspects of performance (Lehmann et al., 2007).

Concluding Remarks

The importance of communicating effectively, using language in creative and imaginative ways in order to promote student understanding and responsiveness, has been highlighted in the literature as one of teachers' challenges in instrumental lessons (Duffy, 2015; Duffy & Healey, 2013; Lennon & Reed, 2012). Despite this, few studies have been focused on instructional communication in instrumental lessons (Kennell, 1992, 2002; Lennon & Reed, 2012; Rostvall & West, 2003). This article explored the current paradigm of the communication in one-to-one instrumental lessons. Overall, the studies reported a scenario where teachers mostly talk, technique is often emphasized and questioning represents a small proportion of time. Furthermore, students' activity in the lessons is mainly playing. Concerning the content

communicated in instrumental lessons, the literature outlined that instrumental teachers used a specific pedagogical vocabulary in order to explain and demonstrate a skill. Some strategies for communicating this vocabulary effectively were highlighted in the literature (i.e. metaphors; modelling; emphasizing emotion felt; marking critical features; demonstration; and frustration control). In addition teaching cue is suggested as a pedagogical tool to improve the effectiveness of instructional communication. Finally, the literature also suggested that sometimes students do not understand the meanings of teachers' instructions. Some authors asserted that students must be involved in the communication processes, which may encourage them to express their ideas in the lessons.

Regardless of the insights here discussed, the literature review presented indicated few studies focused on instructional communication in one-to-one instrumental lessons. Therefore, there is still a lack of research on the meanings behind instruction, as well as students' understanding of such meanings. In addition, research on the use of teaching cues as a means by which to optimize instructional communication in instrumental teaching and learning is almost non-existent. Thus, it is not possible to recognize either the potential use of such a tool in instrumental teaching or how it can optimize the communication process. Although this field of research is increasing, some authors claim that the research in instrumental teaching is not following up the current demand for this practice.

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