EFFECTIVE HARP PEDAGOGY

A Study of Techniques, Physical and Mental

by

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the techniques required to effectively play the modern concert harp. Following a study of the main harp performing methods and an examination of the most popular instructional books published in recent times, this study explores and analyses the practice techniques of harp playing. It investigates and identifies general current practice techniques in music, and sees ways in which these may be incorporated into the learning of the harp. A number of musical excerpts are selected as the bases of specific practice plans which are designed to demonstrate how physical and mental techniques may be combined to support accurate and musical harp playing. The practice techniques and plans are assessed and supported by referring them to teachers and senior students. These research participants provided useful information regarding their own learning experiences and observations on the place that technical studies played in the growth of their own performance skills.
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A special thanks to all the people who participated in my research. I am truly grateful for their support and am humbled by their generosity.

Most importantly, I thank God for his amazing provision and guidance.

Praise be to God!
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

For the purpose of developing effective harp pedagogy, one must first understand the meaning of pedagogy, and build on each component involved. According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, the word ‘pedagogy’ is defined as “[the] study of teaching methods, including the aims of education and the way in which such goals may be achieved. The field relies heavily on educational psychology, or theories about the way in which learning takes place.” This principle of aiming to achieve the desired goals with the knowledge of choosing the right path, which will lead to successful outcomes, should be the basis of effective harp pedagogy development, as in any instrumental teaching and learning.

The teachers should gain a comprehensive understanding of harp playing techniques, provide suitable guidance according to their students’ needs, and encourage them to achieve their goals by fostering both their physical playing skills and psychological learning procedures. Isabelle Moretti, one of the leading harpists in the world, describes the need of acquiring technique as follows: “Technique is freedom, that is, the possibility to do what you want musically right away, without being afraid that your fingers will betray you.” (Moretti 2011, p.22)

While one should not be consumed by technique learning alone, it is considered a significant integral part to the educational process. The harp does not differ from this general principle.

While the acquisition of sound playing techniques remains a priority in instrumental learning, there is a growing awareness of positive outcomes when appropriate mental learning techniques have been applied in the learning process. Since recent studies have proven that it takes more than hours of repetition to achieve promising results from practice, all kinds of innovative ideas regarding the use of psychological strategies to assist learning have flourished. Studies which have gained significant esteem over the past decade include topics such as the following:
● How to nurture student and teacher dynamics
● How to prevent injury and boost physical and psychological wellness
● How to deal with performance anxiety
● How to practise efficiently and effectively

While all of the above aspects are important for the building of a life-long music career, this research will focus on the last aspect devoted specifically to harp playing.

1.1 Research Objectives

Due to the way that the harp was designed, harpists are required to play the harp with their arms hanging in the air, supported with strength from the upper arms, the elbows, and the forearms. This is to allow the wrists and the fingers to move with flexibility. It is not hard to imagine that long hours of practice in this position can be physically demanding and even exhausting for the players, especially if any incorrect postures and/or movements, which may cause injuries, are employed over the period. For this reason, this research is dedicated to exploring ways to enhance the effectiveness of harp practice by studying different techniques and tools which are of assistance, and to promote goal-oriented practice, rather than relying solely on long hours of repetitive physical practice. By understanding how technical problems can be solved by following this approach, the learners are also enabled to become their own teachers.

With the intention of placing this study within a wider context, some of the most popular instructional books published since the twentieth century were studied, with focus being on the comparison between the Salzedo Method and the French Method. The resources relating to practice techniques were studied for their application to the development of advanced harp playing.
to convert theory into practice, five musical excerpts were chosen as the bases of specific practice plans to demonstrate the application of the combined knowledge gained from developing physical and mental techniques for harp playing.

In order to test the practice techniques propounded in this research, the following surveys and interview have been carried out:

1. **A harp pedagogy online survey** for selected harp teachers in New Zealand and Australia, designed to find out about their own study backgrounds and teaching experience, and to seek feedback from them on the effectiveness of the researcher’s devised practice plans.

2. **A harp learning student survey** for intermediate and advanced concert harp students who are studying in New Zealand. This survey result provides the researcher with an opportunity to evaluate the practice strategies and/or practice plans from the students’ point of view.

3. **A practice strategies implementation follow-up interview** with selected concert harp teachers in New Zealand. This interview discusses their students’ responses with the implementation of practice techniques and tools during their lessons.

The findings uncover the pedagogical trend in harp teaching and learning in New Zealand and Australia, and reveal the effectiveness of the suggested practice techniques and tools for harp learning in a realistic light.
1.2 Outline of the Thesis

This research aims to identify the means that will lead to a greater understanding of teaching and learning skills, and consequently to more effective practice and performance. The structure of the thesis is organised as follows:

Chapter 2 gives an overview of different harp methods. It also investigates how recent publications of harp instructional books are similar to or differ from the original philosophies which they stem from. Chapter 3 discusses the importance of the incorporation of mental strategies to improve harp learning abilities. Chapter 4 explains the process and procedure of the surveys and interviews conducted in this research. Chapter 5 examines the philosophies and the pedagogical trends employed by harpists in Australia and New Zealand. Chapter 6 reveals the effect of the implementation of practice strategies in terms of real performance. And finally, Chapter 7 summarises the research and outlines some suggested future work.
CHAPTER 2: THE STUDY OF HARP PEDAGOGY

Although the harp is one of the oldest instruments in history, the concert harp, which has the innovative double-action pedal mechanism, was only invented by Sébastien Érard in the early nineteenth century. The double action pedal harp could be played in all major and minor keys with chromatic capability, and its volume of sound and ranges of pitches were also expanded. However, because the size and the string tension on the double-action pedal harp are relatively different compared to the previous models, such as the hook harp, the chromatic harp, the single-action harp and the triple harp, harp playing techniques have needed to adapt as a consequence.

For the purpose of helping harpists to gain a more rounded understanding of harp pedagogy, the first part of this chapter examines the major harp playing methods; whereas the second part evaluates a few of the recent harp instructional books and observes the ways in which harp pedagogy has changed and/or been adapted over the past century.

2.1 The French Method versus the Salzedo Method

Although there have been many great concert harpists and harp teachers since the nineteenth century, the growing amount of literature in concert harp pedagogy is a relatively recent phenomenon. The most profound example of the earliest publication is Henriette Renié’s Complete Method for the Harp (English translation 1966). This style of teaching was succeeded by Renié’s student – Marcel Grandjany. Although Grandjany had not published any harp method himself, some of his instructions can be observed on the DVD, Marcel Grandjany: The Teacher (Grandjany Centennial Fund / American Harp Society, Inc. 2008). On the other hand, Carlos Salzedo, who was also a student of Renié’s at the Paris Conservatoire, reworked the techniques and developed a way of harp playing that
was vastly different from that of his teacher. In 1929, Salzedo and his second wife, Lucile Lawrence, who was also a virtuosic harpist, published *Method for the Harp* (Lawrence & Salzedo 1929), illustrating techniques which are now known as the Salzedo Method.

The Salzedo Method has many rules about how to make quality sound on the harp with the use of expressive gestures. He dedicated himself to making harp playing look and sound appealing by analysing the relationship between movements and sound production. Greatly inspired by his friend, Nijinsky the dancer, Salzedo collaborated with him to formulate a theory of gestures for the harp which accentuate the aesthetics in harp playing. Moreover, the Salzedo Method also teaches harpists to stay relaxed both physically and mentally in order to reduce tension accumulated by the physical demands of harp playing.

On the other hand, the French Method is believed to be more of a loosed approach to harp playing. Generally, the French Method does not encourage expressive gestures but advocates lowering the elbows, flexible wrists with the right arm resting lightly on the soundboard so the fingers can move from one position to another with speed and precision. Grandjany based his teaching on what feels right physically, and insisted that the hands must not be forced into an uncomfortable position. He strongly believed that in order to become a skilful harpist, it is essential for one to gain a thorough knowledge of theory, Solfége, and music history. With the focus always on suppleness, Grandjany encouraged harpists to always listen to their own playing, and pay attention to the tone produced.

A detailed comparison of the techniques employed by the French Method and the Salzedo Method is provided in the following table, with ✗ marking the differences between the methods, and ✓ marking the similarities:
The French Method is described as: developing melodic playing, full sound, and the ability to play fast passages with good articulation. It is believed to enhance the ability to play for long periods without straining, as there is less stress on the shoulders and the upper arms.

The Salzedo Method is described as: developing even and strong technique, and producing a big sound which is clean and clear. It is an elegant and polished way of playing. Lawrence ascertained that “those who understand and faithfully follow Salzedo’s concept of harp technique will never have hand tendonitis, nor develop carpal tunnel problems.” (Hintze 2001, p.29)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASPECTS</th>
<th>THE FRENCH METHOD</th>
<th>THE SALZEDO METHOD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BENEFITS of the method</td>
<td>The French Method is described as: developing melodic playing, full sound, and the ability to play fast passages with good articulation. It is believed to enhance the ability to play for long periods without straining, as there is less stress on the shoulders and the upper arms.</td>
<td>The Salzedo Method is described as: developing even and strong technique, and producing a big sound which is clean and clear. It is an elegant and polished way of playing. Lawrence ascertained that “those who understand and faithfully follow Salzedo’s concept of harp technique will never have hand tendonitis, nor develop carpal tunnel problems.” (Hintze 2001, p.29)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Elbows, Arms & Shoulders Positions | ✓ Keep the shoulders relaxed. 
- ✓ The placement of the forearms should be considered a prolongation of the wrists, however, the position of the upper right arm varies depending on circumstances. For example, the elbow should be higher with wrists curved in a little to aid the action of the thumb in descending scales. However, when the wrist is placed entirely on the edge of the soundboard, the upper arm is lowered and the body should come forward a little in order to give more freedom to the forearm. 
- × Renié explained that if the elbow is too low, it makes the technique heavy which often produces a hard or weak tone. Nevertheless, she strongly disagreed with the use of parallel elbow. Moreover, Renié reminded harpists to take the formation of their students’ arms into account. 
- ✓ Grandjany urges harpists to balance the harp well without swaying. | ✓ Keep the shoulders relaxed. 
- ✓ The forearms are parallel to the floor with high elbows. The arms should not press on the edge of the soundboard. However, there are exceptions where the elbows should be a little lower, such as when one is playing in the upper register. This permits free execution and prevents the shoulders from tensing up. 
- × Salzedo explained that having the elbows up gives the hands freedom and lightness, and thus obtains maximum suppleness and agility. This would also develop the muscles of the upper arm. 
- ✓ Salzedo instructed harpists to keep the harp from rocking. |
### Hands & Wrists Positions

| ✓ | Keep the hands relaxed and allow the wrists to stay fluid. |
| × | The wrist, neither curved in nor rounded out, is in a natural position. It must be extremely supple. The right wrist should rest lightly on the soundboard; whereas the left wrist is held out by the forearm. Renié opposed the technique of curving the wrists too much, as she believed this would make the movement of the fingers stiff. |
| ✓ | Renié warned harpists not to press the wrist against the soundboard because this would immobilize the muscles which pass through it. |
| ✓ | While keeping the hands relaxed, both hands should almost be at the same level on the strings. |
| × | Both wrists should be curved inwardly without touching the soundboard, with some exceptions such as when playing in the upper register. This practice offers the harpists a point of reference. However, in no case should the wrist press on the edge of the soundboard. |
| ✓ | Kondonassis, a Salzedo Method follower, explained that it is not wise to rest or press the right wrist upon the soundboard, because this would block circulation and increase the chance of the harpist getting an injury. |

### Hand Shape

| ✓ | The hand is hollow on the inside and rounded on the outside. |
| × | Renié believed that the three fingers, while slanted, should be placed with straighter knuckles without crowding one another, and the base of the right thumb should be away from the strings. Left fingers should be more parallel to the strings, with the base of the left thumb less extended than the right. |
| × | As opposed to Renié’s teaching, Grandjany specified that the wrists should be nearer the strings, and 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> fingers should point towards the chest without curving the smaller joints too much. |
| × | Grandjany also pointed out that the 4<sup>th</sup> finger of the right hand should be at the same level as the base of the palm, which is below the thumb. |
| ✓ | Curve the hand and maintain a hollow in the palm. |
| × | Hold the fingers down and have all knuckles curved outwardly. Occasionally big stretches have to be played with flat or curved-in knuckles in order to reach the strings with ease. |
| × | Maintain an expansion of the palm from the base of the thumb to the base of the 5<sup>th</sup> finger. This will prevent the accumulation of tension in the hand, and foster precise finger placing. |
| × | Salzedo believed that by retaining the natural outwardly curved fingers, which is the position of the relaxed hand, it reduces stress on the joints, leaving the fingers freer and stronger to produce an even tone. |
| Thumb Position | ✗ | The tip of the thumb should be aslant and the thumb should not be placed too high on the string. |
|               | ✓ | The base of the thumb should extend outwardly to form a curved space between the thumb and the 2nd finger. |
|               | ✓ | Renié advocated the use of a lower thumb position to allow for bigger distances of stretches, which is called the “petit technique”. |
|               | ✗ | The thumb should be kept high and upright, without bending backward. |
|               | ✓ | There must be a big space between the thumb and the 2nd finger in order to allow the fingers to articulate with equal strength. |
|               | ✗ | The left thumb should be placed a little lower than the right thumb. However, the left thumb should always be higher than the fingers of the right hand. |
|               | ✓ | Salzedo commented that it is not necessary to play with the thumb up when playing notes with big stretches. |
| Thumb Action | ✓ | The articulation of the thumb comes from the lower joint. While one does not play with the first joint, it must remain free. |
|               | ✗ | In descending passages, the thumb should execute a semi-circle downward movement into the next group of notes without closing it fully over the hand. |
|       | ✓ | The thumb should be played on the outer edge of the finger tip, and its action should be controlled by the lower joint. |
|       | ✗ | The thumb should close straight over the second knuckle of the 2nd finger after it is being played. |
| Strings Placing, Plucking & Fingering | ✗ | Wrist and fingers should be firm but not tense when developing relaxed pressure tone. Upon plucking, first press and squeeze the string with the tip of the finger, and then release it. |
|               | ✗ | Expression can only be produced by a more or less intense pressure of the finger on the string. This should be followed by a wrist raising movement. |
|               | ✓ | In addition, use the 2nd and 3rd fingers instead of the thumb and 2nd fingers to create a more expressive tone in a melodic line. |
|               | ✓ | Place in the direction of playing with |
|               | ✗ | The fingers should rest very lightly on the strings, without tension. Do not squeeze or hang on to the notes before it is time to pluck the strings. The strength should not be produced by the fingers, as the fingers are merely the medium through which the muscles of the arm act. Furthermore, one must play with the finger-tips, without using too much flesh. |
|               | ✗ | Expression is achieved by closing the fingers fully and completely, followed by the gesture of Raising while keeping the body relaxed. |
the exception of broken figures where the fingers must be replaced simultaneously.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Articulation</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✗ Close the fingers immediately in one of the following three ways after playing:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Long Articulation – The fingers close fully into the palm, and the fingers should generally be flat in this position.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Medium Articulation – The fingers close partially by bending the first and the second joints of the fingers. The tip of the fingers may or may not touch the top of the palm as a result of this closing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Short Articulation – While the second joint takes some part in this movement, it is generally executed by bending of the first joint.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ Salzedo introduced a technique called “Sliding Along the Strings” where the harpist would slide noiselessly up and down along the string from the middle point right before plucking them. This will allow the harpist to play with ease and suppleness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ Always place in the order of playing with the exception of broken figures where the fingers must be replaced simultaneously.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Follow-through Gesture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✗ Renié’s raising gesture is executed by making an outward wrist movement, either with or without the arm. This will prolong or shorten the sound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ Grandjany insisted that harpists must avoid unnecessary body and facial movements, and instead encouraged them to achieve expression through finger works.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ Salzedo’s raising gesture is executed by using the elbow as an axis and raising the closed hands with complete control, thus allowing the sound to travel without being hindered. Upon raising, one should not look at the hands, but keep the eyes fixed in the direction of the soundboard or the strings, and listen intently before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scales &amp; Chords / Arpeggios Playing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ Grandjany taught students to drop their hands after playing a longer valued note or chord, however, the practice of the outward wrist movement still applies otherwise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ Gradually releasing the hand at the end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ It is also important to match the character of the music with the appropriate expressive gestures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ Raising improves tone, technique and musical interpretation. It also releases tension after playing a long technical passage or a series of notes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ After turning under in an ascending scale, the 4th finger would naturally be placed a little higher, which is caused by the turning movement of the thumb. One should slide the 4th finger down slightly and allow it to return to the slanted position.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ Draw back the elbow a little, and use the thumb as a pivot. In playing, the thumb describes a brief semi-circle upward movement, which returns the hand to its normally position, and causes the wrist to move back as the three fingers are replaced altogether onto the next group of strings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ When turning over or under, replace the 4th finger low and the thumb high, while maintaining a big thumb space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ Keep the wrist curved in and the forearm parallel to the floor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ Use the 4th finger as a pivot, raise the elbow and pull back the arm simultaneously with the movement of the 4th finger. It is important not to alter the angle of the hand, and be sure to keep the 2nd and 3rd fingers closed in the hand before replacing them onto the next group of strings altogether with the thumb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ When practising arpeggios, focus on plucking one finger only while keeping the other fingers placed on the string. Play slowly and softly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ Arpeggiate all the chords, unless indicated on the score.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Grandjany urges harpists to learn scales properly in order to improve the tone and make their fingers stronger. The fingers must always be articulated, all buzzing should be eliminated, and attention must be paid to shading and phrasing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Place finger by finger in passages with fast scales.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ The 2nd and 3rd fingers should be replaced simultaneously in broken chordal figures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ When practising arpeggios, anchor the...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
top finger or fingers placed on the strings while plucking the other fingers from the bottom note to the top. Add one more note as the practice goes.

- When playing chords, which require the crossing of the hands, Renié advocated that harpists look in advance at the two middle notes of the upcoming group, and place the 4th finger and the thumb simultaneously at the place where the hand is going to be transported.

| Glissando | ✓ To play an ascending glissando, slide in a straight line with the 2nd finger almost perpendicular to the string. The run should end with the 2nd finger plucking the last string before closing it in a hooked position as the hand leaves the strings.

- Varying from Renié’s teaching, Grandjany taught students to play the right hand 2nd finger ascending glissando using the side of the finger tip. Keep the finger slanted downwardly and the thumb relaxed in order to get a stronger tone. However, the 3rd finger glissando would be done with a perpendicular finger, which would produce a softer tone.

- The descending glissando is played with the thumb, ending with 2nd, 3rd and 4th fingers placed on the last notes to produce an illusion of a fingered run. The forearm must move in the same direction as the glissando.

- Double and Triple Glissandi are

- Salzedo attempted to rename glissando to flux, which was considered an unnecessary and unsuccessful modification by harpists.

- Glissando is played be gliding in the centre of the strings with the pedals specially arranged. Ascending glissando should be played with either the 2nd of the 3rd finger; whereas the descending glissando should be played using the thumb, keeping the hand wide open without any stiffness.

- While Lawrence and Salzedo introduced many special glissando techniques, there is no mention of the playing of the double glissando technique in their instructional book.
played by lifting the arms off from the soundboard, and turning the hand over, leaving the hands and the fingers in an open slanted position. In *pp* playing, the fingers should be completely slack, and the wrist should stay very supple; whereas in *ff* playing, the fingers should be slightly rigid, and the wrist should support them on the strings.

| Slide | ✓ The thumb slide must be played independently by sliding the thumb rather than with the aid of the hand or the arm.  
✓ To play a 4th finger slide, slide it across the strings before placing the other fingers on the upper notes.  
✗ Interval slides are executed by placing the thumb high and the fingers more slanted. Bend the fingers downwardly and play the intervals absolutely together. | ✓ To play a thumb slide, place the other fingers before sliding the thumb in a downward motion.  
✗ Keep the thumb up when sliding, and bend it entirely over the second knuckle of the 2nd finger after playing.  
✓ To play a 4th finger slide, slide it across the strings before placing the other fingers on the upper notes.  
✗ Lawrence and Salzedo did not mention the technique of interval slides in their instructional book. |
| Trills | ✓ Place fingers on the strings one at a time, and play the trills with a little oscillation of the wrist.  
✓ Grandjany instructed students to keep the unused fingers loose while playing trills, and stay close to the string.  
✗ Renié also mentioned the use of the Four-finger trill, as she believed that sometimes it is easier to play the trill with the thumb on the beat. In the Four-finger trill, each finger is placed before the following note at its proper height. | ✓ One-hand trill is played with an oscillating movement of the wrist.  
✗ Two-hand trill is played with both wrists remaining steady.  
✗ Lawrence and Salzedo preferred to teach the two-handed trill because they believed that the one-handed trill could not be very successful. |
| Harmonics | ✓ Use the second knuckle of the 2nd finger to cut the string in half when | ✓ While maintaining the same big space between the thumb and 2nd finger, use |
executing the right hand harmonics.

- Use the heel of the palm to cut the string in half when executing the left hand harmonics.
- The hand plays by pressing on the string before leaving it without any raising movement of the wrist.
- The standard notation for a harmonic is a small circle surmounting the note which is to be played, creating the note sounding an octave higher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Muffling</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✗ Renié talked about dampened tones, such as the use of étouffés, dampened octaves, and dampened chords, when she addressed the muffling techniques.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Grandjany believed that it is vital to give clean and clear performances where careful phrasing and muffling are observed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Salzedo talked about how to clear the sound when he addressed the muffling techniques.

- In general, muffling is obtained by firmly placing the hand flat on the strings, with fingers slightly separated.
- After muffling, remove the hand from the strings with a slight outward movement of the wrist, taking away the finger tips last in order to avoid making any noises.
- Where possible, muffling should be executed in rhythm with precise placing.
- One should not muffle at the end of a piece, unless indicated on the score.
- Many other variations of the muffling

- Use the heel of the palm to cut the string in half when executing the right hand harmonics. It is important to always keep the right forearm parallel to the floor, and raise the hand gently with freedom and suppleness, but without altering the angle immediately after playing.
- Use the heel of the palm to cut the string in half when executing the left hand harmonics. The thumb and the 2nd finger should form an open O afterwards.
- Salzedo’s initial way of notating the harmonics is to indicate the harmonics with the actual sounding pitch, whereas others use the note where it is to be played. Salzedo later changed his mind and followed the long-accepted standard practice instead.
- Wherever possible, muffling should be executed in rhythm with precise placing.
**Buzzing**

- ✓ One must avoid hitting the vibrating string with the nail, and damp them if required.
- ✗ Renié advocated the use of the following technique in order to avoid buzzing in chordal passages: with the right hand, replace the 2nd finger and thumb first, support the hand lightly on the edge of the thumb, and place the 3rd and 4th fingers only in playing; whereas with the left hand, place the 2nd finger, allowing it to be completely elongated and perpendicular to the string, hence bending it lowered so that the 4th finger and thumb are placed in playing.

**Pedalling**

- ✓ Bring the pedal gently and silently into the inner part of the notch without making any noise.
- ✗ There is no mention of which type of pedal diagrams the French Method players prefer, or how pedal changes should be marked in Renié’s instructional book.

- ✓ Bring the pedal gently and silently into the inner part of the notch without making any noise.
- ✗ Use vertical lines to represent pedal positions in the pedal diagram. Mark the right foot pedals over the left foot ones. Where possible, they should be marked at the place in the music where actually pedal changes are needed.

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**Table 1: A Technique Comparison between the French and the Salzedo Methods**

Because the teachings of these two methods are fairly diverse, it created a division between the French and the Salzedo players. While the belief of which technique is more effective has created many debates, Marson reminded harpists to remember that “[people] vary greatly, and it is necessary to take into account the widely different sizes, shapes and the fleshiness of the fingers where they touch the strings.” (Marson 2005, p.61)
2.2 Other Harp Methods

Although the French and the Salzedo methods are considered as the most widespread harp techniques adopted by harpists, there are other influential harp methods, such as the Russian Method. The Russian Method has existed for nearly 250 years, however, there is very little information about it in English. According to Zingel (1992), Albert Zabel, the German composer and virtuosic harpist, established the Russian harp school when he was an instructor at the newly opened conservatory in St. Petersburg. His method was later developed into various Russian schools, including the Mark Rubin, Xenia Erdeli and Vera Dulova schools, spreading around St. Petersburg and Moscow. While many people believe that the Russian Method is a combination and/or adaptation of the French and the Salzedo methods, Melinda Felletár’s research shows that it is actually a blending of the French and the German schools.

The Russian harp school was established as a result of a quest to rectify sound production on the harp, aiming to teach harpists to develop hand strength and secure hand placement. Some key features of the Russian Method, gathered from findings of Felletár’s research, an interview of Natalia Shameyeva posted on Harpblog, articles published in various harp journals and responses posted by a few forum members of The Harp Column, are listed as follows:
1. Strong sound projection is developed by playing loudly during practice, taking the dynamics level up a couple notches.

2. Strings are plucked with greater surface area of the flesh of the finger tips. The Russian school practitioner believes that “the tone increases proportionally to the size of the area fingers touch the strings (and to the intensity of friction).” (Felletár 2009, p.6)

3. “The palm is kept in equilibrium by the second finger. The weight of the palm (bones, muscles, etc.) is distributed evenly over the fingers.” (Felletár 2009, p.6)

4. “Gravity, as central force, is built into the plucking mechanism, and therefore frees muscles from their load.” (Felletár 2009, p.6)

5. The Xenia Erdeli branch of Russian school harpists never arpeggiate chords, unless it is specified in the music.

6. Ascending scale is played by crossing under the 4th and 3rd fingers at the same time, hence providing more stability.

7. Scales are learnt in every combination of fingerings, and played by placing accents on differing notes rather than fingers. (E.g., every second note, every third note, or every fourth note… etc.)

8. The articulation of the thumb is played by making a circular movement instead of closing over the 2nd finger.

9. A rounded sound is generated by the fingers articulating fully into the palm after plucking the strings. This allows the fingers to be independent.

10. A prolonged sound with quality tone is accomplished by the releasing of the wrist in a small and supple outward flicking motion, which is also a technique mentioned in the Salzedo and French methods. The Vera Dulova School called it “Kistevoe dviženie”.

11. Muscle relaxation is achieved by executing follow-through gestures, such as the movement of the wrist and the fingers closing deeply into the palm.
Furthermore, while Mark Rubin advocated the use of the 5th finger, Natalia Shameyeva commented that this technique should be confined to exercises rather than applying it to performing concert music. Nonetheless, Marson observed that: “in general Russian harpists today, like their counterparts the world over, eschew attempts to play with five fingers.” (Marson 2005, p.65)

In addition, the Suzuki Method, which emerged in mid-twentieth century, actually has little to do with the physical techniques of harp playing as it is a learning approach rather than a method. The Suzuki harp school is based on the philosophy that children should learn to play by ear before they learn to read music notations in the same way that they would learn to speak their mother-tongue before they start to read. This method was initially designed for the learning of violin and piano, and it has now been applied to harp for about thirty years.

2.3 Adaption of the Methods in Recent Publications

As modern harpists became more receptive to ideas from different methods, some adopted a variety of teachings, while many still based their technique on one particular method over the others. This is evident in many of the instructional books, of which four publications have been selected for discussion. These publications include the Complete Method for the Harp (1972) by David Watkins, who had been taught by Solange Renié, herself a student of her aunt Henriette Renié; Harp for Today: a Universal Method for the Harp (2008) by Susann McDonald, who had been taught by Henriette Renié, and Linda Wood Rollo; On Playing the Harp (2006) by Yolanda Kondonassis, who had been taught by Alice Chalifoux, herself a student of Salzedo; and A Method for the Harp: The Power of Music (2008) by Judith Liber, who had been taught by Lucy Lewis at Oberlin College, and later, Salzedo at the Salzedo Harp Colony in Camden, Maine. It is important to acknowledge that these “methods” are really instructional books based on the playing method of others, but not necessarily
adding anything completely new or innovative in playing technique. For example, most of Watkins’ teaching is the same as the French Method, apart from the following additions and/or modifications:

- As the students’ ability progress, they should employ the rounded fingers shape, having the fingers point more toward the chest in order to allow them to play with greater speed and clarity. However, beginners are advised to play with flat 2nd, 3rd, and 4th fingers instead.
- In order to avoid touching the adjacent vibrating strings, place the fingers flat at first, and then play them rounded at the moment of articulation. However, one can also use the knuckle to damp the vibrating string when replacing as an alternative.
- Move the pedal as near to the note it changes, preferably on the actual note, and especially if the change occurs on a strong beat. Don’t move the pedals during a pause or a silent bar in order to avoid mechanical noise.
- Try moving the pedals in opposing directions if there are several pedals needed to be moved at once.

In comparison, while McDonald and Wood Rollo’s teaching is generally based on the French Method, there seem to be more significant changes in comparison to Watkins’ teaching, and they are listed as follows:

- Rather than addressing the three different types of articulation instructed by Renié, McDonald and Wood Rollo simply advocate harpists to pluck the string firmly, and follow the movement by bouncing the fingers into the palm as an instant release.
- When playing the turn-around glissandi, picture a figure-eight image on the strings, and slide the thumb down and the 2nd finger up along the lines, making a large loop at the bottom and a smaller loop at the top.
Two-handed trill, played with a slight circling motion and with the awareness of producing equal and clear tone between the thumb and the 2\textsuperscript{nd} finger, has been explained in detail by McDonald and Wood Rollo.

Most muffles should be done with the left hand alone on the lower strings. However, contrary to Salzedo’s belief, McDonald and Wood Rollo instruct harpists to muzzle with both hands together at the end of a piece or movement.

For rapid pedalling, move the pedals in a diagonal motion rather than notch them.

Like Lawrence and Salzedo, McDonald and Wood Rollo also teach harpists to move pedals rhythmically on beat.

On the other hand, Kondonassis’ teaching is very much grounded in the Salzedo Method. She extended the instructions and explanation about some of the following techniques:

- When placing the fingers on the strings, make sure that the 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 3\textsuperscript{rd} and 4\textsuperscript{th} fingers are placed at an even level on the strings, hence making the knuckles curved and the fingers slanted.
- Having the thumb space will allow the thumb to push and release by closing over the top of the hand, rather than relying on a push of the arm.
- Raising, which should be executed by using the elbow as an axis, is an opportunity for relaxation, it must be done in a disciplined and musical way. Kondonassis states that while raising, “do not let the wrist bend forward or lead – this will throw the whole motion out of balance.” (Kondonassis 2006, p.12) Furthermore, she also outlined the many benefits of Raising, including showing improvements in both the technical and the musical aspects of harp playing.
- When playing scales and arpeggios, pay close attention to the steadiness of the hand, and maintain a good centre of resistance throughout.
- When playing an interval slide, slide straight across the strings and push with the elbow.
- Place the harmonics from a short distance away with a relaxed but firm hand in order to avoid muffling the previous sound too early.

Contrary to Salzedo’s teaching, a few differences observed in Kondonassis’ instruction are listed below:

- Instead of having the fingers slightly separately for muffling as instructed by Salzedo, Kondonassis advocates the practice of closed fingers muffling instead.
- In order to avoid buzzing, Kondonassis advises harpists to place either the bottom or the top of the chord or arpeggios first before placing the rest of the fingers back onto the strings finger by finger.

In addition, the Salzedo Method is believed to have divided into two major branches: the Alice Chalifoux (who succeeded Salzedo’s position as the director of the Summer Harp Colony) branch; and the Lucile Lawrence (Salzedo’s second wife and the co-author of Method for the Harp), branch. The teaching of Alice Chalifoux was followed faithfully by Kondonassis, whose instructions have been addressed previously. In comparison, the teaching of Lucile Lawrence differs in the following ways:

- Point the fingers downwardly without collapsing the knuckles in order to improve on tone quality, and to stay relaxed.
- In order to ensure that the thumb space and the fingers are positioned correctly, look for the “little wrinkles” between the thumb and the fingers.
- Lucile Lawrence emphasised producing a warm and fluid but nonetheless large sound.
While Alice Chalifoux, Lucile Lawrence, and many other harpists who had been under the tutelage of Salzedo stayed more or less faithful to his teaching, Liber employed a wide variety of techniques instead. Although some were derived from the Salzedo Method, Liber’s teaching differs in the following ways:

- Similarly to the French technique, the right lower arm and elbow, while naturally relaxed, should be held slightly away from the body and raised to the same height as the wrist. Liber later advocates that the wrists must never touch the soundboard, a technique which is employed by the Salzedo Method players.

- As opposed to Salzeldo’s teaching, Liber believes that the wrists should be held parallel to the slope of the soundboard, rather than with the floor.

- The fingers should be rounded, and pointing “to” the chest, with thumb high and rounded.

- Similarly to the Russian technique, the turning under movement in ascending scales is executed by replacing the 4\textsuperscript{th} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} fingers simultaneously while pivoting on the thumb.

- Differing from both the French and the Salzedo methods, descending glissando is executed by placing the rounded thumb, with a closed hand and straighten arm, and press inward with the elbow; whereas double glissando is executed by placing the curved 2\textsuperscript{nd} and straight 3\textsuperscript{rd} fingers on the strings with an open hand and pull back and up with the elbow.

- Similarly to Watkins’ teaching, prepare the fingers in the shape of the next chord in advance, and replace with straightened fingers, not rounded, in order to avoid touching the vibrating strings.

It is clear to note that some techniques have in-fact evolved and been modified and/or combined in order to suit the technical demands of the music and/or to accommodate the needs of the individual harpist.
2.4 Choosing a Method or Methods

In the research *The Evolution of Harp Pedagogy in Twentieth Century America* (Nichelson 2003), Nichelson found that while the moderately experienced and less experienced teachers are more likely to combine schools of harp playing in their instruction, the more experienced teachers tend to follow a single school of harp playing. Interestingly, a survey conducted by Hintze (Hintze 2001), which evaluated the recent status of the division between the Salzedo technique and the French technique players, also found that many younger harpists adopt a mix of techniques that best suited their physical needs, performance style, and musical preference. This is affected by the increasing number and variety of harp learning materials, and the students’ exposure to diverse teachers. As a result, more harpists are beginning to explore techniques from other methods nowadays.

In spite of the flexibility offered by this current trend, a concern has been expressed in regards to the practice of combining different methods. Nichelson was quoted saying: “I believe that beginning and intermediate students should be given the kind of structure and guidance a single method provides, but students at the advanced level should be encouraged to explore all the options and find out what best serves their interest.” (Hintze 2001, p.34) This viewpoint corresponds with Kondonassis’ comment: “I feel that everyone can learn from each other in a variety of ways, but I do believe that it is best to learn one method in a whole sense and make it your own. Otherwise, the result is often a hodge-podge with many gaps in understanding and execution.” (Hintze 2001, p.34) Therefore, although it is useful to access techniques from other methods, it is vital to first build a firm foundation before exploring all the other possibilities.

Above all, harpists need to acknowledge that the study of techniques is a means to assist effective learning; hence, instead of focusing merely on it, they must listen to themselves carefully in order to
produce quality tone in their playing. Marson stated that “[there] will, though, always be new and unexpected demands on the contortions of the hands, but the greatest difficulties lie in producing good sounds, and creating music rather than mere mechanical arrangements of notes.” (Marson 2005, p.68)

2.5 Other Techniques for Harp Playing

Apart from developing sound physical playing techniques, an intellectual learning approach has also becoming increasingly popular in recent years. Atkinson categorised the various techniques in which harpists need to address in the list below (Atkinson 2009, p.28):

1. Posture, hand and arm position
2. Finger and arm techniques
3. Relaxation within the technique
4. Pedalling/lever changing technique
5. Practice technique

It is evident that all techniques mentioned above are indispensable to the learning of harp playing, however, the focus of this study is placed on the last category – the practice technique. Since there is limited published information on practice techniques devoted to harp learning, this research addresses the present practice approaches in music, and investigate how they can be applied appropriately for the development of advanced harp playing techniques in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 3: PRACTICE TECHNIQUES FOR HARP PLAYING

Since practice technique is an area that is often overlooked or understated during tuition, it is common for music students to have difficulty learning the music without teacher direction, and without sufficient and/or efficient practice between their lessons, and hence arrive ill-prepared for their next tuition. Therefore, in order to develop effective harp pedagogy, teachers should not only teach the physical playing techniques, they should also equip their students with tools to cope with the day to day practice, so they will become independent and successful learners themselves. It is vital to know that, as Mills reflects, “playing the harp is about 80% mental and 20% physical.” (Mills 2010b, p.29) Therefore, harpists should remember to practice with their brains rather than being so caught up in the physical difficulties. For this purpose, this chapter will address the different mental learning skills which will enhance one’s harp playing ability.

3.1 Assist Playing Skills with Mental Learning Skills

While consistent practice is vital for the growth of any instrumentalists, research has shown that the success of one’s progress depends more than on the number of hours spent on practice. Dr. K. Anders Ericsson, one of the world’s leading psychologists, suggests that it requires at least ten years and/or 10,000 hours of deliberate practice to achieve an expert level of performance in any given domain. Kageyama analysed this finding and pointed out that “the real key here is not the amount of practice required but the type of practice required to [attaining] an expert level of performance.” (Kageyama 2009) Although Grandjany instructed students to practise three or four hours a day, he warned harpists not to do the contrary by seeking merely the technical facility and forget to pay attention to the musicality of the performance. He stressed that: “A pupil who works slowly and carefully,
listening to himself and checking his progress, will find that he has gained brilliance of style as well as tone quality after a few years.” (Marson 2005, p.119)

In order to allow mental learning to take place effectively, one must change their practice approach, and become goal-orientated. It also takes more than knowing all the practice techniques, but rather, understanding how each technique can be applied appropriately. In fact, this goal-oriented learning approach is not a new phenomenon as we have seen it being taught by Weidensaul in her 1978 publication, *Scientific Practice: A manual for Harp Students*. This approach allows the learner to establish specified step by step attainable goals, and encourages them to identify the technical and musical demands of the music in order to work out suitable solutions to tackle the difficult passages without wasting time on doing mindless repetitions.

Although mental practice requires discipline and can be tiring to the brain at first, it reduces bodily fatigue and injury by allowing frequent breaks in the playing. It also helps harpists to use their time more wisely, and allow them to practise efficiently even when there is no access to the instrument, or if they are not physically feeling well for the regular practice. Sirin Pancaroglu, one of Turkey’s most renowned harpist, notes the impact of mental practice as follows: “Its significance lies only in the tremendous under-girding and confidence it gives to the performer.” (Pancaroglu 2006, p.59) She even advised harpists to divide their daily practice between mental rehearsals and physical playing, as well as to develop their musical knowledge and analytical skills. Furthermore, mental practice provides more quality time by isolating work that does not require repetition, and allows the player to pay more attention to its tone, phrasing, and musical interpretation.
3.2 The Development of Mental Learning Skills

Once a goal-orientated mindset is established, it is necessary to start establishing good practice habits by having a well-organised practice routine, which should start with ample warm-ups. Lieberman describes that “warm-up includes sharpening mental focus, establishing the physical and mental settings that will be the most helpful to you while playing, and initiating a fluid oxygen and blood flow through your muscles.” (Lieberman 1991, p.84) Furthermore, supported by authors such as Klickstein (2009) and Inglefield (2001), one can also devise relevant exercises which specifically target a tricky technical spot and use them as warm-up for the preparation of the more demanding technical work later. However, as advocated by Volpé Bligh, “[the] most important thing to remember when practising is to cultivate the habit of playing in a completely relaxed way at all times, breathing deeply and regularly.” (Volpé Bligh 2011, p.24) It would be impossible to perform in a relaxed way if one did not practise in this way. The following quotes outline some of the tremendous benefits one can gain from being relaxed while playing:

*Relaxation is crucial and is the basis for a pleasing tone quality, virtuosity, and endurance. It can also prevent the trauma of tendonitis and other arm and back problems.* (Susann McDonald 1983, p.14)

*The faster they want to play, the more relaxed they need to be.* (Philip Johnston 2007, p.204)

*Relaxation is really the result of proper technique and posture.* (Sarah Bullen 2000, p.7)

As one begins to establish good practice habits, it is beneficial to utilize the various mental learning
modes to expand one’s learning ability. Dr. Carrol McLaughlin, an internationally respected harpist and a Distinguished Professor at the University of Arizona, endorses the “Triple Channel Learning” theory (McLaughlin 2008), which was derived from the Neuro-Linguistic Programme. The triple channel is represented by three learning modes, which are being outlined with a few examples below:

1. Visual Mode (seeing):
   - Study the music away from the harp and/or memorise the details of the score much like taking a photograph.
   - Use colour markers to outline repair points and important dynamics markings.

2. Aural Mode (hearing):
   - Sing or whistle the melodic or harmonic lines. McLaughlin encourages students to use Solfége or English letter names to sing the names of the note during practice.
   - For a difficult pedal passage, recite the name of the pedal being moved out loud in order to imprint an aural reminder.

3. Kinaesthetic Mode (feeling):
   - Be aware of how the fingers feel on the strings. For example, feel the distance between each finger when placing the fingers on the strings.
   - Anchor the information in the kinaesthetic mode by writing it out the difficult passages from memory.

Through the study of the triple channel learning, McLaughlin encourages performers to examine their own preferred learning mode and explore the other possibilities in order to allow their learning outcome to be more fruitful. Apart from exercising the different learning modes, it is also vital to broaden one’s theoretical and historical knowledge in music, and develop all the essential musical skills, such as aural, sight reading and interpretation.
3.3 Practice Strategies for Harp Learning

In order to learn with more reliability, it is beneficial to learn a variety of practice techniques and be able to apply them appropriately and adequately. Hence, the following five approaches are discussed in the section to assist harpists to teach and learn effectively:

1. Establish an Organised Practice Schedule
2. Isolate Identified Problem Areas
3. Employ the Visual Learning Mode
4. Utilize the Aural Learning Mode
5. Explore the Kinaesthetic Learning Mode

Establish an Organised Practice Schedule

The first approach to effective pedagogy is to keep a practice schedule well-organised. It is extremely helpful to document the students’ practice progress by writing down their practice plans, short term and long term goals, and the actual outcomes at the end of each session in a Practice Journal. This allows the students to stay focused, keep track of their progress, evaluate their own practice process, and to help them in deciding the need to modify their practice method and goals accordingly. Johnston believes that “being able to compare projected outcomes against actual outcome will get [the students] thinking about how they can do things better in the future.” (Johnston 2007a, p.279)

The use of a practice journal, even if the documentation is kept brief, relieves unnecessary pressure on the students; and hence, rather than wasting time doing mindless repetition or feeling overwhelmed by the task ahead, they are more likely to maintain a positive attitude by achieving reasonable expectations for each stage of their learning progress, and for working out how they can improve in a step by step manner. Furthermore, the practice journal can also act as a communication
tool between the student, the teacher, and the parents.

On the other hand, Checklist Practice is most helpful for setting short term goals. Because often there are so many things to take care of in a complex phrase, hence it is useful to devise a checklist of what the student wants to achieve in order to ensure that all details in the music are being covered. Johnston advised students to “focus on these items one at a time, [partly] to raise their awareness of them as individual issues.” (Johnston 2007a, p.249) Once the students comprehend each element into their playing, then they can start combining the elements together. Consequently, the Practice Journal is the perfect place to record the checklist.

**Isolate Identified Problem Areas**

The second approach to effective pedagogy is to learn to identify the technical demands of the passage, isolate the problems, and to practise by applying a variety of problem-solving tactics if needed. To tackle a technical spot, it is crucial to break the passage down into small fragments, and concentrate on solving the specific problem before putting the fragments together as a whole.

Similar to Fragment Practice, Repair Points Practice requires students to divide the music into digestible portions with pedal diagrams marked at the beginning of each repair point due to the practicality of the instrument. Johnston advises students to “[establish] a series of safety ramps in the piece, [at] places [where] they can jump to and start from at any time [in case there is any unexpected slip up occurring during the performance.]” (Johnston 2007a, p.244-5) Having the repair points also allows the students to analyse and identify the different levels of difficulty in each section quickly, and hence helps them to discern and prioritise their time and energy. Moreover, McDonald and Wood Rollo also advocate it as being beneficial for the development of memorisation as well as to overcome difficult passages.
**Employ the Visual Learning Mode**

The third approach to effective pedagogy is to employ the visualisation tactics in one’s learning. One of the ways is to use Pedal Change Diagram, especially when one is learning new pieces that involve complex pedal changes. The Pedal Change Diagram marks the immediate change of the pedal movements, which occur at the beginning of each repair point, using circles or arrows. This serves as a reminder for the harpists to execute the pedal changes on the exact spot in the music when they are repeating the same section, and when they may not always have the right pedal settings straight away.

Another way to channel the visual mode is to practise away from the instrument. This requires detailed study and analysis of the music, without being preoccupied with the physical demands of playing. Balderston expresses that “[in] order to play and understand any piece, you should know what parts or ingredients will meld together to make that piece a whole.” (Balderston 2000, p.19) Therefore, it is essential to identify the musical elements, such as style, form, key signature, time signature, tempo markings, melodic shape and harmonic structure, and observe musical patterns, such as repetition and sequence, in a piece. Moreover, in order to strengthen one’s photographic memory and to practise being confident, visualise and imaginary playing without using the instrument is also one of the variations for **Away from the Instrument Practice**.

**Utilize the Aural Learning Mode**

The fourth approach to effective pedagogy is to utilize one’s inner-hearing ability. Inner-hearing plays a crucial role for mental imaging, which is described by Klickstein as the ability to “internally hear a piece of music, feel the sensations of executing it, and mentally hone their interpretation.” (Klickstein 2009, p.35) An effective way to develop inner-hearing ability is to learn **Solfége Singing**, which is a singing system highly valued in the Kodály Concept of music education. In an interview
published on the *American Harp Society Teacher Forum*, McDonald notes that the French school places a strong emphasis on the study of Solfége, a tool which she uses in her teaching as well. Singing, whether using Solfége or not, can provide a natural breathing to music that can be adapted to harp playing. It helps to enhance the musical line, and concentrates the mind on the actual notes, instead of relying on muscle memory. Moreover, it is evident that most people who learn Solfége develop an innate ability to grasp pitch with ease, which is an advantage because it would help harpists to hear the next group of notes in advance so they could locate the strings promptly, without relying solely on notation reading, thereby speeding up the learning progress.

Another effective way to practise using the aural mode is to do *Self-Recording Evaluation*, which allows the harpists to concentrate on listening and assessing their own playing. Furthermore, study of professional recordings and performances are also proven to be extremely useful for picking up further details of the music.

Practice techniques such as *Melody Alone Practice* and *Metronome Practice* help harpists to gain a more accurate sense of the music through listening. Melody Alone Practice, either played with one hand or divided between two hands, allows harpists to hear how the section should be phrased and interpreted; whereas Metronome Practice allows the harpists to hear the beat in order to keep their rhythm precise. However, while Frédéric-Charles Meyer, an English harpist and teacher, demanded constant practice to the metronome, starting with slow speeds and building up tempi bit by bit; Salzedo believed that the use of metronome should be limited for rhythmical control.
Explore the Kinaesthetic Learning Mode

The fifth approach to effective pedagogy is to explore the kinaesthetic learning mode. It is clear that the majority of the practice techniques are primarily designed to exercise the body and the brain via the kinaesthetic learning mode. However, each of these techniques has a specific function or functions which make them unique and useful depending on the technical need required. Some possible functions of the different techniques are described as follows:

- In order to establish a correct finger placement, use Blocked Chords Practice and Hand Shape Practice; or Fast Movement Practice for the training of precise execution of cross-under, cross-over and transporting movements.

- In order to encourage a smooth playing of a passage, use Slow Practice, which is a technique highly supported by numerous harpists such as Renié, Lawrence, Salzedo, and Balderston, to firmly develop good articulation and posture, and hence produce quality tone before speed is increased. The soft and fast playing of the Spiderfinger Practice helps to develop suppleness and facility. Lieberman explains that “musicians are encouraged to practice by touching lightly on the note at first, and then try repeating the piece of music with slightly more finger/arm weight, and more until clear tone can be achieved.” (Lieberman 1991, p.34) On the other hand, Eyes Closed Practice helps to overcome a technical anxiety, and/or to promote the smoothness of a line or a series of movement by redirecting visual energy into kinaesthetic one.

- To enrich the physical and mental memorisation of the parts, Repetition Practice can be used in conjunction with Separate Hand Practice or Pedal Alone Practice, which are helpful to tackle isolated technical spot. Octave Changing Practice, which is done by placing a sequence written in a very low or high register to a more comfortable one until the notes and fingering are learnt, is also helpful for the same purpose.
To strengthen the fingers along with aural reinforcement, use *Accent Practice* and *Altered Rhythms Practice*, which are also useful for speeding up sections of technical difficulty. Moreover, *Left Hand Strengthening Practice* and *Unison Practice* are helpful if one wishes to develop the strength of both hands at the same time while getting more familiar with the parts.

This literature research has shown that it is beneficial to use a variety of learning approaches in order to make practice more interesting, engaging, and effective as long as the correct technique is chosen to target the specific problem. As supported by Lieberman, musicians are advised to back up their muscle memory by mentally playing the music, visualise themselves playing with confidence, hearing the piece in their inner ear, see the music using photographic memory, and remember the structure of the music by careful analysis. In addition, it is also wise to schedule practice performances before a major event and/or simulate performance condition during practice in order to accustom oneself to playing under pressure, and to deliver reliable and successful practice results.

**Note:**

♦ Please be aware that the suggested practice techniques and tools were categorised in the above way accordingly to their most obvious purpose; and hence they may also be used via another approach depending on why and how they are going to be incorporated. Moreover, many of the techniques can also be used in conjunction with another.

♦ For a defined list of the techniques, please refer to *Appendix P: Practice Techniques for Harp Learning*, and *Appendix Q: Practice Plans for Harp Learning* to see examples of their application.
CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

This study of effective harp pedagogy explored a wide variety of sources for information such as historical books, harp method books, general music and non-music books, and journal articles. As a more focused approach to this topic, a two-part enquiry has been set up to study how harpists learn and teach the harp, and how the incorporation of practice techniques and tools affects one’s learning.

Part A: The Harp Pedagogy Online Survey

The first part consists of an online survey which was sent to selected harp teachers and/or harpists in New Zealand and Australia. The Harp Pedagogy Online Survey was designed to find out about the harpists’ own study backgrounds and teaching experience, and to seek feedback from them on the effectiveness of the researcher’s devised practice plans.

The process of the first part of the enquiry was conducted online. An invitation email (see Appendix A) was sent out to 45 New Zealand and Australian harpists, whose email addresses were obtained from searching various universities and harp societies’ websites and harpists’ webpages, from email replies responding to the request forwarded onto the harp societies’ mailing list, or by seeking contact from other harpists, on 27/28 June 2010. On 3 July 2010, an email titled Part 1 of 3: Project Introduction (see Appendix B) was sent to the same group of harpists, providing them with information, such as the Proposed Thesis Outline (see Appendix C) – explaining the aims and procedure of this research, and Commendation Letters – proving credentials of the researcher. On 4 July 2010, an email titled Part 2 of 3: Consent Request (see Appendix D) was sent specifying the content of the enquiry and the rights of the participants with information attached in the Information Sheet (see Appendix E) and the Consent Form (see Appendix F). Another email titled
Part 3 of 3: Survey Information (see Appendix G) was sent on the same day, providing the harpists the links to access *The Harp Pedagogy Online Survey*, and to download the files – *Practice Techniques for Harp Learning* and *Practice Plans* – for answering the survey questions and for their personal reference. Please refer to Appendix H to view the actual content of *The Harp Pedagogy Online Survey*. Furthermore, an email reminder (see Appendix I) was sent on 29 July 2010 prior to the online survey deadline.

**Part B: The Harp Learning Student Survey and The Practice Strategies Implementation Follow-Up Interview**

The second part of the enquiry, which aims to find out the impact of the incorporation of practice techniques and tools in one’s teaching and/or learning outcomes, consists of two components – *The Harp Learning Student Survey* and *The Practice Strategies Implementation Follow-Up Interview*. *The Harp Learning Student Survey* was designed for intermediate or advanced concert level harp students who are studying in New Zealand. This survey provided the researcher with an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the practice techniques and tools from the students’ point of view. On the other hand, *The Practice Strategies Implementation Follow-Up Interview* was conducted with selected concert harp teachers in New Zealand. The interview results allowed the researcher to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of practice techniques and tools from the teachers’ point of view, and compare it with the students’ responses.

Furthermore, five musical excerpts were chosen as the bases of specific practice plans to demonstrate the application of the combined knowledge gained from developing physical and mental techniques for harp playing as a means to convert theory into practice. These practice plans, suitable for harpists at intermediate and advanced levels, demonstrate the practical application of the combined knowledge gained from developing physical techniques in harp playing and mental techniques in
practising. The devised practice plans incorporates simple isolated technical exercises, which serve as the basis of building secure advanced techniques to target specific technical needs, so that the passages become more musical and manageable to play. As mentioned above, examples of the practice plans have been sent to selected harpists / harp teachers in New Zealand and Australia for their comments. Apart from promoting the teaching of practice techniques, the purpose of this exercise is to refer to previous methods to develop a means of sharing and exchanging educational resources to further establish more effective harp pedagogy.

An invitation email (see Appendix J) outlining the focus, purpose and procedure of this part of the research was sent to 13 harp teachers in New Zealand on 6 August 2010 and the invitation email (see Appendix K) for the students was sent on 11 August 2010. After receiving the email responses from some of the teachers and students, *The Harp Pedagogy Information Pack*, containing documents, such as the *Information Sheet* (see Appendix L and M) and the *Consent Form* (see Appendix N and O), a poster – *Practice Techniques for Harp Learning* (see Appendix P), and a booklet – *Practice Plans for Harp Learning* (see Appendix Q), were sent to the participants on 31 August 2010. A period of three months was then allocated for the harp teachers and harp students to apply the suggested practice techniques and to experiment with some of the practice plans in their teaching and learning. The Teacher Interview questions (see Appendix R) and the Student Survey (see Appendix S) were posted to the participants on 28 November 2010.
4.1 Source of Evidence

4.1.1 The Harp Pedagogy Online Survey (Part A)

This online survey was designed for selected concert harpists and harp teachers in New Zealand and Australia. Of the 45 harpists who were invited to participate in this research via email, 22 responses (49%) were collected in early August, 2010.

4.1.2 The Harp Learning Student Survey (Part B)

This part of the research sought the participation of selected intermediate or advanced level concert harp students in New Zealand. After contacting the students, all 8 of them gave their consent to participate. An information pack, which included a poster – Practice Techniques for Harp Learning, was distributed to each participant in August. The student survey was mailed to each participating student in late November, and the results, which indicate how effective the use of practice techniques and tools are for harp teaching and learning, were all collected by early January 2011.

4.1.3 The Practice Strategies Implementation Follow-up Interview (Part B)

This part of the research sought participation of selected concert harp teachers in New Zealand. Of the limited number of concert harp teachers in New Zealand, five invitations were sent and three concert harp teachers gave their consent to participate. The researcher was then provided with the names of their concert harp students who were at intermediate or advanced playing level. An
information pack, which included a poster - *Practice Techniques for Harp Learning*, was distributed to each participant in August. All teacher interviews took place in mid-December 2010.

### 4.2 Significance of the Study

This research is significant because it aims to help harpists to learn and teach the harp with more efficiency and positive results. The practice techniques and tools suggested in this research employ a mixture of strategies, such as the following, to guide harpists to practice in a goal-oriented approach:

- They create visual cues, using techniques and tools such as the Repair Points, Pedal Change Diagram, and the poster of *Practice Techniques for Harp Learning*;
- They support self-evaluation skills, using tools such as Self-Recording Evaluation and Practice Journal;
- They enhance musicianship, memorisation and interpretation skills using techniques and tools such as Solfége Singing, Pedal Alone Practice, Away from the Instrument Practice and Melody Alone Practice; and
- They promote the growth of problem discernment and problem solving skills in harp playing.

This study also provided a channel for harpists in New Zealand and Australia to share information within the harp community. While this research mainly focused on technique development through strategic practice, it is essential to base this approach on a foundation where a strong awareness is placed on the physical factors, such as the use of warm-up exercises, relaxation techniques, breathing techniques, and posture adjustment, of harp playing. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that this research only contributes to a facet of the harp pedagogy research, and should not replace the other facets.
CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS OF DATA - PART A

5.1 The Harp Pedagogy Online Survey

5.1.1 Regarding the Participants

The years of harp learning and playing of the harpists who participated in this part of the research spread widely as shown by the following data:

- 11-20 years: 23%
- 21-30 years: 32%
- 31-40 years: 36%
- 41-50 years: 9%

The data show that either there were significantly fewer harpists 40 to 50 years ago, or that many harpists who had been playing the harp for a long time have now stopped playing. Otherwise, there is a relatively even spread between the different categories. In comparison, the number of years of harp teaching experience gained by the participants is as follows:

- 0 years of teaching experience: 9%
- 1-10 years of teaching experience: 32%
- 11-20 years of teaching experience: 27%
- 21-30 years of teaching experience: 27%
- 31-40 years of teaching experience: 5%
There is no direct relationship between the numbers of years of harp learning and years of harp teaching within the community of the surveyed participants. While 27% of the participants started teaching the harp after having learnt the harp for less than ten years, 73% started teaching the harp after having played the harp for over ten years.

The findings indicate that the participants attained their qualification and/or training in harp performance and teaching from the following means:

- From going through tertiary study in harp performance
- From going through tertiary study in music and/or education
- From attending harp performance exams offered by institutions, such as A.M.E.B
- From professional performing and teaching experience

Many of these participants have been tutored by a number of harp teachers in the past, and there is a total number of 50 different harp teachers, including both international teachers and local teachers in New Zealand and Australia, mentioned by the 22 participants.

Regardless of who their teachers were or which method they adopted, it is interesting to see that the majority of the participants have different people in mind who are of great influence to their philosophies and skills in harp teaching and learning. However, the following list provides the names of the people who had inspired at least 45% of the participants, and impacted their approach to harp pedagogy immensely:
In addition, 32% of the participants expressed that their teaching and learning philosophies and skills were influenced by one of more of the following group:

- University lecturers / staff
- Other instrument and/or singing teachers
- Conductors
- Colleagues / other performers
- Family members or friends who are also musicians

Note:

♦ 23% of the participants did not provide a response for this question.
Through the years of harp playing, the majority of participants indicate sufficient to high levels of learning ability in terms of sight reading and music learning skills which are illustrated by the following data:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants’ self-evaluation on their sight reading skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Accurate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0% 9% 27% 41% 23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants’ self-evaluation on their music learning skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0% 0% 14% 32% 54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While sight reading skill seems to be more challenging for the participants, the majority of the participants show high levels of confidence in their harp learning skills in the self-evaluation.

5.1.2    Regarding the Choice of Harp Methods, Resource and Lesson Content

Regarding the Choice of Harp Methods

The survey results show the percentage of the different methods that the participants adopted during their learning of the harp:
- 27% adopted the Salzedo Method;
- 32% adopted the French (Grandjany or Renié) Method;
- 32% adopted a combination of harp methods – while the most common combination is made up of the French and the Salzedo methods, a few participants also recall having learnt other harp methods;
- 5% adopted a method other than the selection provided in the question;
- 4% did not adopt any particular method;
- None adopted the Russian Method;
- None adopted the Suzuki Method.

![The Harp Method(s) Used for Learning](image)

**Figure 1**: The Harp Method(s) Used for Learning
On the other hand, the data below indicate the percentage of the different methods that the participants prefer to employ in their harp teaching:

- 32% prefer to teach using the Salzedo Method;
- 36% prefer to teach using the French (Grandjany or Renié) Method;
- 23% prefer to teach using a combination of harp methods – while the most common combination is made up of the French and the Salzedo methods, some participants also mentioned the use of other methods, and/or their own method for their teaching;
- None uses the Russian Method in their teaching;
- In addition, 9% mentioned the use of Suzuki Method, which is incorporated alongside their preferred teaching method.

![The Harp Method(s) Used for Teaching](image)

Figure 2: The Harp Method(s) Used for Teaching
Of all the participants who are presently engaged in teaching, 60% of them are teaching the method(s) that they had employed when they were learning the harp:

- 20% who learnt the Salzedo Method now teach using the Salzedo Method;
- 25% who learnt the French Method now teach using the French Method;
- 15% who learnt a combination of harp methods now teach using a combination of harp methods.

In comparison, 40% of the participants made some changes to the way they teach the harp, which are different from how they were trained:

- 10% who learnt a combination of harp methods now teach using the Salzedo Method;
- 10% who learnt a combination of harp method now teach using the French Method;
- 5% who learnt the Salzedo Method now teach using a combination of the Salzedo and the Suzuki methods;
- 5% who learnt the French Method now teach using a combination of French and Suzuki methods;
- 5% who learnt the French Method now teach using a combination of harp method according to their students’ needs;
- 5% who did not learn the harp using any method now teach using a combination of harp methods.

Furthermore, none of the participants switch from one particular method to another.
Figure 3: Method used for Learning versus Method chosen for Teaching

Note:

♦ 9% of the total participants are not engaged in any teaching; hence they had left the questions relating to teaching unanswered. As a result, the data was derived from the responses of those who do teach.
It is interesting to find that amongst the surveyed participants, half of them believe that it is essential to adopt a particular method of harp playing, while the other half believes that it is unnecessary to do so due to the following reasons:

1. Each method has something to offer, hence it is beneficial to take the strength of every method and integrate them into one’s teaching.
2. It is more important to know the reasons behind the different techniques, and incorporate the suitable techniques according to needs of each individual.
3. Everybody is built differently and therefore they may need to adapt different techniques which are more fitting to their body.
4. It is important to develop musicianship as well as technical facility, and since technique is merely a tool for creating music, any method is fine as long as the players listen attentively to their own playing.

Furthermore, the limited access to teachers of certain method and the different intentions of the student’s for learning the harp influence whether one would adopt a particular method or not in their learning. In addition, the survey results also show the following two things about participants’ teaching approaches:

- 30% of the teaching participants indicate that they study and consider different ways or introduce different elements of harp teaching all the time, 45% do so a lot, 20% do so occasionally, and 5% have never done so.
- 20% of the teaching participants design specific exercises for their student all the time, 55% often do so, 15% sometimes do so, 5% seldom do so, and 5% have never done so.
Regarding the Choice of Resource

It is clear to note that all teaching participants use instructional books and/or technical exercises in their teaching. The results of how frequently these titles were used for their own harp learning are illustrated in the following table, starting with most frequently used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of the participants</th>
<th>Instructional Book / Technical Exercises Used in Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Method for the harp (Lucile Lawrence &amp; Carlos Salzedo, 1929)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Metodo per Arpa (Maria Grossi &amp; Ettore Pozzoli, 1986)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Modern Study for the Harp (Carlos Salzedo, 1921)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>The Complete Method for the Harp (Henriette Renié, 1966)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Conditioning Exercises (Carols Salzedo, 1986)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Daily Dozen (Carols Salzedo, 1929)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Exercices et Études Op.9 (Ed Lariviere, 1992)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Technical Development for Harpists (Danielle Perrett, 2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Méthode de Harpe, Book 2 (Jean-Henri Naderman, 1975)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>On Playing the Harp (Yolanda Kondonassis, 2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Universal Method for the Harp (Nicolas-Charles Bochsa &amp; Charles Oberthuer, 1912)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Complete Method for the Harp (David Watkins, 1972)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Harp for Today: A Universal Method for the Harp (Susann McDonald &amp; Linda Wood Rollo, 2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>51 Esercizi Giornalieri (Luigi Maria Magistretti, 1924)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Russian Method: Improving Techniques (Alla Yashne, 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Suzuki Harp School books (Mary Kay Waddington, 1985)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other: Sylvia Woods’ Books / Videos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other: Harp Exercises for Agility and Speed (Deborah Friou, 1989)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other: School of Mechanism (Victor Coeur)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other: Practical Method for Grand Harp and Irish Harp (Josef Molnar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other: Études (Bochsa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other: Technique Studies for Harp (Alfred Holy)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: The Method Books Used for Learning
In comparison, the results of how frequently these titles are being used for participants’ teaching are illustrated in the following table, starting with most frequently used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of the participants</th>
<th>Instructional Book / Technical Exercises Used for Teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Metodo per Arpa (Maria Grossi &amp; Ettore Pozzoli, 1986)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Technical Development for Harpists (Danielle Perrett, 2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Conditioning Exercises (Carols Salzedo, 1986)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Exercices et Études Op.9 (Ed Lariviere, 1992)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Method for the harp (Lucile Lawrence &amp; Carlos Salzedo, 1929)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Universal Method for the Harp (Nicolas-Charles Bochsa &amp; Charles Oberthuer, 1912)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Complete Method for the Harp (David Watkins, 1972)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Modern Study for the Harp (Carlos Salzedo, 1921)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>The Complete Method for the Harp (Henriette Renié, 1966)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Daily Dozen (Carols Salzedo, 1929)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>On Playing the Harp (Yolanda Kondonassis, 2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Méthode de Harpe, Book 2 (Jean-Henri Naderman, 1975)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Suzuki Harp School books (Mary Kay Waddington, 1985)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Harp for Today: A Universal Method for the Harp (Susann McDonald &amp; Linda Wood Rollo, 2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Other: Harp Exercises for Agility and Speed (Deborah Friou, 1989)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Other: Various harp books for beginners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>51 Esercizi Giornalieri (Luigi Maria Magistretti, 1924)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Russian Method: Improving Techniques (Alla Yashne, 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other: Sylvia Woods’ Books / Videos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other: Practical Method for Grand Harp and Irish Harp (Josef Molnar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other: Studies of Boscha, Posse and Damases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other: Irish Harp Book (Sheila Larchet Cuthbert, 2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other: Mimura Exercises (Tsutomu Mimura, 1966-1972)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other: Bernard André books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other: Exam Syllabus Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other: My own exercises</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: The Method Books Chosen for Teaching
Amongst the popular method books, Grossi and Pozzoli’s * Metodo per Arpa*, used by the 50% participants in their learning and 70% for their teaching, is one of the top resource of all time. Parrett’s *Technical Development for Harpist*, which has only been used by 32% of the participants in their learning, is now being widely used by 60% of the participants for teaching. Furthermore, there is also a slight increase, from 5% who used Waddington’s *Suzuki Harp School* books in their learning to 20% who use it for teaching. While the usage of many books stayed approximately the same, there is a noticeable decline with some of the following materials which were published by the prominent harp education pioneers:

- Lawrence and Salzedo’s *Method for the Harp* (1929) has dropped from being the top choice preferred by 59% of the participants during the course of their harp study to 35% who now use it for teaching. Despite this, it is still one of the most popular method books at present.
- Salzedo’s *Modern Study for the Harp* (1921) was used by 50% of the participants during the course of their harp study, and only 25% use it for teaching. However, since this material is designed for advanced players, the decreased figure could be explained due to the limited number of advanced harp students.
- Salzedo’s *Daily Dozen* (1929) was used by 46% of the participants during the course of their harp study, but only 25% now use it for teaching.
- Renié’s *The Complete Method for the Harp* (1966) was used by 46% of the participants during the course of their harp study, but only 25% now use it for teaching.

It is only in recent years that a greater amount of new instructional books, revised and/or adapted based on an existing harp method or methods, for intermediate and advanced levels harp players have surfaced, and perhaps this is why they have not been as widely used as the older publications.
Note:

♦ 9% of the participants did not use or rarely used any instructional and technical books during the period of their harp studies.

♦ 9% of the participants do not teach, and hence they left the questions relating to teaching unanswered.

♦ Since the focus of this research is not on the evaluation of a comprehensive list of instructional books used by the participants, the titles provided by the researcher and the participants should be considered incomplete. For this reason, the review of which period or periods of instructional books are preferred by the participants was not carried out. Despite this, the titles mentioned in this research do represent many of the most frequently used materials for intermediate and advanced levels players around the world.
Regarding the Choice of Lesson Content

The following table contains an analysis of the possible components for harp lessons used in participants’ learning, compared to their teaching:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>How often...</th>
<th>... did you use the following in your learning of the harp? (%)</th>
<th>... do you use the following in your teaching of the harp? (%)</th>
<th>SUMMARY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warm-Up Exercises</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>While a few participants were not or seldom had been taught to do warm-up exercises during their learning of the harp, they have become more aware of the importance of warm-up exercises in harp playing, and hence there is an increase of frequency in the use of warm-up exercises during tuition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Studies &amp; Etudes</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Although technical studies and etudes are still regarded as important and are often included during tuition, there is a slight decrease in frequency for teachers who always work on these with their students during tuition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ear &amp; Rhythm Training</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ear and rhythm training seems to have been sometimes overlooked during many participants’ learning of the harp, however, more harp teachers are incorporating it into their teaching nowadays.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solfége Singing</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>While basic Solfége singing is a vital component in music education, it is a foreign concept to many musicians in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
New Zealand and Australia, hence less than 25% of the participants actively use it as a teaching tool.

While 59% of the participants were exposed to frequent music theory and analysis training in their learning of the harp, 41% have never or seldom been taught these skills. However, the figures show that a large number of participants do include this aspect in their harp teaching.

Scales and arpeggio have always been recognised as an essential component in harp learning. The figures show that most teachers encourage their students to practise these on a regular basis.

The figures between how often harpists and harp teachers learnt and teach playing gestures are about the same. This may have been influenced by the harp method(s) individual participants employ in their harp playing. E.g., The Salzedo Method followers pay more attention to playing gestures compared to the French Method followers.

The majority of participants integrate practice techniques in their teaching frequently, despite the fact that some participants only received a little coaching on this in their learning.

While 50% of the participants never or seldom used the Practice Journal in their learning and teaching, many teachers who have been using it in their learning do the same with their students on a regular basis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Music Theory &amp; Analysis</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>New Zealand and Australia, hence less than 25% of the participants actively use it as a teaching tool.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Scales &amp; Arpeggios</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Scales and arpeggio have always been recognised as an essential component in harp learning. The figures show that most teachers encourage their students to practise these on a regular basis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Playing Gestures</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>The figures between how often harpists and harp teachers learnt and teach playing gestures are about the same. This may have been influenced by the harp method(s) individual participants employ in their harp playing. E.g., The Salzedo Method followers pay more attention to playing gestures compared to the French Method followers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Practice Techniques</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>The majority of participants integrate practice techniques in their teaching frequently, despite the fact that some participants only received a little coaching on this in their learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Practice Journal</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>While 50% of the participants never or seldom used the Practice Journal in their learning and teaching, many teachers who have been using it in their learning do the same with their students on a regular basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Component</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Seldom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posture Adjustment</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breathing Techniques</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxation Techniques</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Preparation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress Management</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body / Finger Care</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even though a few participants only received little or some instruction on posture adjustment, the figures show that there is a growing awareness in this area.

The figures between how often harpists and harp teachers learnt and teach breathing techniques are about the same. While 25% of the participants never or seldom discussed breathing techniques during tuition, 50% do so regularly.

While 25% of the participants never or seldom learnt and/or teach relaxation techniques, 75% do focus on relaxation techniques on a regular basis during tuition.

The figures between how often harpists and harp teachers learnt and teach performance preparation skills are about the same. Attention in this area is paid accordingly to the students’ needs.

75% of the participants do discuss stress management with their students from time to time during tuition, despite the fact that 41% have never or seldom been exposed to this topic during their learning of the harp.

The figures between how often harpists and harp teachers learnt and teach body and finger care matters are about the same. This may have been the result of teaching in the similar fashion to how they were taught, where more attention was paid to the other components.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Harp Maintenance</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although basic harp maintenance is not a topic for every lesson, many teachers often spend time educating their students about harp care during tuition.

Table 4: The Make-Up of Harp Lessons

To summarise the findings, components which are being frequently included in harp lessons are warm-up exercises, scales & arpeggios, practice techniques, and posture adjustment; and components which are being included often are technical studies & etudes, music theory & analysis, playing gestures, relaxation techniques, and performance preparation. In comparison, components which are less frequently being included in harp lessons are ear & rhythm training, Solfége singing, practice journal writing, breathing techniques, stress management, body / finger care, and harp maintenance.

It is clear that more harpists and harp teachers are finding the teaching and learning of practice techniques, whether it is being deliberately taught or interwoven into the lessons as problem arises, to be as essential. While some components, which are also important within the learning of music in general, are not being taught as often during harp tuition, the researcher believes that these components, such as Ear & rhythm training, Solfége singing, and Practice journal, could be easily integrated into the teaching and learning of practice techniques. This would allow the learners to reap the benefits they offer.
5.1.3  Regarding the Teaching of Practice Techniques in Harp Playing

Regarding the Employed Practice Techniques

Although practice techniques are being widely taught, not all practice techniques are being used regularly, therefore it is necessary find out how often different practice techniques are actually being taught in harp lessons. For this reason, the following table, with the most frequently used practice techniques listed on the top and the least frequently used on the bottom, shows the percentage of participants who have used the Practice Techniques (first edition) complied by the research:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of Teaching Participants</th>
<th>Practice Technique Employed in Teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Metronome Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Slow Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Blocked Chords Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>Repetition Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>Separate Hand Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>Fragment Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>Melody Alone Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>Repair Points Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>Hand Shape Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Away from the Instrument Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Pedal Alone Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>Altered Rhythms Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>Self-Recording Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Eyes Closed Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Octave Changing Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Practice Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Checklist Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Fast Movement Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Solfége Singing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Spiderfinger Practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Practice Techniques Employed in Teaching
Another representation of the data in alphabetical order is provided in the figure below:

The Percentage of Harp Teachers Teaching Practice Techniques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Technique</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Altered Rhythms Practice</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Away from the Instrument Practice</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blocked Chords Practice</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checklist Practice</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eyes Closed Practice</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fast Movement Practice</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fragment Practice</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand Shape Practice</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melody Alone Practice</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metronome Practice</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Octave Changing Practice</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedal Alone Practice</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Journal</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repair Points Practice</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition Practice</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Recording Evaluation</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate Hand Practice</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solfége Singing</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiderfinger Practice</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow Practice</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4: The Percentage of Harp Teachers Teaching Practice Techniques
Regarding the Devised Practice Plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Plan Example</th>
<th>Not useful</th>
<th>Little useful</th>
<th>Very useful</th>
<th>Extremely useful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(A)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(D)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:

♦ Please refer to Appendix H: The Harp Pedagogy Online Survey - Survey Questions for the first edition of the devised practice plans.

Many participants found the devised practice plans useful for teachers and students because:

1. They are organised which are easy to follow with details and clear goals.
2. They facilitate more efficient and practical learning.
3. The different ways of practising keep a passage interesting and the musical intent alive.
4. Many teachers understand that they can also combine the practice techniques and/or create their own techniques to assist their learning and teaching of the harp.
5. Different techniques will work better for different people, therefore it is good to explore all the possible ways of breaking it down to find what works best.

Some feedback was also given by the participants and this has been summarised as follows:

1. The explanation for the Hand Shape Practice seems to be somehow confusing and more difficult to understand fully for some.
2. Instead of progressively increasing the speed as suggested in Example (C), the Salzedo Method teaches students to learn the piece through Slow Practice and to increase the speed in only two or three notches.

3. A mere understanding of the shaping of the melodic line in Example (A) is not sufficient to create musical phrasing if tension comes into the technique. The right physical support, which allows the hands and the wrists to relax, and attentive listening for the right balance and dynamics shape between the melody and the accompaniment, are vital.

4. While the Pedal Change Diagram used in Example (D) offered another variety to Pedal Practice, the pedal changes, which are inseparable from the music, should be executed with the music in front of the player, so the player could execute them in a meaningful and in contextualised way, rather than relying on additional markings for reminders.

5. Variations of the complied practice techniques and other learning techniques have been suggested by various participants. Some of these techniques were taken into account and have been adopted into the revised version of the Practice Techniques for Harp Learning and Practice Plans for Harp Learning.

6. The inclusion of poetry or imagination would be useful to provide descriptions of tone or ways of thinking about tone, resulting in much repetitive labour being greatly reduced by a strong imaginative goal.

5.1.4 Regarding Participants' Personal Views on Harp Pedagogy

The following is a list of suggestions provided by the participants regarding their views to effective harp pedagogy:
[It is important to have] patience and encouragement.

I think effective teaching and learning goes far beyond the actual nuts and bolts of teaching the physicality of playing the harp. A huge amount of what we do is about encouraging self-confidence in our students, assisting them to develop the skills to teach themselves, teaching them how to listen, how to appreciate and understand music, imparting to them a joy of learning and a capacity to play the best they can at whatever level they are at – to name just a few things!

Every student is different and their ages also influence what is said in the lesson. Adult students are better with concepts but children need very simple language. Adults are much more demanding of themselves. Some students are good with imagery, some are better with their ear.

Each student learns at a different pace, and learns in different ways. I have a wide range of students from 6 years to 74 years old. Some pick up ideas quickly when explained to them, others need to copy at the same time they are shown, others pick up musical ideas after hearing an example. So they are learning visually, aurally or kinaesthetically or a combination of both. This makes my teaching very interesting. Also I find young students are very fast with their hands but their brains take a little longer to understand some things. The older students understand immediately, but get very frustrated when their hands do not do exactly what they want. So as a teacher I am very patient, try quickly to ascertain what type of learner they are and tailor their lessons to fit them. And most importantly, enjoy the music learning trip with them.

A teacher needs to be constantly learning, improving, and be up to date with the latest advancements if possible.

Rapport with your student is extremely important, and evincing an interest in them as an individual, not just a harp student.
A grasp of human nature and specifically the current influences in the way people are influenced and behave can be very useful in teaching (and any area!). For example, if teaching a person of western type mentality, possibly used to instant gratification, one will have to devise ways to stimulate patience and perseverance in order to get results. Possibly another cultural background, where hard constant work is a habit, that patience and perseverance will come easier, and more emphasis might have to be put on 'living' the music as you play, and not be overly obsessed with technical perfection. [It is] essential to develop good body and hand habits from the beginning. Too many self-taught harpists create habits which are detrimental to their well being and to their playing. Focusing on a strong technique is more important in the early stages than trying to learn a lot of repertoire. Students must understand and be patient with this process – the harp is a very technical, difficult, and non-ergonomic instrument which can create big stresses on the body if not played correctly.

It is important to have clearly defined goals as to what a student wants to achieve and what is expected from the teacher.

Teachers need beginner and intermediate pieces from different musical genres and cultures. It is difficult to keep students interested when they have to play everything slowly at the beginning, and the music is simplistic and naive, and not connected to modern music. I find the idea of Suzuki harp [school] very appealing. However, the material in the books I have seen is technically stressful for a beginner. More appropriate pieces could be taught by ear to develop relaxed technique and listening skills. Note reading and rhythmic skills can be taught really effectively away from the harp, often with games or question quizzes. Sight reading is a specific skill, separate from learning pieces, and it is good to practise it regularly with students on pieces below their technical level. If the teacher teaches a lot by ear, it's important to focus on note reading skills parallel to this.
• Being firm about memory work and sight reading from the beginning.

• Every student is different and we should beware of generalising too much about good teaching techniques – practising your mental state is just as important as practising what you do with your hands. If we played a wrong note every time we practised, we would expect to play that same wrong note in performance. We need to remember that if we think negative thoughts every time we practise a passage, those thoughts will be there when we perform it just as surely as a wrong note would be. The impact of confidence levels on playing results cannot be underestimated.

• CDs and recordings – knowing new music before you play it can make a big difference to the way you learn it – with an overall understanding of the piece rather than phrase by phrase. Particularly with exam students who 'develop' mistakes late in their preparation for the exam, I record their piece and they spend the week listening and looking at the music, and only start playing it themselves in the second half of the week. [As a result], the mistakes [would be] gone without too much stress.

• A great performer is not always a great teacher, and vice versa. There can be a stigma attached to this which should not be the case.
CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS OF DATA - PART B

6.1 The Harp Learning Student Survey

6.1.1 Regarding the Student Participants

Although most student participants started learning the harp at around eight to thirteen years old, the age that they began their harp study varies widely. Amongst the 8 student participants who have been learning the harp for five to eighteen years, 2 are at advanced level in terms of their harp playing ability, 4 are at post intermediate level, and 2 are at intermediate level. Furthermore, prior to harp learning, all 8 student participants have or had learnt other instruments: 7 of them played piano/keyboard, and some also played instruments such as violin, flute, guitar, recorder and saxophone. (Please note that a few of them have or had learnt more than one instrument before they began to play the harp.) This finding indicates that the students all had some level of prior musical and/or theoretical knowledge before taking up harp learning.

When it comes to analysing the student participants’ practice habits, the results show that the hours that they put in for practice ranges from 5 hours to 19 hours per week. While 3 of the 8 student participants arrange their practice sessions irregularly, the rest of them normally practise regularly in chunks of one to two hours per practice session. Of these 5 student participants, 3 practise one session per day or on most days; whereas the other 2 schedule two or three practice sessions per day or on most days. During a self-evaluation question, the results reveal that 1 of the 8 student participants’ believes that her actual practice hours are more than planned on average, 3 believe that their actual practice hours are about the same as planned, and 4 believe that their actual practice hours are less
than their goal on average. Many participants found it hard to practise for more hours due to the following limitations: (a) the insufficient time due to work and study; (b) the lack of efficient organisation; and (c) the less than ideal condition of the practice space and/or the instrument availability.

It is clear to note that at least half of the student participants are struggling with time, space and energy in order to obtain more hours for practice. For these reasons, in order to boost students’ changes of success, there is a definite need to provide them with tools and techniques that would help them practise more efficiently.

6.1.2 Regarding the Students’ Views on the Practice Techniques & Tools

The following table provides a summary of the student participants’ evaluation of the suggested practice techniques and/or tools:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRACTICE TECHNIQUE</th>
<th>...... before this research?</th>
<th>...... during the period of this research?</th>
<th>How helpful is this practice technique to your learning? (1 being not helpful to 5 being extremely helpful)</th>
<th>When do you find this practice technique useful? During the... period. /8 – students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accent Practice</td>
<td>3 → 4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>• Note learning: 1/8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 → 3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>• Technique securing: 8/8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 → 3</td>
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| Pedal Alone Practice | 3 → 3 | 5  | ● Note learning: 7/7 – (1p N/A)*  
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## PRACTICE TOOL

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<th>Helpfulness</th>
<th>When do you find this practice tool useful?</th>
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### Table 6: Students’ Evaluation of the Practice Techniques

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<th>When do you find this practice tool useful?</th>
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- Performance preparation: 2/8
Pedal Change Diagram

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- Note learning: 6/7 – (1p N/A)*
- Technique securing: 5/7 – (1p N/A)*
- Performance preparation: 3/7 – (1p N/A)*

Table 7: Students’ Evaluation of the Practice Tools

Note:

♦ One of the student participants was unable to gain access to a pedal harp during the period of this research, therefore the result of any pedal related questions are marked “1p N/A”, thus leaving only seven responses.

Apart from seeing how the student participants reacted to the different practice techniques and tools, the survey results also reveal the following findings, which are drawn from the students’ responses as they incorporate these practice techniques and tools into their practice:

1. Half of the student participants expressed that it did not take long for them to implement the practice techniques and tools in their learning, because many of them had already been using some of practice techniques and tools advocated in this research. 3 of the 8 student participants stated that approximately a couple weeks was required for them to become familiar with the practice techniques and tools. A few participants also mentioned that they only implemented and/or learnt the different practice techniques and tools which were required in accordance with
the demands of the pieces they were learning.

2. Half of the student participants did not find any difficulties when they first started learning the practice techniques and tools. However, the other half had some difficulties which were caused by: (a) Physical limitation and/or injury – some practice techniques, such as Blocked Chords Practice, Fast Movement Practice and Accent Practice, are harder to execute under the circumstances; (b) The lack of variety of technical demands in the repertoire which the participants were learning – the reason for using some of the techniques, such as unison and Octave Changing Practice, only made sense in some music which requires the technical demands, therefore it was challenging to implement all practice techniques and tools at all once; and (c) The lack of patience and the incorporation of controlled and methodical practice habits.

3. After implementing the practice techniques and tools for at least three months, 5 of the 8 student participants were not having any problems, but 3 of them expressed challenges like the following: (a) Physical limitation and/or injury made some of the techniques a bit challenging to apply; (b) Some of the techniques and/or tools requires a lot of concentration, so it was challenging to stay focused for a long period of time; (c) It was difficult to incorporate practice techniques such as Metronome Practice when rhythmic accuracy is a challenge to the player.

4. 3 of the 8 student participants believe that they are able to choose appropriate practice techniques very well, while the other 5 believe that they are able to do so adequately.

5. 2 of the 8 student participants indicate that they always consider using a variety of practice techniques and/or tools to overcome technical difficulties, 5 often do so, and 1 sometimes do so.

6. When the student participants were asked about the impact of strategic practice towards their learning, their responses are summarised in the following table:
### ASPECT
### SUMMARY OF THE STUDENTS’ RESPONSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASPECT</th>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time &amp; Energy Management:</strong></td>
<td>As listed below, 7 of the 8 student participants recognised positive differences regarding this aspect in the following ways:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The large range of techniques and tools helped them to overcome technical difficulties and achieve their goals effectively. For example, Checklist Practice and the use of the Practice Journal encouraged them to set goals and to stay focused rather than wasting time practising aimlessly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Although a lot of energy and patience were required, the incorporation of practice techniques allowed them to learn music solidly right from the start.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- This systematic approach improved their time management, allowing them to become more consistent in terms of the length and the timing of their practice sessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technique Mastery:</strong></td>
<td>6 of the 8 student participants recorded significant improvement in technique mastery after implementing practice techniques and tools into their learning. Their progress has been described as steady, and as their technique secured, the difficult passages became easier to manage using a range of practice options. 1 of them also mentioned that she is now better at problem spotting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Musicianship Skills:</strong></td>
<td>2 of the 8 student participants noticed improvement with this aspect. Some of the practice techniques and tools, such as Solfége Singing, Melody Alone Practice, and Self-Recording Evaluation, helped them listen better to the music they produce. They felt that as a result of better technique mastery, their musicianship skills had also progressed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aural Skills:</td>
<td>5 of the 8 student participants observed some improvement with this aspect. They began to study the harmonic and melodic relationship of each work in more detail, and listen to what they produced more carefully. Singing, regardless whether Solfége or letter names were being used, had helped to cement the melody and note memorising.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight Reading Skills:</td>
<td>Although less improvement had been noticed with this aspect, 3 of the 8 student participants noted that some of the practice techniques and/or tools had helped them in recognising chord structure and music patterns, and understanding how a phrase fits together better, which in turn speeds up the sight reading process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note Learning Skills:</td>
<td>6 of the 8 student participants have showed improvement with this aspect. The use of practice techniques and tools, such as Repair Points Practice, Fragment Practice, Repetition Practice, Separate Hand Practice, Slow Practice, Blocked Chords Practice, Away from the Instrument Practice, Octave Changing Practice, and Solfége Singing, have proven to be effective for note learning. The student participants have found it useful to learn music in a methodical way by breaking the music down and learning each segment properly with patience. This allowed their note learning skills to progress faster, which was time productive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorizing Skills:</td>
<td>6 of the 8 student participants recognised improvement with this aspect. Many of them noted that Repair Points Practice, Fragment Practice and Repetition Practice have allowed them to focus on small sections of music intensively, and are extremely useful when memorising music. Away from the Instrument Practice and Solfége Singing have also been mentioned to be helpful.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Theoretical & Structural Analysis Skills:

3 of the 8 student participants noticed improvement with this aspect. The use of the Practice Journal was said to have brought about an awareness and was useful for keeping record; the use of Away from the Instrument Practice allowed them to recognise melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and thematic structures which was especially helpful when learning a new piece of music; and the use of Hand Shape Practice and Blocked Chords Practice was also beneficial.

### Mental Strength & Confidence:

5 of the 8 student participants believe that they have improved with this aspect due to reasons such as the following: (a) Using the practice techniques, which exercise the mind, has built up their mental strength and confidence; (b) Having a larger range of practice options improved their problem-solving skills, hence increased their confidence when presented with new pieces; and (c) Having a goal-oriented and planned practice leads to better performance preparation management, which relieved some unnecessary stress. In addition, one student participant also pointed out that a lot of mental strength was required when implementing these practice techniques and tools.

### General Physical Conditions:

6 of the 8 student participants believe that they have improved with this aspect due to reasons such as the following: (a) Using the practice techniques has improved their physical condition as it gave both the body and the mind equal exercise; (b) They are more aware of their hand and finger positions, and how they can strengthen weak fingers with the use of certain practice techniques; (c) They have learnt to discern when they can study the music away from the instrument, and make plans for the next goal-oriented practice, which in turn reduce some physical pain. It is vital to
note that while it is valuable to invest more time in practice, physical injuries caused by muscular overuse continue to be of serious concern by many of the participants.

Table 8: Students’ Responses to the Practice Techniques & Tools

7. The additional comments provided by some student participants clearly show that the use of practice techniques and tools are of great help to the learners for note learning, and perfecting and performance, especially when dealing with difficult passages. One student participant believes that not only the majority of these practice techniques and tools are essential in harp learning, they are also applicable to the learning of other instruments. Furthermore, even though a variety of practice techniques were given in this research, one student participant expressed that she was happy to learn only the ones that she needs.

6.1.3 Regarding the Students’ Views on the Devised Practice Plans

The student participants indicate that the use of practice plans worked well for them for the following reasons: (a) the practice plans shows how a variety of practice techniques can be used to tackle the same challenging spot. This encourages one to be creative when looking for solutions; (b) the practice plans allows one to learn the techniques while learning notes; (c) the layout of the practice plans helps them to relate practice techniques to their own repertoire; and (d) the approaches used in the practice plans make one to become more conscious of working methodically in order to achieve their goals. However, there are a few things that did not work out well in terms of these practice plans: (a) a few participants were unaware that these practice plans were only for reference, hence they thought they needed to learn the excerpts provided in these practice plans; and (b) a couple student
participants expressed that they felt overwhelmed by the large amount of information provided.

After referring to the practice techniques and tools, and the practice plans, 7 of the 8 student participants support the practice of converting technically demanding passages into isolated technical exercises/studies for themselves, rather than relying on etude to develop playing techniques. They found it rewarding to be able to learn isolated sections to a very high standard this way. They also found it beneficial to be able to master their techniques in the process of learning the repertoire, which is practical and time-saving. 1 student participant disagreed with this approach because she believes that both etudes and studies have their purpose in developing playing techniques, so they should be used to gain the necessary techniques first before applying them to pieces. On this note, 2 student participants, who support the use of isolated technical exercises, also stressed the importance of using etudes and studies as well, because they are still considered extremely useful in the development of harp playing techniques.

### 6.1.4 Regarding the Students’ Practice Methods

After participating in this research, the student participants reviewed the philosophy of their practice methods and their responses are summarised as follows:

1. 6 of the 8 student participants believe that their method of practice has changed in the course of carrying out this project. This project, which supports planned, detailed, creative and efficient practice, made them become more aware of the different techniques and tools they can use to achieve goals in their practice. The other 2 believe that their practice method has not changed because they were already using most of the practice techniques prior to participating in this
research.

2. 7 of the 8 student participants believe it is very important to include the learning of practice techniques and tools during the lessons and the remaining 1 believe it is quite important to do so.

3. 5 of the 8 student participants indicate that they would always continue to use the practice techniques and tools introduced in this survey in their own learning, and the remaining 3 indicate that they would often do so in their learning.

4. In addition to this study, 1 student participant commented that the acquisition of sound playing techniques, which could be effectively improved by strategic practice, should help developing musicianship as more attention can be paid to phrasing when one is not struggling with techniques. However, if this is not the case, then the harpists need to make sure that they are not solely occupied by the study of techniques, which is only a means to the actual music creation.

6.2 The Practice Strategies Implementation Follow-up Interview

6.2.1 Regarding the Teachers’ Views on the Practice Techniques & Tools

The following table provides a summary of the teachers’ evaluation of their students’ responses to the suggested practice techniques and/or tools:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRACTICE TECHNIQUE</th>
<th>...... before this research? ➔ ...... during the period of this research? (1 being never to 5 being always)</th>
<th>How effective do you find the suggested practice technique in your students' learning? (1 being not helpful to 5 being extremely helpful)</th>
<th>When do you find this practice technique useful? During the... period. /3 – teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accent Practice</td>
<td>1 → 1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>● Note learning: 0/3 ● Technique securing: 2/3 ● Performance preparation: 1/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 → 4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 → 4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altered Rhythms Practice</td>
<td>5 → 5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>● Note learning: 1/3 ● Technique securing: 3/3 ● Performance preparation: 1/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 → 4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 → 4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Away from the Instrument Practice</td>
<td>5 → 5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>● Note learning: 1/3 ● Technique securing: 2/3 ● Performance preparation: 3/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 → 5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 → 4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blocked Chords Practice</td>
<td>5 → 5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>● Note learning: 2/3 ● Technique securing: 2/3 ● Performance preparation: 0/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 → 4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 → 4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checklist Practice</td>
<td>3 → 4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>● Note learning: 1/3 ● Technique securing: 1/3 ● Performance preparation: 2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 → 1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 → 4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eyes Closed Practice</td>
<td>1 → 2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>● Note learning: 0/3 ● Technique securing: 2/3 ● Performance preparation: 0/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 → 5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 → 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fast Movement Practice</td>
<td>1 → 4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>● Note learning: 0/3 ● Technique securing: 3/3 ● Performance preparation: 2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 → 1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 → 3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fragment Practice</td>
<td>2 → 4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>● Note learning: 2/3 ● Technique securing: 3/3 ● Performance preparation: 2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 → 5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 → 5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand Shape Practice</td>
<td>3 → 3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>● Note learning: 3/3 ● Technique securing: 3/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 → 1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Type</td>
<td>Progress</td>
<td>Score</td>
<td>Teachers’ Evaluation of the Practice Techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left Hand Strengthening</td>
<td>4 → 4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>• Performance preparation: 0/3 • Note learning: 3/3 • Technique securing: 2/3 • Performance preparation: 1/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melody Alone Practice</td>
<td>5 → 5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>• Note learning: 3/3 • Technique securing: 3/3 • Performance preparation: 2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metronome Practice</td>
<td>5 → 5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>• Note learning: 2/3 • Technique securing: 2/3 • Performance preparation: 3/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Octave Changing Practice</td>
<td>1 → 2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>• Note learning: 2/3 • Technique securing: 1/3 • Performance preparation: 1/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedal Alone Practice</td>
<td>2 → 3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>• Note learning: 2/3 • Technique securing: 2/3 • Performance preparation: 3/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repair Points Practice</td>
<td>4 → 4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>• Note learning: 0/3 • Technique securing: 2/3 • Performance preparation: 3/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition Practice</td>
<td>2 → 2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>• Note learning: 3/3 • Technique securing: 3/3 • Performance preparation: 2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate Hand Practice</td>
<td>5 → 5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>• Note learning: 3/3 • Technique securing: 3/3 • Performance preparation: 2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiderfinger Practice</td>
<td>1 → 4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>• Note learning: 2/3 • Technique securing: 1/3 • Performance preparation: 0/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow Practice</td>
<td>5 → 5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>• Note learning: 3/3 • Technique securing: 3/3 • Performance preparation: 2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unison Practice</td>
<td>1 → 1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>• Note learning: 1/3 • Technique securing: 1/3 • Performance preparation: 1/3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: Teachers’ Evaluation of the Practice Techniques
Apart from seeing how the teachers evaluated their students’ reaction to the different practice techniques and tools, the survey results also reveal the following findings, which are drawn from the teachers’ responses in regards to their students’ learning as they incorporate these practice techniques and tools into their practice:

1. It is clear to note that every student learns at a different pace. While some student learned most of the practice techniques and tools quickly, a few have not yet been able to grasp all of the varieties. One teacher responded that “some particular techniques or tools do work very quickly and almost
universally; whereas some are of more subtle and intended for the individual.”

2. 2 of the 3 teachers did not find any difficulties when they first started teaching the practice techniques and tools apart from trying to encourage their student(s) to actually put them into practice. 1 of them noted that the difficulty lies in trying to remember the less familiar practice techniques and to discern which one is most suitable to apply according to the music.

3. At the end of this research, none of the teachers were having any difficulty in trying to incorporate the practice techniques and tools in their teaching. The only challenge expressed was finding the most appropriate practice techniques and/or tools at the right time in order to cope with what was needed.

4. The teachers felt that only some of the students understand how to choose appropriate practice techniques for the technical spots, and/or that they may not always do so at the current stage. Therefore, knowing that it would take a long time for the students to absorb all of this, the teachers believe that their role is to assist the students in working out their own solutions and become independent years later.

5. When the teachers were asked about the impact of strategic practice towards their students’ learning progress, their responses are summarised in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASPECT</th>
<th>SUMMARY OF THE TEACHERS’ RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time &amp; Energy Management:</strong></td>
<td>All 3 teachers noticed improvement in some of the students with this aspect. One teacher mentioned that her students have showed much more efficiency in time and energy management as they now think about what needs to be fixed and how can it be done, hence saving a lot of time. However, one teacher pointed out that while she noticed some improvement with a few of her students, the difference was not significant considering that everything is improving with these students in general.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technique Mastery:</strong></td>
<td>All 3 teachers observed improvement with this aspect in their students. One teacher noticed that her students now master techniques much quicker, and another teacher noticed moderate change in most of her students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Musicianship Skills:</strong></td>
<td>The teachers either did not notice much change in their students with this aspect, or did not have a chance to evaluate this during the course of this study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aural Skills:</strong></td>
<td>The teachers did not notice any change in their students with this aspect. However, one teacher believes that if she taught Solfége, then it is possible to see a better result in her students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sight Reading Skills:</strong></td>
<td>2 of the 3 teachers noticed some improvement in a couple of their students with this aspect; whereas the other teacher did not get a chance to evaluate this aspect in her student during the course of this study. It should also be taken into account that many of the student participants already possess reasonable sight reading skills prior to participating in this study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Note Learning Skills:</strong></td>
<td>All 3 teachers noticed improvement in some of their students with this aspect. It should also be noted that many of the student participants already possess reasonable note learning skills prior to participating in this study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Memorizing Skills:</strong></td>
<td>2 of the 3 teachers have noticed moderate to significant changes in some students with regards to this aspect, especially with the incorporation of Repair Points Practice. The other teacher could not supply an assessment of her student with this aspect because her student had not been participating in any music memorisation works during the course of this study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theoretical &amp; Structural Analysis Skills:</strong></td>
<td>The teachers did not notice any change in their students with this aspect during the course of this study.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mental Strength & Confidence: All 3 teachers observed improvements in most, if not all, students with this aspect. The students are encouraged to narrow down the problem and fix it using some of the practice techniques, and hence they are more likely to succeed in their practice. All of these aspects combined together increased their confidence.

General Physical Conditions: All 3 teachers noticed improvement in several students. The students were described as having become more aware of their posture, and more conscious about keeping their hands, fingers and everything else relaxed while trying to project the rhythm and the tone without tension, which should be the underlying focus of all the practice techniques. Some of the practice techniques, such as Accent Practice, Blocked Chords Practice, Altered Rhythms Practice, Repetition Practice, and Slow Practice, also helped the students to strengthen their hands and body.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mental Strength &amp; Confidence:</th>
<th>All 3 teachers observed improvements in most, if not all, students with this aspect. The students are encouraged to narrow down the problem and fix it using some of the practice techniques, and hence they are more likely to succeed in their practice. All of these aspects combined together increased their confidence.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Physical Conditions:</td>
<td>All 3 teachers noticed improvement in several students. The students were described as having become more aware of their posture, and more conscious about keeping their hands, fingers and everything else relaxed while trying to project the rhythm and the tone without tension, which should be the underlying focus of all the practice techniques. Some of the practice techniques, such as Accent Practice, Blocked Chords Practice, Altered Rhythms Practice, Repetition Practice, and Slow Practice, also helped the students to strengthen their hands and body.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11: Teachers’ Evaluation of Students’ Responses to the Practice Techniques & Tools

6. The following is a list of summarised comments shared by the teachers on the use of these practice techniques and tools:

- The practice techniques and tools are well thought out and of great use to teachers and students as ability advances. They can also be applied in the learning of other instruments, such as the piano.
- A teacher mentioned that it was difficult to give an overall answer for some of the questions, such as those regarding the frequency of the practice techniques and tools being used, and the impact of the application in their students’ learning. This teacher noticed that each student learns and responds to instructions differently, hence the teacher would have needed
to make subtle changes and to teach each student differently.

- A teacher shared that she normally puts more focus on keeping the students’ hands relaxed during the initial learning period and then pays more attention to the students’ phrasing and musicianship. Although it is important to develop clean techniques, it does not necessarily develop phrasing in music at the same time. Another teacher also supports the same view as she pointed out that it is not sufficient to develop powerful techniques for its own sake as the end result should be to improve the musicianship skills. Nevertheless, this latter teacher advocates that technical development has to be acquired before musicianship can be improved effectively. Since it is possible to have a great technique and no musicianship, she suggests that students build their technical foundation first and then broaden that to include being able to play as they desire musically.

- Another practice technique was suggested by one of the teachers, which is to ask the students to write a script about their pieces. This technique would allow the students to form visualization for the purpose of improving their interpretation and musicianship, and to convey the meaning of music.

- A teacher also commented that although the list of the suggested practice techniques and tools seems to be quite comprehensive, there are many more that are not covered in this research. Therefore, teachers and students are encouraged to be more creative in solving problems.

### 6.2.2 Regarding the Teachers’ Views on the Devised Practice Plans

In general, the practice plans suggested are considered helpful to the teachers who were able to look at the examples and think about how their student’s repertoire could be related. They have been
described as being sensibly laid out, where a variety of practice techniques and tools have been applied appropriately. As commented by one of the teachers: “choosing the right thing for the right moment is absolutely important.” Nevertheless, there are a few concerns expressed by a couple teachers. First of all, it had limited application in one of the teachers’ teaching due to her student’s chosen repertoire. Another teacher commented that because every teacher seeks different sound quality and music aesthetics, which drive whatever they are trying to communicate, this methodical approach may or may not work for all individuals.

After referring to the practice techniques and tools, and the practice plans, all 3 teachers support the practice of converting technically demanding passages into isolated technical exercises / studies for their students. They believe that it would be more efficient to do so because the students can then work smarter rather than harder. However, although using specifically devised exercises is extremely useful, the teachers believe that this is only one of the ways to develop their students’ technical skills. As one teacher said “if I feel that the technique that has been taught or practised need an extra boost, then I dive into my etudes.” Furthermore, another teacher also acknowledged that there are many etudes, which are also great pieces filled with musical interests, suitable for performance.

6.2.3 Regarding the Teachers’ Teaching Styles and Practice Methods

After participating in this research, the teachers reviewed the philosophy of their teaching styles and practice methods and their responses are summarised as follows:

1. Although all of the teachers had been using some of the practice techniques and tools in their teaching, they felt that their teaching style and/or their own practice method did change slightly.
By participating in this study, their practice techniques repertoire has increased and/or has been revised. One teacher found it useful to use the chart/poster, which provided visual cues to reinforce ideas, to show her student the different ways of practising. Another teacher pointed out that the incorporation of practice techniques and tools would become extremely helpful once the student are learning advance repertoire.

2. All 3 teachers agreed that it is very important to spend time teaching practice techniques and tools during lessons. They believe that it is important to equip the students with the skills to recognise technical demands of a piece, isolate the problem, and approach difficulties with effective practice themselves. As a result, the students are able to develop decision making skills to help them in the professional world. Until the students are able to fully grasp this concept, the teachers believe that they should spend time in instructing and guiding the students.

3. As additional information to this study, the teachers shared the following perspectives regarding their teaching and learning philosophy which they would like to place special emphasis on:

- It is important to note that every student, every piece, and every situation is different; and hence the teacher needs to learn to be flexible, and try to respond to the unique needs of each student.

- Every music teacher should know about Feldenkrais. They need to learn to exercise breathing and use the correct posture for doing different tasks. Although Feldenkrais cannot be 100 percent applied to harp playing, it is important to be able to play musically the way the score demands with minimum of tension or stress.

- The three most important things that one teacher focuses in her teaching are posture, articulation, and the teaching of Feldenkrais and The Inner Game of Music, which is written by Barry Green and Timothy Gallwey in 1986.
6.3 Practice Techniques for Harp Learning: Evaluation and Summary

The results of the implementation of each suggested practice technique or tool is provided below:

**Accent Practice**

The following figures reflect the frequency in which the participating students and teachers had used or taught Accent Practice before and during the period of this research:

- Before participating in this research, 18% of the participants had often or always used or taught Accent Practice, 64% had rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, and 18% had never used or taught this technique.

- During the period of this research, 55% of the participants have used or taught Accent Practice, 36% have rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, and 9% have never used or taught this technique. The figures show an increase of 37% in the number of participants who have used or taught Accent Practice on a regular basis during the period of this research.

Evaluated by both the student participants themselves and their teachers, the following figures reflect the effectiveness of Accent Practice on the students’ learning progress:

- 36% of the participants found Accent Practice extremely helpful, 18% found it very helpful, 27% found it helpful, 10% found it a little helpful, and 9% were unable to evaluate this due to the lack of application.
Of all the participants, 9% found Accent Practice useful during the note learning period, 91% found it useful during the technique securing period, and 9% found it useful during the performance preparation period. The responses between the participating students and teachers are similar.

In addition, one teacher commented that she often prefers to make every note equally accented, rather than using a mixture of heavy and weak notes when using Accent Practice. Another teacher pointed out that Accent Practice is something that everybody needs to do at some point or another, but not necessarily in every lesson or in every piece of music.
Altered Rhythms Practice

The following figures reflect the frequency in which the participating students and teachers had used or taught Altered Rhythms Practice before and during the period of this research:

- Before participating in this research, 64% of the participants had often or always used or taught Altered Rhythms Practice, 36% had rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, and 0% had never used or taught this technique.
- During the period of this research, 64% of the participants have used or taught Altered Rhythms Practice, 18% have rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, 9% have never used or taught this technique, and 9% did not supply a response.

Evaluated by both the participating students themselves and their teachers, the following figures reflect the effectiveness of Altered Rhythms Practice on the students’ learning progress:

- 64% of the participants found Altered Rhythms Practice extremely helpful, 18% found it very helpful, and 18% found it helpful.
Of all the participants, 36% found Altered Rhythms Practice useful during the note learning period, 91% found it useful during the technique securing period, and 18% found it useful during the performance preparation period. The responses between the participating students and teachers are similar.

One teacher pointed out that the need to incorporate Altered Rhythms Practice is completely dependent on the type of music, as is the use of Accent Practice.
Away from the Instrument Practice

The following figures reflect the frequency in which the participating students and teachers had used or taught Away from the Instrument Practice before and during the period of this research:

- Before participating in this research, 27% of the participants had often or always used or taught Away from the Instrument Practice, 64% had rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, and 9% had never used or taught this technique.

- During the period of this research, 45% of the participants have often or always used or taught Away from the Instrument Practice, 45% have rarely or sometimes used this technique, and 10% have never used or taught this technique. The figures show an increase of 18% in the number of participants who have used or taught Away from the Instrument Practice on a regular basis during the period of this research.

Evaluated by both the participating students themselves and their teachers, the following figures reflect the effectiveness of Away from the Instrument Practice on the students’ learning progress:

- 36% of the participants found Away from the Instrument Practice extremely helpful, 27% found it very helpful, 10% found it helpful, 9% found it a little helpful, and 18% did not find it helpful.
Of all the participants, 64% found Away from the Instrument Practice useful during the note learning period, 55% found it useful during the technique securing period, and 73% found it useful during the performance preparation period. There is a higher percentage of students who found this technique useful for note learning than the percentage of the teachers. However, while all teachers found this technique useful when preparing for a performance, only 63% of the student participants felt the same way.

One teacher found Away from the Instrument Practice essential because it helps to reduce the risk of the student getting RSI (Repetitive Strain Injury), and it can also be used to determine how well her students know the music from memory. Another teacher found this technique valuable in helping students overcome mental blocks that stop them at certain points of a piece; if the mind knows where they have to go next, and the hands follow.
**Blocked Chords Practice**

The following figures reflect the frequency in which the participating students and teachers had used or taught Blocked Chords Practice before and during the period of this research:

- Before participating in this research, 18% of the participants had often or always used or taught Blocked Chords Practice, 73% had rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, and 9% had never used or taught this technique.
- During the period of this research, 55% of the participants have used or taught Blocked Chords Practice, 45% have rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, and 0% have never used or taught this technique. The figures show an increase of 37% in the number of participants who have used or taught Blocked Chords Practice on a regular basis during the period of this research.

Evaluated by both the participating students themselves and their teachers, the following figures reflect the effectiveness of Blocked Chords Practice on the students’ learning progress:

- 27% of the participants found Blocked Chords Practice extremely helpful, 46% found it very useful, and 27% found it helpful.
Of all the participants, 82% found Blocked Chords Practice useful during the note learning period, 73% found it useful during the technique securing period, and only 18% found it useful during the performance preparation period.

The majority of the teachers pointed out that the need to use Blocked Chords Practice is very repertory dependent.
**Checklist Practice**

The following figures reflect the frequency in which the participating students and teachers had used or taught Checklist Practice before and during the period of this research:

- Before participating in this research, 0% of the participants had often or always used or taught Checklist Practice, 55% had rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, and 45% had never used or taught this technique.
- During the period of this research, 55% of the participants have used or taught Checklist Practice, and 27% have rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, and 18% have never used this technique. The figures show a growth of 55% in the number of participants who used or taught Checklist Practice on a regular basis during the period of this research. Moreover, 27% of the participants, who had never used this technique during their harp learning, have incorporated this technique into their teaching from time to time.

Evaluated by both the participating students themselves and their teachers, the following figures reflect the effectiveness of Checklist Practice on the students’ learning progress:

- 27% of the participants found Checklist Practice extremely helpful, 10% found it very helpful, 36% found it helpful, 9% found it a little helpful, and 9% did not find it helpful, and 9% were unable to evaluate this due to the lack of application.
Of all the participants, 45% found Checklist Practice useful during the note learning period, 36% found it useful during the technique securing period, and 45% found it useful during the performance preparation period.

While Checklist Practice could sometimes be useful in assisting the students in gaining ownership of their learning to encourage them to be their own teachers, the teachers are concerned that this attention to detail approach could be too regimented for some students. One teacher believes that it would work better if her student gains a concept of the music rather than dissecting it into little things.
Eyes Closed Practice

The following figures reflect the frequency in which the participating students and teachers had used or taught Eyes Closed Practice before and during the period of this research:

- Before participating in this research, 9% of the participants had often or always used or taught Eyes Closed Practice, 27% had rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, and 64% had never used or taught this technique.
- During the period of this research, 9% of the participants have often or always used or taught Eyes Closed Practice, 55% have rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, and 36% have never used this technique. There is an increase of 28% in the number of participants who started using Eyes Closed Practice from time to time.

Evaluated by both the participating students themselves and their teachers, the following figures reflect the effectiveness of Eyes Closed Practice on the students’ learning progress:

- 9% of the participants found Eyes Closed Practice extremely helpful, 18% found it very helpful, 36% found it useful, 27% found it a little helpful, and 10% did not find it helpful.
Of all the participants, 18% found Eyes Closed Practice useful during the note learning period, 73% found it useful during the technique securing period, and 36% found it useful during the performance preparation period. While none of the teachers found Eyes Closed Practice useful when preparing for a performance, 50% of the student participants did.

The majority of the teachers advocate this practice technique in the way that it redirects the students’ attention to listening and trying to get a better sound, rather than being consumed by the difficulty of the required technique. A teacher also suggested a variation of Eyes Closed Practice, which is to ask the students to draw a visual analogy of the passage, and to achieve the intended effect by imagining the execution of the scenario.
Fast Movement Practice

The following figures reflect the frequency in which the participating students and teachers had used or taught Fast Movement Practice before and during the period of this research:

- Before participating in this research, 9% of the participants had often or always used or taught Fast Movement Practice, 55% had rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, and 36% had never used or taught this technique.
- During the period of this research, 55% of the participants have often or always used or taught Fast Movement Practice, 36% have rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, and 9% have never used this technique. The percentage of the participants who used or taught Fast Movement Practice on a regular basis during the period of this research has increased by 46%, and most other participants have also used or taught it from time to time.

Evaluated by both the participating students themselves and their teachers, the following figures reflect the effectiveness of Fast Movement Practice on the students’ learning progress:

- 27% of the participants found Fast Movement Practice extremely helpful, 27% found it very helpful, 27% found it useful, 10% found it a little helpful, and 9% did not find it helpful.
Of all the participants, 18% found Fast Movement Practice useful during the note learning period, 91% found it useful during the technique securing period, and 64% found it useful during the performance preparation period.

One teacher expressed that the need to use Fast Movement Practice is very much dependent on the choice of repertoire, as is the use of other practice techniques.
Fragment Practice

The following figures reflect the frequency in which the participating students and teachers had used or taught Fragment Practice before and during the period of this research:

- Before participating in this research, 64% of the participants had often or always used or taught Fragment Practice, 36% had rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, and 0% had never used or taught this technique.
- During the period of this research, 100% of the participants have often or always used or taught Fragment Practice. While Fragment Practice had been used or taught by many of the participants, all of the participants used or taught it on a regular basis during the period of this research.

Evaluated by both the participating students themselves and their teachers, the following figures reflect the effectiveness of Fragment Practice on the students’ learning progress:

- 91% of the participants found Fragment Practice extremely helpful, and 9% found it helpful.
Of all the participants, 73% found Fragment Practice useful during the note learning period, 91% found it useful during the technique securing period, and 64% found it useful during the performance preparation period.

One teacher noticed that Fragment Practice and Repair Points Practice have a psychological effect on their students. She described that “[Fragment Practice] takes a huge amount of pressure out of the students.” It is clear to note that the result of the students’ practice is more successful as they learn to break down a big project into a series of increasingly difficult, but achievable tasks. Another teacher described Fragment Practice as “invaluable for everyone in all kinds of situations.”
**Hand Shape Practice**

The following figures reflect the frequency in which the participating students and teachers had used or taught Hand Shape Practice before and during the period of this research:

- Before participating in this research, 27% of the participants had often or always used or taught Hand Shape Practice, 45% had rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, 18% had never used or taught this technique, and 10% did not supply a response.

- During the period of this research, 45% of the participants have often or always used or taught Hand Shape Practice, 36% have rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, 9% have never used this technique, and 10% did not supply a response.

Evaluated by both the participating students themselves and their teachers, the following figures reflect the effectiveness of Hand Shape Practice on the students’ learning progress:

- 9% of the participants found Hand Shape Practice extremely helpful, 64% found it very helpful, and 27% found it useful.
Of all the participants, 73% found Hand Shape Practice useful during the note learning period, 73% found it useful during the technique securing period, and 9% found it useful during the performance preparation period. Although all teachers found Hand Shape Practice useful during the note learning and technique securing periods, only 63% of the student participants found it useful for those two periods.

One teacher noticed that, as in all of the practice techniques, Hand Shape Practice worked well for some students, but not at all for others. Another teacher heightened the fact that that Hand Shape Practice coincides with Renié’s teaching about preparing the hands away from the strings before playing.
**Left Hand Strengthening Practice**

The following figures reflect the frequency in which the participating students and teachers had used or taught Left Hand Strengthening Practice before and during the period of this research:

- Before participating in this research, 46% of the participants had often or always used or taught Left Hand Strengthening Practice, 27% had rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, and 27% had never used or taught this technique.

- During the period of this research, 64% of the participants have often or always used or taught Left Hand Strengthening Practice, 27% have rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, and 9% have never used this technique.

Evaluated by both the participating students themselves and their teachers, the following figures reflect the effectiveness of Left Hand Strengthening Practice on the students’ learning progress:

- 36% of the participants found Left Hand Strengthening Practice extremely helpful, 18% found it very helpful, 36% found it useful, and 10% found it a little helpful.
Of all the participants, 91% found Left Hand Strengthening Practice useful during the note learning period, 82% found it useful during the technique securing period, and 27% found it useful during the performance preparation period.

The researcher commented that the need to exercise Left Hand Strengthening Practice is very much dependent on the nature of the repertoire. It is evident to see both the right hand and the left hand parts are equally challenging in most pieces at the advanced level, however, it may not be the case for many pieces at the intermediate level.
Melody Alone Practice

The following figures reflect the frequency in which the participating students and teachers had used or taught Melody Alone Practice before and during the period of this research:

- Before participating in this research, 55% of the participants had often or always used or taught Melody Alone Practice, 45% had rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, and 0% had never used or taught this technique.

- During the period of this research, 82% of the participants have often or always used or taught Melody Alone Practice, 18% have rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, and 0% have never used or taught this technique. The percentage of the participants who have used Melody Alone Practice on a regular basis during the period of this research has increased by 27%, and the rest of the participants have also used or taught it from time to time.

Evaluated by both the participating students themselves and their teachers, the following figures reflect the effectiveness of Melody Alone Practice on the students’ learning progress:

- 55% of the participants found Melody Alone Practice extremely helpful, and 45% found it very helpful.
Of all the participants, 100% found Melody Alone Practice useful during the note learning period, 73% found it useful during the technique securing period, and 55% found it useful during the performance preparation period. While all teachers found Melody Alone Practice useful during the technique securing period, only 63% of the student participants felt the same.

The teachers pointed out that Melody Alone Practice is particularly useful when the melody is played by the thumb or when it is written in the inner voice. One teacher believes that it is beneficial to encourage students to sing the melody along in order to reinforce the melodic line.
**Metronome Practice**

The following figures reflect the frequency in which the participating students and teachers had used or taught Metronome Practice before and during the period of this research:

- Before participating in this research, 73% of the participants had often or always used or taught Metronome Practice, and 27% had rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, and 0% had never used or taught this technique.
- During the period of this research, 100% of the participants have often or always used or taught Metronome Practice.

Evaluated by both the participating students themselves and their teachers, the following figures reflect the effectiveness of Metronome Practice on the students’ learning progress:

- 82% of the participants found Metronome Practice extremely helpful, and 18% found it very helpful.
Of all the participants, 64% found Metronome Practice useful during the note learning period, 91% found it useful during the technique securing period, and 82% found it useful during the performance preparation period.

All participating students and teachers recognise Metronome Practice as of great importance in harp learning.
**Octave Changing Practice**

The following figures reflect the frequency in which the participating students and teachers had used or taught Octave Changing Practice before and during the period of this research:

- Before participating in this research, 9% of the participants had often or always used or taught Octave Changing Practice, 9% had rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, and 82% had never used or taught this technique.

- During the period of this research, 27% of the participants have often or always used or taught Octave Changing Practice, 55% have rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, and 18% have never used this technique. The percentage of the participants who used or taught Octave Changing Practice during the period of this research has grown slightly.

Evaluated by both the participating students themselves and their teachers, the following figures reflect the effectiveness of Octave Changing Practice on the students’ learning progress:

- 9% of the participants found Octave Changing Practice extremely helpful, 9% found it very helpful, 36% found it useful, 36% found it a little helpful, and 10% did not find it helpful.
Of all the participants, 55% found Octave Changing Practice useful during the note learning period, 45% found it useful during the technique securing period, and 9% found it useful during the performance preparation period.

Octave Changing Practice is less likely to be used on a regular basis because the need to use it very much depends on the technical demands of the repertoire. However, the teachers believe that this technique could be very helpful, as it helps to establish a reasonable level of kinaesthetic memory at a more accessible range before transferring the part back to its original register. This would relieve some physical stress from playing at the extreme registers of the harp.
Pedal Alone Practice

The following figures reflect the frequency in which the participating students and teachers had used or taught Pedal Alone Practice before and during the period of this research:

- Before participating in this research, 36% of the participants had often or always used or taught Pedal Alone Practice, 55% had rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, 0% had never used or taught this technique, and 9% did not supply a response.
- During the period of this research, 64% of the participants have often or always used or taught Pedal Alone Practice, 27% have rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, 0% have never used or taught this technique, and 9% did not supply a response. Many of the participants who had occasionally used or taught Pedal Alone Practice have now used or taught it on a regular basis. The percentage of it being used more frequently has increased by 28%.

Evaluated by both the participating students themselves and their teachers, the following figures reflect the effectiveness of Pedal Alone Practice on the students’ learning progress:

- 45% of the participants found Pedal Alone Practice extremely helpful, 36% found it very helpful, 10% found it useful, and 9% did not supply a response due to the lack of application.
Of all the participants, 82% found Pedal Alone Practice useful during the note learning period, 64% found it useful during the technique securing period, and 45% found it useful during the performance preparation period. (Please note that 9% were unable to comment on this due to the lack of application with this technique. However, the figures were still derived from the total number of participants.)

This practice technique is highly recommended by the teachers when complex changes are involved in the music. One teacher shared that she prefers to do the pedals changes one after the other without following the rhythm as this would take away all the other triggers to memory in order to ensure absolute memory for the pedal changes alone.
**Repair Points Practice**

The following figures reflect the frequency in which the participating students and teachers had used or taught Repair Points Practice before and during the period of this research:

- Before participating in this research, 36% of the participants had often or always used or taught Repair Points Practice, 45% had rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, 10% had never used or taught this technique, and 9% did not supply a response.
- During the period of this research, 73% of the participants have often or always used or taught Repair Points Practice, 18% have rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, 0% have never used or taught this technique, and 9% did not supply a response. The percentage of the participants who used or taught Repair Points Practice on a regular basis during the period of this research has increased dramatically by 46%, and most other participants have also used or taught it from time to time.

Evaluated by both the participating students themselves and their teachers, the following figures reflect the effectiveness of Repair Points Practice on the students’ learning progress:

- 64% of the participants found Repair Points Practice extremely helpful, 9% found it very helpful, and 27% found it useful.
Figure 19: The Evaluation of Repair Points Practice

- Of all the participants, 45% found Repair Points Practice useful during the note learning period, 82% found it useful during the technique securing period, and 73% found it useful during the performance preparation period. While all teachers found Repair Points Practice useful during the note learning and performance preparation periods, only 63% of the student participants felt the same.

As with the use of Fragment Practice, the teachers believe that Repair Points Practice has a psychological effect on the students. The teachers also raised the need to have a pedal diagram at the beginning of each repair point, as it would make the re-starting points easy follow.
The following figures reflect the frequency in which the participating students and teachers had used or taught Repetition Practice before and during the period of this research:

- Before participating in this research, 91% of the participants had often or always used or taught Repetition Practice, 9% had rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, and 0% had never used or taught this technique.
- During the period of this research, 91% of the participants have often or always used or taught Repetition Practice, 9% have never used this technique, and 0% have never used or taught this technique. The frequency of Repetition Practice being used or taught by the participants stayed approximately the same.

Evaluated by both the participating students themselves and their teachers, the following figures reflect the effectiveness of Repetition Practice on the students’ learning progress:

- 91% of the participants found Repetition Practice extremely helpful, and 9% found it very helpful.
Of all the participants, 100% found Repetition Practice useful during the note learning period, 100% found it useful during the technique securing period, and 73% found it useful during the performance preparation period.

While every participants use Repetition Practice constantly, one teacher shared that she only get the students to do a lot of Repetition Practice on small fragments of music in order to avoid RSI problems.
Separate Hand Practice

The following figures reflect the frequency in which the participating students and teachers had used or taught Separate Hand Practice before and during the period of this research:

- Before participating in this research, 91% of the participants had often or always used or taught Separate Hand Practice, 9% had rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, and 0% had never used or taught this technique.
- During the period of this research, 100% of the participants have often or always used or taught Separate Hand Practice.

Evaluated by both the participating students themselves and their teachers, the following figures reflect the effectiveness of Separate Hand Practice on the students’ learning progress:

- 91% of the participants found Separate Hand Practice extremely helpful, 9% found it very helpful.
Of all the participants, 100% found Separate Hand Practice useful during the note learning period, 82% found it useful during the technique securing period, and 36% found it useful during the performance preparation period. While most teachers found Separate Hand Practice useful during the performance preparation period, only 25% of the student participants felt the same.

One teacher shared that in teaching a new piece, she tends to be very flexible and would allow the student to learn the notes either hands together or separately, depending on the student’s preference. She further explained that what follows is a process of “[deconstructing] the piece and isolate which hand is the problem and do Fragment Practice.”
Spiderfinger Practice

The following figures reflect the frequency in which the participating students and teachers had used or taught Spiderfinger Practice before and during the period of this research:

- Before participating in this research, 0% of the participants had often or always used or taught Spiderfinger Practice, 64% had rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, and 36% had never used or taught this technique.
- During the period of this research, 18% of the participants have often or always used or taught Spiderfinger Practice, 73% have rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, and 9% have never used this technique. Although the percentage of the participants who used or taught Spiderfinger Practice during the period of this research has grown slightly, this technique remained as being less frequently used.

Evaluated by both the participating students themselves and their teachers, the following figures reflect the effectiveness of Spiderfinger Practice on the students’ learning progress:

- 18% of the participants found Spiderfinger Practice extremely helpful, 18% found it very helpful, 27% found it useful, 10% found it a little helpful, 18% did not find it helpful, and 9% did not supply a response.
Of all the participants, 36% found Spiderfinger Practice useful during the note learning period, 55% found it useful during the technique securing period, and 18% found it useful during the performance preparation period.

One teacher shared that she would ask the students who are close to getting RSI problems to do Spiderfinger Practice. Another teacher is concerned about the concept of this practice technique, because she believes the students would not be able to articulate their fingers properly from doing too much Spiderfinger Practice. Another teacher shared that she would only recommend Spiderfinger Practice in certain situations for students who are trying to bring out a fast tempo, and would not suggest it for beginners.
**Slow Practice**

The following figures reflect the frequency in which the participating students and teachers had used or taught Slow Practice before and during the period of this research:

- Before participating in this research, 91% of the participants had often or always used or taught Slow Practice, 9% had rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, and 0% had never used or taught this technique.

- During the period of this research, 91% of the participants have often or always used or taught Slow Practice, 9% have rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, and 0% have never used or taught this technique. The frequency of Slow Practice being used or taught by the participants stayed approximately the same.

Evaluated by both the participating students themselves and their teachers, the following figures reflect the effectiveness of Slow Practice on the students' learning progress:

- 91% of the participants found Slow Practice extremely helpful, and 9% found it helpful.
Of all the participants, 100% found Slow Practice useful during the note learning period, 82% found it useful during the technique securing period, and 45% found it useful during the performance preparation period. While all teachers found Slow Practice useful during performance preparation period, only 38% of the student participants felt the same.

One teacher believes that Slow Practice is essential because it allows the brain to have enough time to absorb what one is trying to do, which could not be achieved if one does things fast all the time. Another teacher shared her motto, which is along the same line of the previous comment, saying that “if you cannot play it slow, you cannot play it quickly.” However, the teachers do recognise that there are pieces which are easier to play quickly when it is driven by momentum.
The following figures reflect the frequency in which the participating students and teachers had used or taught Unison Practice before and during the period of this research:

- Before participating in this research, 18% of the participants had often or always used or taught Unison Practice, 46% had rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, and 36% had never used or taught this technique.
- During the period of this research, 18% of the participants have often or always used or taught Unison Practice, 64% have rarely or sometimes used or taught this technique, and 18% have never used this technique.

Evaluated by both the participating students themselves and their teachers, the following figures reflect the effectiveness of Unison Practice on the students’ learning progress:

- 18% of the participants found Unison Practice extremely helpful, 10% found it very helpful, 36% found it useful, 27% found it a little helpful, and 9% did not supply a response.
Of all the participants, 45% found Unison Practice useful during the note learning period, 45% found it useful during the technique securing period, and 27% found it useful during the performance preparation period.

Unison Practice is one practice technique which is less familiar to the participants before participating in this research. One teacher views this practice technique as one that helps with the building of technical skills, creating a foundation to cope with future scenarios.
Practice Journal

The following figures reflect the frequency in which the participating students and teachers had used or taught Practice Journal writing before and during the period of this research:

- Before participating in this research, 18% of the participants had often or always used or taught Practice Journal writing, 18% had rarely or sometimes used or taught this tool, 55% had never used or taught this tool, and 9% did not supply a response.
- During the period of this research, 28% of the participants have often or always used or taught Practice Journal writing, 18% have rarely or sometimes used or taught this tool, 45% have never used this tool, and 9% did not supply a response.

Evaluated by both the participating students themselves and their teachers, the following figures reflect the effectiveness of Practice Journal writing on the students’ learning progress:

- 27% of the participants found Practice Journal writing extremely helpful, 27% found it very helpful, 10% found it useful, 9% found it a little helpful, and 27% did not find it helpful.
Of all the participants, 73% found Practice Journal writing useful during the note learning period, 64% found it useful during the technique securing period, and 45% found it useful during the performance preparation period. While all teachers found the use of Practice Journal useful for the students during the note learning period, only 63% of the student participants felt the same.

One teacher specified that it is vital to use the Practice Journal as it allows the teacher to write down clear instructions for their students, and to create a channel for communication. Another teacher believes that it is useful particularly when one is working on a huge project which needed to be broken down into stages or sections. While the participating students and teachers recognise the benefits of Practice Journal writing, not many of them have been able to put it in action all the time.
Self-Recording Evaluation

The following figures reflect the frequency in which the participating students and teachers had used or taught to do Self-Recording Evaluation before and during the period of this research:

- Before participating in this research, 18% of the participants had often or always used or taught to do Self-Recording Evaluation, 46% had rarely or sometimes used or taught this tool, and 36% had never used or taught this tool.
- During the period of this research, 55% of the participants have often or always used or taught to do Self-Recording Evaluation, 27% have rarely or sometimes used or taught this tool, and 18% have never used this tool. The percentage of the participants who used or taught to do Self-Recording Evaluation on a regular basis during the period of this research has increased by 37%.

Evaluated by both the participating students themselves and their teachers, the following figures reflect the effectiveness of Self-Recording Evaluation on the students’ learning progress:

- 45% of the participants found Self-Recording Evaluation extremely helpful, 45% found it very helpful, and 10% found it useful.
Of all the participants, 18\% found Self-Recording Evaluation useful during the note learning period, 45\% found it useful during the technique securing period, and 73\% found it useful during the performance preparation period. While all teachers found the use of Self-Recording Evaluation useful for the students during the performance preparation period, only 63\% of the student participants felt the same.

Most teachers expressed that the use of self-recording is very effective and worthwhile in helping students play better.
**Solfége Singing**

The following figures reflect the frequency in which the participating students and teachers had used or taught Solfége Singing before and during the period of this research:

- Before participating in this research, 27% of the participants had often or always used or taught Solfége Singing, 18% had rarely or sometimes used or taught this tool, and 55% had never used or taught this tool.

- During the period of this research, 27% of the participants have often or always used or taught Solfége Singing, 36% have rarely or sometimes used or taught this tool, and 37% have never used this tool. There is only a slight increase in the number of participants who used Solfége Singing during the period of this research.

Evaluated by both the participating students themselves and their teachers, the following figures reflect the effectiveness of Solfége Singing on the students’ learning progress:

- 27% of the participants found Solfége Singing very helpful, 19% found it useful, 27% found it a little helpful, and 27% did not find it helpful.
Of all the participants, 82% found Solfége Singing useful during the note learning period, 9% found it useful during the technique securing period, and 18% found it useful during the performance preparation period.

Although Solfége is very popular in Europe and Asia, it is not commonly taught in New Zealand. One teacher experienced a lot of success in helping her students hear the parts, saw how they fitted in with each other and felt the phrasing by employing singing, without using the Solfége system in her teaching. Another teacher expressed that even though she does not incorporate Solfége Singing in her teaching due to the lack of knowledge about it, she believes that it could be of great benefit to the student’s learning once they know the sound of the sight singing syllables.
Pedal Change Diagram

The following figures reflect the frequency in which the participating students and teachers had used or taught to incorporate Pedal Change Diagram before and during the period of this research:

- Before participating in this research, 55% of the participants had often or always used or taught to incorporate Pedal Change Diagram, 9% had rarely or sometimes used or taught this tool, 27% had never used or taught this tool, and 9% did not supply a response.
- During the period of this research, 73% of the participants have often or always used or taught to incorporate Pedal Change Diagram, 0% have rarely or sometimes used or taught this tool, 18% have never used this tool, and 9% did not supply a response.

Evaluated by both the participating students themselves and their teachers, the following figures reflect the effectiveness of the incorporation of Pedal Change Diagram on the students’ learning progress:

- 64% of the participants found Pedal Change Diagram extremely helpful, 9% found it very helpful, 9% found it a little helpful, 9% did not find it helpful, and 9% did not supply a response due to the lack of application.
Of all the participants, 82% found Pedal Change Diagram useful during the note learning period, 73% found it useful during the technique securing period, and 55% found it useful during the performance preparation period. While all teachers found the use of Pedal Change Diagram useful for the students during the performance preparation period, only 38% of the student participants felt the same. (Please note that 9% were unable to comment on this due to the lack of application with this tool. However, the figures were still derived from the total number of participants.)

Instead of using arrows, one teacher mentioned that it is easy to show the pedal changes by circling them. While one teacher found Pedal Change Diagram extremely useful as it takes out unnecessary information and distils the essential information reminding the players about the actual pedal
movement, another teacher viewed it completely differently. The latter teacher prefers her students to become connected to the pedals so they can develop an instant reaction to the pedal diagrams and the pedal changes indications, and execute them quickly without having to be reminded that something has to move.
Summary of the Utilization of Practice Techniques and Tools

An overall comparison of the usefulness of the practice techniques and tools is drawn in the following statements:

1. The practice techniques that the participants have found most helpful are as follows:
   - Repetition Practice
   - Separate Hand Practice
   - Fragment Practice
   - Slow Practice
   - Metronome Practice

   This finding also corresponds with the result of the Harp Pedagogy Online Survey (Part A of the research) – please refer to Table 5: Practice Techniques Employed in Teaching.

2. The practice techniques that the participants have found less helpful are as follows:
   - Octave Changing Practice
   - Eyes Closed Practice

   Drawing from the results of the Harp Pedagogy Online Survey (Part A of the research), these two techniques were also less commonly taught by the online survey participants – please refer to Table 5: Practice Techniques Employed in Teaching.
3. As illustrated in the following graph, the most popular practice techniques or tools used during the note learning period are Melody Alone Practice, Repetition Practice, Separate Hand Practice, and Slow Practice:

![The Effectiveness of Practice Techniques & Tools During the Note Learning Period](image)

Figure 29: The Effectiveness of Practice Techniques & Tools during the Note Learning Period
4. As illustrated in the following graph, the most popular practice techniques or tools used during the technique securing period are Repetition Practice, Accent Practice, Altered Rhythms Practice, Fast Movement Practice, Fragment Practice, and Metronome Practice:

![The Effectiveness of Practice Techniques & Tools During the Technique Securing Period](image)

Figure 30: The Effectiveness of Practice Techniques & Tools during the Technique Securing Period
5. As illustrated in the following graph, the most popular practice techniques or tools used during the performance preparation period are Metronome Practice, Away from the Instrument Practice, Repair Points Practice, Repetition Practice and Self-Recording Evaluation:

![The Effectiveness of Practice Techniques & Tools During the Performance Preparation Period](image)

Figure 31: The Effectiveness of Practice Techniques & Tools during the Performance Preparation Period
6. It is interesting to note that there are some discrepancies between the teachers and the student participants’ responses. The ratio of the teachers who found the following practice techniques and tools useful is comparatively higher than the ratio of the student participants:

- Away from the Instrument Practice during the performance preparation period
  - 100% (teachers) versus 63% (students)
- Hand Shape Practice during the note learning and the technique securing periods
  - 100% (teachers) versus 63% (students)
- Melody Alone Practice during the technique securing period
  - 100% (teachers) versus 63% (students)
- Pedal Alone Practice during the performance preparation period
  - 100% (teachers) versus 25% (students)
- Repair Points Practice during the performance preparation period
  - 100% (teachers) versus 63% (students)
- Practice Journal during the note learning period
  - 100% (teachers) versus 63% (students)
- Self-Recording Evaluation during the performance preparation period
  - 100% (teachers) versus 63% (students)

In contrast, the ratio of the students who have found the following practice techniques useful is comparatively higher than the ratio of the teachers:

- Away from the Instrument Practice during the note learning period
  - 75% (students) versus 33% (teachers)
- Eyes Closed Practice (or its variations) during the performance preparation period
  - 50% (students) versus 0% (teachers)
Repair Points Practice during the note learning period
– 63% (students) versus 0% (teachers)

In general, the practice techniques and tools are found most useful during the technique securing period as well as during the note learning period.

It is important to acknowledge that everybody is different, hence everyone would more or less respond differently to each of the practice techniques and/or tools suggested in this research. The research results show that people perceive how and when these practice techniques and tools could be used differently, and while these techniques and tools work great for some people, they may not have worked well for others. Furthermore, it is also clear to see that the choice of the practice techniques is also very repertoire dependent.

In addition, when comparing the students’ responses with the teachers’ responses, it is evident that there are some discrepancies between the percentage of students who found a particular practice technique or tool useful for a particular learning period and the percentage of teachers who felt the same way, and vice versa. This may also suggest that perhaps the students still need further guidance and experience in order to fully comprehend how these practice techniques and tools can be utilized in order to maximise their learning and playing abilities.
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION & FUTURE WORK

This chapter provides a summary of the overall research work and the proposed solution presented in the thesis. Potential areas for future work are also offered.

7.1 Research Summary

This study demonstrates that in order to develop effective harp pedagogy, harp teachers should teach both the physical technique and strategies as well as the mental technique and strategies of harp learning. While the most prominent methods used for harp playing remained the French Method and the Salzedo Method for nearly a century, it is evident that the followers of these methods had more or less modified their adopted method in their publications. Since more of the younger harpists are inclined to combine different methods in their playing, it is advised that they should gain a coherent understanding in one system, thus building a firm technical foundation before experimenting with different ideas. Regardless of what method or methods one adopts, all harpists are encouraged to play in a relaxed way; while the development of technical facility is vital, one should acknowledge it as a tool to support the harpist’s ability to produce better tone and phrasing.

Furthermore, as there is a growing awareness of the benefits of mental learning skills for all instrumentalists as for harpists alike, teachers should be encouraged to teach their students to practise effectively and efficiently by equipping them with problem-solving strategies and tools in order to foster their ability to become independent learners. This research has shown that students can benefit from exercising deliberate practice, paying attention to tone and musicality, and following the learning approaches listed below, designed to increase the reliability of their practice:
1. Establish an organised practice schedule by using techniques such as Practice Journal, and Checklist Practice.

2. Isolate identified problem areas by using techniques such as Fragment Practice, and Repair Points Practice.

3. Employ the visual learning mode by using techniques such as Pedal Change Diagram, and Away from the Instrument Practice.

4. Utilize the aural learning mode by using techniques such as Solfége Singing, Self-Recording Evaluation, Melody Alone Practice, and Metronome Practice.

5. Explore the kinaesthetic learning mode by using techniques such as Blocked Chords Practice, Hand Shape Practice, Fast Movement Practice, Slow Practice, Spiderfinger Practice, Eyes Closed Practice, Repetition Practice, Separate Hand Practice, Pedal Alone Practice, Octave Changing Practice, Accent Practice, Altered Rhythms Practice, Left Hand Strengthening Practice, and Unison Practice.

It is beneficial to use a variety of learning approaches or to combine some of the practice techniques in order to make practice more interesting, engaging, and effective. Nevertheless, it is crucial to ensure that the correct practice technique or techniques are chosen to target any specific problem.

The main principles posited by this research were identified and tested in the two surveys that formed the basis of the study – The Harp Pedagogy Online Survey which was completed by 22 harpists / harp teachers from New Zealand and Australia, which examined the current trends of harp pedagogy in the two countries, and gathered feedback about the researcher’s devised practice plans. The responses of the online survey are summarised as follows:
• 60% of the participants are teaching the method or methods that they had adopted when they were learning the harp; whereas 40% have modified their adopted method or methods in their teaching. Nevertheless, none switched from one particular method to another.

• 50% of the participants believe that it is essential to adopt a particular method of harp playing, while the other 50% disagree.

• There is a decline in the number of people who now use Method for the Harp (Lawrence and Salzedo 1929), the original publication for the Salzedo Method, and The Complete Method for the Harp (Renié 1966), the original publication for the French Method, for tuition.

• The most frequently used components involved in harp lessons are warm-up exercises, scales & arpeggios playing, practice techniques learning, and posture adjustment; the components which are less frequently being covered are ear & rhythm training, Solfége singing, practice journal writing, breathing techniques exercising, stress management, body/finger care, and harp maintenance.

• It is evident that there are some practice techniques that are more familiar to the participants than the others. While techniques, such as Metronome Practice, Slow Practice, and Blocked Chords Practice, are commonly used by all of the participants; techniques, such as Solfége Singing and Spiderfinger Practice, have only been employed by 20% to 30% of the surveyed harpists / harp teachers.

• Furthermore, the majority of the participants recognised the researcher’s devised practice plans as a helpful model.

Secondly, The Harp Learning Student Survey and The Practice Strategies Implementation Follow-Up Interview, in which the participants were 8 concert harp students at intermediate or advanced playing level and 3 concert harp teachers in New Zealand, observed the effectiveness of the
implementation of practice techniques and tools in the students’ learning process over a three-month period. The responses of the survey and the interview are summarised as follows:

- The implementation of the practice techniques and tools has proven most helpful in students’ development of time and energy management, technique mastery, note reading skills and memorisation skills. It also helps to improve their mental strength and confidence as well as their general physical conditions. Furthermore, some students have also recognised improvement in their musicianship skills and aural skills.

- The practice techniques and tools were found to be most useful during the technique securing period, and the note learning period of the students’ learning process.

- As a result of carrying out this study, 75% of the student participants believe that their method of practice has changed, while the other 25% indicate that they had already been practising in the proposed approach prior to participating in this research. All participants acknowledge the importance of the learning of practice techniques during tuition, and indicate that they would continue to incorporate them in their learning.

In concluding the findings of this research, it is observed that everyone learns and reacts differently to each of the techniques and tools. While some students are able to grasp the concepts quickly, others may require additional time and guidance before they have the experience and discipline to discern problems by themselves and to fully understand the purpose and the implication of all the suggested practice techniques and tools. In general, the implementation of practice techniques in terms of real performance has proven very useful for harp learning and teaching, nonetheless, it is important to recognise that the choice of practice techniques is very much dependent on the response of the individual player, as well as the technical and musical demands of the repertoire.
7.2 Future Work

Following on from this study, two areas can be identified for future work. The first is the development of aural skills for harpists. Although the development of aural skills is a universal element vital for all musicians, the way in which it can be applied to the learning of different instruments may vary in some aspects. Since playing the harp requires the fingers to interact with the strings and the feet to control the pedals changes, special measures need to be taken into account with regards to the aural training harpists receive. For this reason, it is important for harpists to develop a stronger inner-hearing ability by the use of such activities as Solfége singing and rhythm syllables reciting. The acquisition of inner-hearing ability will allow harpists to learn music at a faster pace with the skill to recall sound when they look at the notation or by memory.

Further investigation can be approached by studying the concepts of music education, and by tailoring these to accommodate the specific needs of harp learning in a structured and sequential way. Philosophies, such as the Dalcroze Method, the Kodály Method, the Orff Method, the Suzuki Method, and the Gordon Music Learning Theory, discuss the development of inner-hearing ability and can be drawn on and studied, in order to gain an understanding of the psychology behind it. As suggested by many prominent music educators, such as Kodály and Suzuki, aural skills learnt from a young age, in a similar way that children learn to speak their mother tongue, would enhance students’ learning ability and help them to establish an emotional sensibility to music. Therefore, more studies related to how harp students can learn the harp in the same way. With the acquisition of the specific aural skills related to harp playing, harpists can use them to develop association and memorisation of notes and pedal changes, accurate execution of rhythm, and proficient delivery of musicianship and interpretation.
The second area which calls for further research is the study of students’ temperaments and their practice habits in relation to the way they process information and respond to different styles of teaching. Since the findings of this research show that everybody reacts differently to each of the practice techniques and tools, it would be of importance to find out information, such as the following, in order to understand what styles of teaching would inspire the individual types of students to progress faster:

- What are the different temperaments or learning styles when it comes to harp or music learning?
- What are the mental and physical barriers that students with different temperaments or learning styles are likely to encounter?
- How do students with similar type of temperament react to different styles of teaching?
- How do students with different temperaments respond to encouragement and criticism?
- How do students with different temperaments interact with the teacher in general?
- How do students with similar type of temperament react and cope under pressure when assigned to activities, such as to participate in a competition or to perform in an informal setting, with consideration to the students’ intentions to learning the harp?

If evidence of relationships can be found between various factors, such as those described above, and the students’ type of temperaments or learning styles, then it is important to study the different techniques and approaches related specifically to harp learning and teaching that motivate individual students to achieve higher goals. To this end, means of analysing individual students’ learning processes to accurately identify the causes of their learning difficulties still requires further study. It would be helpful to utilize the findings to provide teachers with information regarding the instructions that the students with each different type of temperament or learning style are most likely to respond well to, in order to foster their musical growth accordingly.
REFERENCES


66) Volpé Bligh, E. (2010). Is It All In Your Head? *Harp Society of South Australia Newsletter, 7*.


APPENDICES

Appendix A: Harp Pedagogy Research - Invitation Email

(Sent on 27/28 June 2010)

Dear…

My name is Jo-Ying Huang, a harpist from Christchurch, New Zealand. I am currently studying my Master of Music Degree on harp performance at the University of Canterbury, learning from Carolyn Mills, who is the Principle Harpist of NZSO. I am also conducting a research project on Concert / Pedal Harp Pedagogy.

I am writing to you to seek your help by means of an online survey on ‘Effective Harp Pedagogy’ and I would be grateful if you could participate in my research.

I will be in touch within the next week, sending you information about this project. This will include a list of practice techniques that I have compiled for harp learning and teaching, along with a few practice plans devised by myself.

Please email me if you have any questions. Thank you very much for your attention to my email and I hope you will be able to help me by participating in my research.

Yours Sincerely,

Jo-Ying Huang
Dear…

This is Jo-Ying Huang, a Music Masters student from the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, who emailed you a week ago. I am writing to you to provide information about the online survey I am conducting for my research in harp pedagogy.

Please note that you will receive 3 emails from me regarding this research. The contents of these emails are outlined as follows:

- **Part 1 of 3: Project Introduction**
  This is the email that you are reading now which gives you an overview of this project and the materials I will be sending you.

- **Part 2 of 3: Consent Request**
  The second email informs you your right as a participant. Please read the Information Sheet in the attachment and send the approved Consent Form with your name and email address entered at the bottom.

- **Part 3 of 3: Survey Information**
  The third email contains links to download the documents “Practice Techniques.pdf” & “Practice Plans.pdf”. I strongly encourage you to read it and to try it out before attempting the online survey. I sincerely hope this document will be useful to you in your harp teaching as well. In addition, a preview of the survey questions will also be enclosed for your convenience.

Furthermore, please find two attachments in this email: Proposed Thesis Outline.pdf and Commendation Letters.pdf for more information about this research and the researcher.
Thank you very much for taking your time to read my emails. I hope that you would be able to help me with this research by completing the Harp Pedagogy Online Survey. I believe you will also be benefited from my research results and the related materials.

Note: Please refer to the next two emails about how to access the Harp Pedagogy Online Survey, and do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. Thank you.

Yours Sincerely,

Jo-Ying Huang
Proposed Thesis Outline

Jo-Ying Huang

MMus Research at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand

EFFECTIVE HARP PEDAGOGY

This research project will study the various techniques used in harp pedagogy. A thorough understanding of different harp playing methods and practice strategies are essential to students, teachers and performers to learn, teach and play more effectively.

It is beneficial to experiment with different options in order to meet specific technical demands of the music. Therefore, this research will first examine the fundamental physical playing techniques used in different harp methods, and then explore the mental practice techniques which are useful in harp playing.

Strategic practice is an area which is often understated or overlooked during tuition, hence the students may have difficulty learning the music without teacher direction. Since there is limited published information on practice techniques devoted to harp playing, this research will investigate the present practice techniques in music, and incorporate relevant ones into harp playing.

In order to convert theory into practice, four musical excerpts will be chosen as the bases of specific practice plans to demonstrate the application of the combined knowledge gained from developing physical and mental techniques for harp playing.
Furthermore, three surveys will be conducted as a part of this research to seek comments and advice from other harp teachers and harpists:

1. **An online survey** for selected harp teachers in New Zealand and Australia, designed to find out about their own study backgrounds and teaching experience, and to seek feedback from them on the effectiveness of the researcher’s devised practice plans.

2. **A follow-up interview** with selected harpists / harp teachers in New Zealand. This interview will examine the effectiveness of the implementation of practice strategies with their students.

3. **A student online survey** for intermediate and advanced concert harp students who are studying in New Zealand. This survey will provide the researcher with an opportunity to evaluate the practice strategies and/or practice plans from the students’ point of view.

The intended outcome of the project is to identify the means that will lead to a greater understanding of teaching and learning skills and techniques, and consequently to more effective practice and performance.
Appendix D: Harp Pedagogy Research - Part 2 of 3: Consent Request

(Sent on 4 July 2010)

Dear harpists & harp teachers,

Please read the Information Sheet in the attachment, and, if you agree to the terms specified, please reply this email to me with your name and email address entered at the bottom of the Consent Form preferably by Monday 2 August.

Note: A third email, which contains links to download the document “Practice Techniques & Plans.pdf”, will be sent to you soon. Please let me know if you do not receive it within the next day.

Thank you.

Yours Sincerely,

Jo-Ying Huang
Appendix E: The Harp Pedagogy Online Survey - Information Sheet

Jo-Ying Huang

Email: jyh14@uclive.ac.nz

2 July 2010

Dear Harpists & Harp Teachers:

**EFFECTIVE HARP PEDAGOGY RESEARCH PROJECT**

- The Harp Pedagogy Online Survey -

I am a Master’s student at the School of Music, University of Canterbury in New Zealand, and am conducting a study to find out how to enhance the effectiveness of harp teaching and learning with the incorporation of strategic practice. As part of this study, I am gathering data from concert harpists and harp teachers in Australia and New Zealand regarding their philosophy and experience of harp teaching and learning.

For your reference and comments, I enclose an outline of my proposed thesis and a link to access the online survey, where you can find a few musical excerpts suitable for harpists of intermediate to advanced level, on which my devised practice plans will be based. Your responses are important and I would be grateful if you would e-mail me the approved consent form and complete the online survey preferably by **Monday 2 August 2010**. The online survey will only take 10 to 15 minutes to complete.
Please be assured that particular care will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of all data gathered for this study and the anonymity of participants. However, I may seek your specific permission to use some quotes and/or related materials provided by you. All data is to be securely stored in password protected facilities and/or locked storage at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study, and subsequently be destroyed afterwards. Please also note that the findings derived from the survey results may also be used beyond the research thesis in the future.

Participation in the study is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the project at any time. If you choose to withdraw, I will use my best endeavours to remove any of the information relating to you from the project, including any final publication, provided that this remains practically achievable.

Furthermore, all participants will receive a full report of the results and recommendations of this study at the conclusion of this research.

**Please go the following to access the Harp Pedagogy Online Survey:**


If you have any questions about this research, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you in advance for your contribution.

Yours sincerely,

Jo-Ying Huang
Appendix F: The Harp Pedagogy Online Survey - Consent Form

Jo-Ying Huang

Email: jyh14@uclive.ac.nz

EFFECTIVE HARP PEDAGOGY RESEARCH PROJECT

- The Harp Pedagogy Online Survey -

Declaration of Consent to Participate

◆ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project.

◆ I understand that any information or opinions I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and that any published or reported results will not identify me, unless I have specifically consented to any materials and/or comments cited by the researcher.

◆ I understand that all data from this research will be stored securely at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study, and subsequently be destroyed after the five years period.

◆ I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the project at any time. If I choose to withdraw, I understand that the researcher will use her best endeavours to remove any of the information relating to me from the project, including any final publication, provided that this remains practically achievable.

◆ I understand that I will receive a report on the findings of this study and have provided my email details below for this purpose.
If you are willing to participate in this research project, please click “Reply”, fill in your full name and email address in the space below, and then simply click “Send” to forward the approved consent form back to me at <jyh14@uclive.ac.nz>.

Name:

Email Address:

Please complete the consent form and the online survey preferably by Monday 2 August 2010.

Thank you for your contribution to this study!

1. This project has received ethical approval from the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee.
2. Complaints may be addressed to:
The Chair

Educational Research Human Ethics Committee
University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, CHRISTCHURCH

E-mail: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz
Appendix G: Harp Pedagogy Research - Part 3 of 3: Survey Information

(Sent on 4 July 2010)

Dear harpists and harp teachers,

The Harp Pedagogy Online Survey is accessible at:


Please complete this preferably by Monday 2 August 2010.

For Question 17 in the survey, please click and download the following document from the link provided for definitions of the Practice Techniques for Harp Learning:

http://harpsurvay.limewebs.com/survey/PracticeTechniquesonSurvey.pdf

It will be appreciated if you could try the suggested Practice Plans for Harp Learning (feel free to try as many as your time permits) before attempting the online survey. This document – Practice Plans, is available for download at:

http://harpsurvay.limewebs.com/survey/PracticePlans.pdf

Yours Sincerely,

Jo-Ying Huang
Appendix H: The Harp Pedagogy Online Survey - Survey Questions

EFFECTIVE HARP PEDAGOGY RESEARCH PROJECT

- The Harp Pedagogy Online Survey –

You As A Harpist: This section of the survey acquires information about your harp learning background.

1. How long have you been playing the harp? _____ years.

2. Please outline your main qualifications in harp performance and teaching:

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

3. Who have you studied the harp with?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

4. Apart from the teachers you studied with, who else greatly influenced your philosophy and skills in harp teaching and learning?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
Learning Techniques: The questions in this section reflect your harp learning style and experience. Please select the options that apply to you.

5. How accurately do you sight read new pieces?
   (Please tick one: 1 being less accurate → 5 being very accurately)
   1 2 3 4 5

6. How quickly do you learn new pieces to your satisfaction?
   (Please tick one: 1 being less quickly → 5 being very quickly)
   1 2 3 4 5

7. What method(s) did you learn to play the harp?
   o Salzedo Method
   o French (Grandjany) Method
   o Russian Method
   o Suzuki Method
   o Other Method, please specify: ________________

8. Do you think it is essential to adopt a particular method of harp playing, such as listed in Question 7 above?
   o Yes
   o No, because…
9. Please tick as many of the following that apply to your learning of the harp:

- I did not use or rarely used any method/technical books
- 51 Esercizi Giornalieri (Luigi Maria Magistretti, 1924)
- Complete Method for the Harp (David Watkins, 1972)
- Conditioning Exercises (Carols Salzedo, 1986)
- Daily Dozen (Carols Salzedo, 1929)
- Exercices et Études Op.9 (Ed Lariviere, 1992)
- Harp for Today: A Universal Method for the Harp (Susann McDonald & Linda Wood Rollo, 2008)
- Method for the harp (Lucile Lawrence & Carlos Salzedo, 1929)
- Méthode de Harpe, Book 2 (Jean-Henri Naderman, 1975)
- Metodo per Arpa (Maria Grossi & Ettore Pozzoli, 1986)
- Modern Study for the Harp (Carlos Salzedo, 1921)
- On Playing the Harp (Yolanda Kondonassis, 2006)
- Russian Method: Improving Techniques (Alla Yashne, 2005)
- Suzuki Harp School books (Suzuki Harp School, 1985)
- Technical Development for Harpists (Danielle Perrett, 2001)
- The Complete Method for the Harp (Henriette Renié, 1966)
- Universal Method for the Harp (Nicolas-Charles Bochsa & Charles Oberthuer, 1912)
- Others, please specify: ________________________________
10. How often did you use the following in your learning of the harp?

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<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
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<tr>
<td>Warm-up exercises</td>
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<td>Technical studies &amp; etudes</td>
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<td>Ear and rhythm training</td>
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<td>Solfége singing</td>
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<td>Music theory &amp; analysis</td>
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<td>Scales &amp; arpeggios</td>
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<td>Playing gestures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practice techniques</td>
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<td>Practice journal</td>
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<td>Posture adjustment</td>
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<td>Breathing techniques</td>
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<td>Relaxation techniques</td>
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<td>Performance preparation</td>
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<td>Body / finger care</td>
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<td>Basic harp maintenance</td>
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**You As A Teacher:** Different people have different teaching methods and styles. The following questions will reflect your harp teaching preferences and techniques used in your teaching.

11. How long have you been teaching the harp? ____ years.

12. What is your most preferred method of teaching the harp?
   - o Salzedo Method
   - o French (Grandjany) Method
   - o Russian Method
   - o Suzuki Method
   - o Combination, please specify the methods used: ______________________
   - o Other Method, please specify: ______________________
13. How much do you study and consider different ways or introduce different elements of teaching the harp?
   - Not at all
   - A little
   - Occasionally
   - A lot
   - All the time

14. Please tick as many of the following that apply to your teaching of the harp:
   - I do not use or rarely use any method/technical books
   - 51 Esercizi Giornalieri (Luigi Maria Magistretti, 1924)
   - Complete Method for the Harp (David Watkins, 1972)
   - Conditioning Exercises (Carols Salzedo, 1986)
   - Daily Dozen (Carols Salzedo, 1929)
   - Exercices et Études Op.9 (Ed Lariviere, 1992)
   - Harp for Today: A Universal Method for the Harp (Susann McDonald & Linda Wood Rollo, 2008)
   - Method for the harp (Lucile Lawrence & Carlos Salzedo, 1929)
   - Méthode de Harpe, Book 2 (Jean-Henri Naderman, 1975)
   - Metodo per Arpa (Maria Grossi & Ettore Pozzoli, 1986)
   - Modern Study for the Harp (Carlos Salzedo, 1921)
   - On Playing the Harp (Yolanda Kondonassis, 2006)
   - Russian Method: Improving Techniques (Alla Yashne, 2005)
   - Suzuki Harp School books (Suzuki Harp School, 1985)
   - Technical Development for Harpists (Danielle Perrett, 2001)
   - The Complete Method for the Harp (Henriette Renié, 1966)
   - Universal Method for the Harp (Nicolas-Charles Bochsa & Charles Oberthuer, 1912)
   - Others, please specify: ________________________________
15. How often do you use the following in your teaching of the harp?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
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<tr>
<td>Warm-up exercises</td>
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<td>Technical studies &amp; etudes</td>
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<td>Ear and rhythm training</td>
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<td>Solfége singing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music theory &amp; analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scales &amp; arpeggios</td>
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<td>Playing gestures</td>
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<td>Practice techniques</td>
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<td>Practice journal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Posture adjustment</td>
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<td>Breathing techniques</td>
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<td>Relaxation techniques</td>
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<td>Performance preparation</td>
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<td>Stress management</td>
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<td>Body / finger care</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basic harp maintenance</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

16. How often do you personally design specific warm-up / technical / practice exercises to suit the particular needs of your students?

- Never
- Seldom
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always
17. Do you teach the following practice techniques? - Please refer to the link:


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Technique</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Altered Rhythms Practice</strong>: use rhythm alteration techniques, such as dotted rhythms, to develop note evenness, finger strength, and to speed up sections of technical difficulties.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2. Away from the Instrument Practice</strong>: study the music in detail, including musical elements, recurring patterns, themes and structure of the piece, and listen to other harpists’ performances and/or recordings.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3. Blocked Chords Practice</strong>: play a group of notes or arpeggiated chords as unbroken chords to reinforce placing and to secure hand shapes.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4. Checklist Practice</strong>: compile a checklist of specific targets, such as dynamics, tempo and notes, and focus on each individual aspect at practice before combining them.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>5. Eyes Closed Practice</strong>: heighten motor coordination by eliminating one of the senses while playing a small technical spot with eyes closed.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>6. Fast Movement Practice</strong>: isolate the problematic spot and deliberately exaggerate the speed of the required technical movement. For example, the jumping and placing of notes, including cross-unders, or chords at a much faster speed. This technique is effective in conjunction with the use of Slow Practice and Altered Rhythms Practice.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>7. Fragment Practice</strong>: break down the challenging passages into short fragments. This technique, which is effective in conjunction with Altered Rhythms Practice, is used to overcome technical difficulties and to bring it up to the correct speed. Variation of the Fragment Practice includes:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Note to note practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Beat to beat practice (or every two beats... and so on)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Working backwards by starting from the end and adding previous bars one at a time</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>8. Hand Shape Practice</strong>: position the hands in the air according to the note or chord patterns, then grab the strings immediately.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>9. Melody Alone Practice</strong>: play only the melodic theme in order to hear how the section should sound. If necessary, take the difficult section written for one hand and divide the notes between two hands.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
10. **Metronome Practice**: starting practice with the metronome at a slower tempo then, on repeated playing, progressively increase the speed. This technique is effective for developing evenness of rhythm and to the playing up to speed.

11. **Octave Changing Practice**: moving a passage written in a very high or low register to a more comfortable octave until the notes and the fingerings are learnt.

12. **Pedal Alone Practice**: develop secure feet coordination by practising the pedal changes alone in rhythm.

13. **Practice Journal**: write down the goals for each practice session and record the progress and outcomes.

14. **Repair Points Practice**: break down the piece into sections or phrases and practice from each repair point. This could also be the bridges which transit between sections. Pedal diagrams should be marked at the beginning of each section and emphasis should be drawn to the sections or phrases which need special attention.

15. **Repetition Practice**: repetitively practice the same music or section.

16. **Self-Recording Evaluation**: record your own playing, listen to what it really sounds like, and make adjustments accordingly.

17. **Separate Hand Practice**: practice the parts hands separately to secure playing and develop independence of fingers.

18. **Solfége Singing**: singing Solfége develops inner-hearing skills, helps to grasp pitches, encourage better phrasing, and boost memorisation. Singing is also beneficial in the building of breathing and relaxation techniques that are transferrable in instrumental playing.

19. **Spiderfinger Practice**: playing softly and lightly on the strings at a faster tempo.

20. **Slow Practice**: build a firm foundation by playing the piece accurately in a slow tempo while counting subdivision beats.
THE RESEARCHER’S DEVISED PRACTICE PLANS

All of the practice plans incorporate the technique of Repair Points Practice, in which the music is broken down to small sections in order to tackle specific technical spots. These designed practice exercises and tools, which represent only a few of the approaches to effective practice, aim to develop advanced harp playing techniques.

* Please note that time signatures and note values used in the devised exercises may differ from the original for the purpose of easy reading when practising.
Practice Plan Example (A)

Excerpt: Variations Op.36, No.4, Bars 1-4 (Spohr)

Goals

- To bring out the melody with appropriate phrasing
- To secure the placing between melodic and harmonic notes in the right hand
- To develop control in finger strength and tone

Regarding Playing Positions

- Keep the right elbow up and give support using the muscles of the upper arm in order to allow flexibility in the wrist and more freedom in the hand.
- Maintain a good thumb space by keeping it upright.
- Point the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th fingers slightly downward and curve them slightly outward. Make sure that the knuckles of these fingers do not collapse when playing.
- Because the thumb is playing the melody, make it expressive by pressing on the strings a little before playing. Follow through with fast closing and oscillation.
- Use the right elbow to lead when jumping up and down the strings.
- Make sure the shoulders are down and relaxed.
Practice Approach I

**Away from the Instrument Practice**: analyse the music and uncover the melody which is interweaved in the passage.

**Solfége Singing**: sing the melody with appropriate phrasing using Solfége to assist memorisation of this passage.

**Melody Alone Practice**: play the melody with the right hand using conventional fingerings. Listen to what it should sound like with legato phrasing, and match the tone using the right hand thumb.

---

**Exercise I**

*from Variation No.4*

Spohr

Variations Op.36

---

Practice Approach II

**Fast Movement Practice**: with a steady slow tempo, exaggerate the speed of jumps between the melodic and harmonic notes. It is important to remember that secured placing and fast straight line jumps are necessary.

---

**Exercise II**

*from Variation No.4*

Spohr

Variations Op.36
Practice Approach III

**Fast Movement Practice:** with a steady slow tempo, focus on making quick jumps between the melodic and harmonic notes. Treat the short value notes, the melodic ones in this case, as grace notes, and work on grabbing the harmonic notes soon after playing the melodic ones.

Exercise III

from Variation No.4

Spohr
Variations Op.36

Practice Approach IV

**Fast Movement Practice:** with a steady slow tempo, focus on making quick jumps between the melodic and harmonic notes. Treat the short value notes, the harmonic ones in this case, as grace notes, and work on grabbing the melodic notes soon after playing the harmonic ones.

Exercise IV

from Variation No.4

Spohr
Variations Op.36
Practice Approach V

**Altered Rhythms Practice:** pause on each of the melodic notes and take a little time to think about what is coming and how it should sound, and then match it with playing.

**Exercise V**
from Variation No.4

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**Other Recommended Practice Techniques**

- Blocked Chords Practice
- Metronome Practice
- Separate Hand Practice
- Spiderfinger Practice
- and Self-Recording Evaluation
Practice Plan Example (B)

Excerpt: On Arpeggios / Mirage, bars 1-4 on p.34
from the Modern Study of the Harp (Salzedo)

Goals

- To play the notes in both hands evenly and simultaneously
- To improve tone quality when playing the grace-notes with the notated dynamics
- To phrase the chord progressions in order to match the intended mood

Regarding Playing Positions

- Keep the right elbow up and give support using the muscles of the upper arm in order to allow flexibility in the wrist and more freedom in the hand.
- Maintain a good thumb space by keeping it strong.
- Point the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th fingers slightly downward and curve them slightly outward. Make sure that the knuckles of these fingers do not collapse when playing.
- Keep the wrists loose and flexible.
- Follow through with complete closing of the fingers after playing note.
- Follow through with relaxed and controlled raising after playing each chord.
- Remember to breathe and stay relaxed.
Practice approach I

Fragment Practice: Take the 2\textsuperscript{nd} chord in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} bar as an example...

- Place all fingers on the strings - anchor the fingers on the notes with diamond “◊” noteheads, and play only the notes with conventional noteheads. (Note: the grace notes are fast but not arpeggiated.)
- Listen carefully and make sure that the notes being played are even and together.
- Play each group of notes with different dynamics to test evenness in rhythm and finger strength.
- Repeat one group of notes until the playing is secured before moving onto another one.

![Exercise I](image)

Practice approach II

Blocked Chords Practice: practise the whole section by playing each group of notes as blocked chords in order to increase the security of note replacements.

Other Recommended Practice Techniques

Altered Rhythms Practice, Hand Shape Practice and Repetition Practice
Practice Plan Example (C)

Excerpt: On Grace-Notes and Trills / Inquietude, Bars 3-4 on p.41
from the Modern Study of the Harp (Salzedo)

Goals

- To execute the trills with firm articulation and secured rhythm
- To build up finger strength in order to play according to the notated dynamics
- To synchronise the notes in both hands on a steady pulse

Regarding Playing Positions

- Keep the elbows up and give support using the muscles of the upper arms in order to allow flexibility in the wrists and more freedom in the hands.
- Keep the space between the thumb and 2\textsuperscript{nd} finger slightly smaller than the normal hand position and keep the unused fingers relaxed.
- Keep the wrist loose and play the trills with a little oscillation.
- Keep the hands steady by maintaining a centre of resistance when playing trills.
- Articulate the fingers and follow through with closing where possible.
- Lead with the elbows and keep the shoulders down.
Practice approach I

Take the left hand part of the 2nd bar in this excerpt as an example…

**Fragment Practice**: break down the notes and only add the subsequent note once the pattern can be played without any weak fingers – aim for even balance between the fingers.

---

**Exercise I**

*from Grace-Notes and Trills*

---

Practice approach II

Take the right hand part in the 1st bar of this excerpt as an example…

**Altered Rhythms Practice**: develop finger strength and control by altering the rhythm of this passage. Other rhythmic variations, such as placing accents on specific beats, should also be considered for practice.

**Metronome Practice**: start with a slow tempo and then, on repeated playing, progressively increase the speed after fingerwork is secured. Practise hands separately before combining the parts.
Practice approach III

**Fragment Practice**: playing both hands together from beat to beat. Listen carefully and make sure that the underlying pulse is constant, and that the notes, which are shaded with dynamics, are even and together.

**Other Recommended Practice Techniques**

Slow Practice, Eyes Closed Practice, Fast Movement Practice and Separate Hand Practice
Practice Plan Example (D)

Excerpt: On Grace-Notes and Trills / Inquietude, Bars 1-3 on p.44

from the Modern Study of the Harp (Salzedo)

Goals

- To secure hand shape changes and the movement of jumping between notes
- To execute the thumb slides smoothly with controlled tone and speed
- To accomplish precise pedal changes without buzzing
- To create tone balance between both hands in the desired mood

Regarding Playing Positions

- Keep the elbows up (note: the left elbow will be slightly lower than the right elbow) and give support using the muscles of the upper arms in order to allow flexibility in the wrists and more freedom in the hands.
- Keep the left thumb high, straight and strong, and maintain a good thumb space.
- Point the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th fingers slightly downward and curve them slightly outward. Make sure that the knuckles of these fingers do not collapse when playing.
- Use arm strength, think of pushing downward, to play the thumb slides.
- Slide the thumb straight across the strings.
- Keep the hands steady by maintaining a centre of resistance.
Practice approach I

Take the 1st chord of the left hand part of the 3rd bar in this excerpt as an example…

**Fragment Practice:**

- Place all fingers on the strings - anchor the fingers on the notes with diamond “◊” noteheads, and play only the notes with conventional noteheads.
- Play the slides in a slower tempo first, and progressively build up the speed once they become manageable.
- Execute the slides with control and tone, and repeat the same chord until the desired effect is continuously achieved.
- Apply the exercise to the other chords and learn each of the different hand shapes.

![Exercise I](image-url)
Practice approach II

Separate Hand Practice & Hand Shape Practice: prepare the notes in advance by forming the hand shape accordingly before firmly replacing the fingers on the strings hands separately.

Blocked Chords Practice: place individual groups of notes as blocked chords and jump back and forth between the different registers in a straight line.

Fast Movement Practice: secure the movement of jumping between notes by practising it in a faster speed while playing the passage slowly. Progressively increase the speed of the passage once the playing becomes reliable.

Exercise II
from On Grace-Notes and Trills

Salzedo Inquietude
Practice approach III

**Pedal Alone Practice:** practise the precise action of pedal changes alone in rhythm.

To ensure that all pedal changes are being dealt with, especially the ones that are located at the beginning of the repair points, the researcher suggests the use of *Pedal Change Diagram.* (See below)

In *Pedal Change Diagram,* a small arrow or double arrow is to be placed above the pedal that is to be changed:

- \(\uparrow\) indicates the action of the pedal going up 1 notch.
- \(\uparrow\uparrow\) indicates the action of the pedal going up 2 notches.
- \(\downarrow\) indicates the action of the pedal going down 1 notch.
- \(\downarrow\downarrow\) indicate the action of the pedal going down 2 notches.

Therefore, *Pedal Change Diagram,* which is to be marked at the beginning of this particular excerpt, will look like the following example, indicating that A♭ and D♭ are to be moved down a notch to A♮ and D♮:

```
\(\downarrow\) \(\uparrow\) \(\downarrow\)
```

Apart from giving harpists a reference of pedal settings as in the *Pedal Diagram,* *Pedal Change Diagram* also reminds them about any upcoming pedal changes if there are any.

**Other Recommended Practice Techniques**

**Eyes Closed Practice, Metronome Practice and Repetition Practice**
Your Comments On My Practice Plans: The researcher believes that using appropriate practice techniques can improve the effectiveness of harp learning. Therefore, she has devised a few practice plans for you to try and comment. You should have attempted the given practice plans before answering this section.

18. On a scale of 1 to 4, how useful are the researcher’s devised practice plans? – Please refer to: http://harpsurvay.limewebs.com/survey/PracticePlans.pdf
   (1: Not useful → 2: A little useful → 3: Very useful → 4: Extremely Useful)
   Please comment if you have any suggestions.
   - Practice Plan Example (A): _____
   - Practice Plan Example (B): _____
   - Practice Plan Example (C): _____
   - Practice Plan Example (D): _____
   - Please comment if you have any suggestions:

General Comments and Observations: Please provide any additional information or suggestions that may be helpful to this research.

19. Are there any books on learning/practising and teaching that you would recommend to help harpists to learn to practise more effectively?

20. Are there any particular areas of harp learning and teaching that you think are underdeveloped and would benefit from further research?

21. Please make any comments and/or advice regarding effective teaching and learning?
Appendix I: The Harp Pedagogy Online Survey - Deadline Reminder Email

(Sent on 27 July 2010)

Dear harpists & harp teachers,

A kind notice to remind you that the Harp Pedagogy Survey is due in by Monday 2 August. *(Please note that a partially completed survey would still be very helpful if you could not find time to complete the whole thing.)*

Please find the attached pdf file titled “Harp Pedagogy Survey Information” for instruction to access the survey and to download the relevant resource.

If you have already done or are intending to do the survey, please make sure that you read the Information Sheet in the attachment, and send the Consent Form (see below) back to me by simply enter your name and email address at the bottom of this email.

Thank you again for allowing me to invite you to participate in my research. I really appreciate your input and am looking forward to reading your feedback.

Yours Sincerely,

Jo-Ying Huang
Appendix J: Practice Techniques for Harp Learning - Email to NZ Harp Teachers

(Sent to 13 NZ Harp Teachers on Fri 6 August)

Dear New Zealand Harp Teachers:

I am writing to you again to invite you to participate in the second part of my harp pedagogy research, which focuses on the use of PRACTICE TECHNIQUES. If you have any intermediate or advanced level students at present, then I believe the incorporation of PRACTICE TECHNIQUES would greatly benefit you and your students.

This research will involve you, the teachers, and your students. In order to promote the teaching of practice techniques, I would send each participating teacher / student an updated version of the “Practice Techniques for Harp Playing”. (I am thinking about putting it on a poster or some kind of a booklet.) All that is required are for you to teach and reinforce the practice techniques in your lessons from time to time; and for your students to use the practice techniques when practising by themselves.

The resource will be distributed by the end of August, and a period of approximately 3 months will be given to put this concept into practice. At the end of this research, I would arrange a 30-minute interview with each participating teacher (at your preferred location), whereas each participating student will be given an online survey to fill out in late November or early December.

Thank you very much for participating in my first harp pedagogy survey, and I hope that you would consider continuing to be a part of this research as well.

Please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you very much!

Yours Sincerely,

Jo-Ying Huang

MMus Harp Student at the University of Canterbury
Appendix K: Practice Techniques for Harp Learning - Email to NZ Pedal Harp Students

(Sent on 11 August)

Dear…

This is Jo-Ying, a MMus student at the University of Canterbury who is currently studying harp performance from Carolyn Mills.

I am writing to you to let you know that I am conducting a harp pedagogy survey and would love to have you guys participating if you are willing.

What I am planning to do is to send each of you a poster - "Practice Techniques for Harp Playing" - for your reference. This could be very helpful in your daily practice, and will not contradict with any harp playing techniques you choose to use. (Carolyn may also use these techniques from time to time in case you are not familiar with them. You are also very welcome to contact me should you have any questions about the practice techniques I suggest.)

The poster will be sent to you by the end of August, then you are encouraged to incorporate the practice techniques in your practice for the next 3 months. I will send you a survey to fill out in early December seeking information about your musical background, and about the effectiveness of using practice techniques to improve your harp playing skills.

Please do let me if you do not wish to participate. Thank you very much!

Many thanks!

Kind Regards,

Jo-Ying Huang
From: Jo-Ying Huang

To:

28 August 2010

Dear…

EFFECTIVE HARP PEDAGOGY RESEARCH PROJECT

- The Practice Strategies Implementation Follow-Up Interview –

Following from my earlier Harp Pedagogy Online Survey, I am conducting a study to find out how to enhance the effectiveness of harp teaching and learning with the incorporation of strategic practice techniques. I believe that the incorporation of suitable practice techniques can improve a harp learner’s practice productivity, especially when they have reached the intermediate or advanced playing level.

As part of this study, I am gathering data from concert harp teachers in New Zealand regarding their views on the teaching of practice techniques.
For your reference and comments, I enclose the following documents:

✓ A poster - “Practice Techniques for Harp Learning”
   This contains a list of practice techniques and tools that are suitable for harpists of intermediate to advanced level. Please incorporate as many Practice Techniques as your time allows in your teaching.

✓ A booklet - “Practice Plans for Harp Learning”
   This contains five musical excerpts on which the devised practice plans are based. (Note: examples of all the Practice Techniques are illustrated in the Practice Plans enclosed.)

✓ A consent form entitled “Effective Harp Pedagogy Research Project - The Practice Techniques Implementation Follow-Up Interview”

Please note that because it is such a small community for concert harpists and harp teachers in New Zealand, it may be difficult to maintain anonymity for all data collected. In the cases where anonymity could be breached, I will make sure that I gain your permission to use your names, quotes, and/or any related materials provided by you in order to avoid any misinterpretation. Please be assured that the survey results will not be used for purposes of criticisms, and I will check with you about the information you supply.

All data will be securely stored in password protected facilities and/or locked storage at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study, and subsequently be destroyed. Please also note that the findings derived from the survey results may also be used for such purposes as published articles.

Participation in the study is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the project at any time. If you choose to withdraw, I will use my best endeavours to remove any of the information relating to you from the project, including any final publication, provided that this remains practically achievable.

Furthermore, all participants will receive a full report of the results and recommendations of this study at its conclusion.
Your responses are important and I would be grateful if you would return the approved consent form in the envelope provided by **Monday 13 September 2010**. I will contact you to discuss arrangements for the follow-up interview, which will take approximately 30 minutes, will be arranged at participant’s preferred meeting location in *late November or early December*.

If you have any questions about this research, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you in advance for your contribution.

Yours sincerely,

Jo-Ying Huang
Appendix M: Practice Techniques for Harp Learning - Student’s Information Sheet

From: Jo-Ying Huang

To:

28 August 2010

Dear…

EFFECTIVE HARP PEDAGOGY RESEARCH PROJECT

- The Harp Learning Student Survey -

I am a Master’s student at the School of Music, University of Canterbury in New Zealand, and am conducting a study to find out how to enhance the effectiveness of harp teaching and learning with the incorporation of strategic practice. As part of this study, I am gathering data regarding harp learning from concert harp students in New Zealand who are at intermediate or advanced level.

As a part of this, I am conducting a student survey which focuses specifically on the use of practice techniques in harp learning. I believe that the incorporation of suitable practice techniques can improve a harp learner’s practice productivity, especially when they have reached the intermediate or advanced playing level.
For your reference and comments, I enclose the following documents:

- A poster - “Practice Techniques for Harp Learning”
  
  *This contains a list of practice techniques and tools that are suitable for harpists of intermediate to advanced level. Please incorporate as many Practice Techniques as your time allows in your learning.*

- A booklet - “Practice Plans for Harp Learning”
  
  *This contains five musical excerpts on which the devised practice plans are based. (Note: examples of all the Practice Techniques are illustrated in the Practice Plans enclosed.)*

- A consent form entitled “Effective Harp Pedagogy Research Project - The Harp Learning Student Survey”

Your responses are important and I would be grateful if you would return the approved consent form in the envelope provided by **Monday 13 September 2010.** The survey, which takes about 10 to 15 minutes to complete, will be sent to you in **late November.**

Please note that because it is such a small community for concert harpists and harp teachers in New Zealand, it may be difficult to maintain anonymity for all data collected. In the cases where anonymity could be breached, I will make sure that I gain your permission to use your names, quotes, and/or any related materials provided by you in order to avoid any misinterpretation. Please be assured that the survey results will not be used for purposes of criticisms, and I will check with you about the information you supply.

All data will be securely stored in password protected facilities and/or locked storage at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study, and subsequently be destroyed. Please also note that the findings derived from the survey results may also be used for such purposes as published articles.

Participation in the study is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the project at any time. If you choose to withdraw, I will use my best endeavours to remove any of the information relating to you from the project, including any final publication, provided that this remains practically achievable.

Furthermore, all participants will receive a full report of the results and recommendations of this study at its conclusion.
If you have any questions about this research, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you in advance for your contribution

Yours sincerely,

Jo-Ying Huang
Appendix N: Practice Techniques for Harp Learning - Teacher’s Consent Form

Jo-Ying Huang

Email: jyh14@uclive.ac.nz

EFFECTIVE HARP PEDAGOGY RESEARCH PROJECT

- The Practice Techniques Implementation Follow-Up Interview -

Declaration of Consent to Participate

◆ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project.

◆ I understand that any information or opinions I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and that any published or reported results will not identify me, unless I have specifically consented to any materials and/or comments cited by the researcher.

◆ I understand that all data from this research will be stored securely at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study, and subsequently be destroyed after the five years period.

◆ I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the project at any time. If I choose to withdraw, I understand that the researcher will use her best endeavours to remove any of the information relating to me from the project, including any final publication, provided that this remains practically achievable.

◆ I understand that I will receive a report on the findings of this study and have provided my email details below for this purpose.
By signing below, I agree to participate in this research project.

Name: _______________________________  Signature: __________________________

Email Address: __________________________  Date: __________________________

*Please return this completed the consent form in the envelope provided by

**Monday 13 September 2010.**

*I will be in touch to make interview arrangements, which will be scheduled in late November or early December, with you soon. Thank you for your contribution to this study!*
Appendix O: Practice Techniques for Harp Learning - Student’s Consent Form

Jo-Ying Huang

Email: jyh14@uclive.ac.nz

EFFECTIVE HARP PEDAGOGY RESEARCH PROJECT

- The Harp Learning Student Survey -

Declaration of Consent to Participate

◆ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project.

◆ I understand that any information or opinions I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and that any published or reported results will not identify me, unless I have specifically consented to any materials and/or comments cited by the researcher.

◆ I understand that all data from this research will be stored securely at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study, and subsequently be destroyed after the five years period.

◆ I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the project at any time. If I choose to withdraw, I understand that the researcher will use her best endeavours to remove any of the information relating to me from the project, including any final publication, provided that this remains practically achievable.

◆ I understand that I will receive a report on the findings of this study and have provided my email details below for this purpose.
By signing below, I agree to participate in this research project.

Name: ___________________________ Signature: ___________________________

Email Address: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

Please note that if you are under 18 years of age, please inform your parent/guardian about this research project and participate only if your parent/guardian also consents to your involvement.

Parent / Guardian’s Consent Form for Students who are under 18 years old

Parent / Guardian’s Name: ___________________________

Parent / Guardian’s Signature: ___________________________

Date: ___________________________

Please return this completed the consent form in the envelope provided by Monday 13 September 2010.

Thank you for your contribution to this study!
# PRACTICE TECHNIQUES FOR HARP LEARNING

Compiled by Jo-Ying Huang (August 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRACTICE TECHNIQUES</th>
<th>DESCRIPTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Accent Practice</strong></td>
<td>Place strong accents on certain notes when practising. For example:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Dotted notes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• On-beat notes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Off-beat notes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The first note of every group of 3 notes, then every 5 notes, 7 notes and 9</td>
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<td></td>
<td>notes (other numbers if it is musically appropriate) – The next step is</td>
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<td></td>
<td>to **start on a different note, varying the placement of the accents in</td>
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<td></td>
<td>order to strengthen other fingers and/or finger replacements.**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• On the groups of notes that are technically more demanding. E.g., fragments</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>that have challenging fingerings or require fast finger movement.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This practice technique is effective when used in conjunction with Altered</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Rhythms Practice in order to develop even tone and firm strength in all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fingers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Altered Rhythms Practice</strong></td>
<td>Alter the rhythm of the passage, e.g., using dotted rhythm instead of even</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>quavers, to develop note evenness, build up finger strength, and speed up</td>
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<td></td>
<td>sections which are technically demanding. This can also be used in</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>conjunction with Accent Practice and Fast Movement Practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Away from the Instrument</strong></td>
<td>Study the music in detail, including musical elements, recurring patterns,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>themes and structure of the piece, and listen and compare other harpists’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>performances and/or recordings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Blocked Chords Practice</strong></td>
<td>Play a group of notes or arpeggiated chords as unbroken chords to reinforce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>placing and to secure hand shapes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Checklist Practice</strong></td>
<td>Compile a checklist of specific aspects to look out for, such as dynamics,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tempo, notes, character/mood, pedal changes execution, fingerings, phrasing,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hand and finger position/action, and follow-up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
gestures, and focus on one or only a few aspects at once before learning to become aware of all the aspects in one’s playing.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. <strong>Eyes Closed Practice</strong></td>
<td>Heighten motor coordination by eliminating one of the senses while playing a small technical spot with eyes closed, or with eyes looking forward without looking at the strings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. <strong>Fast Movement Practice</strong></td>
<td>Isolate the problematic spot and deliberately exaggerate the speed of the required technical movement. For example, the jumping and placing, including cross-unders and cross-overs, of notes or arpeggios at a much faster speed. This technique is effective in conjunction with the use of Slow Practice and Altered Rhythms Practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 8. **Fragment Practice** | Break down the challenging passages into short fragments. This technique, which is effective in conjunction with Altered Rhythms Practice, is used to overcome technical difficulties and to bring it up to the correct speed. Variation of Fragment Practice includes:  
  - Note to note practice  
  - Beat to beat practice (or every two beats… and so on)  
  - Working backwards by starting from the end and adding previous bars one at a time  
  - Playing in groups of a number of notes (e.g., 3s, 4s, 5s, 6s, 7s… etc), then varying it again by starting on a different note. |
| 9. **Hand Shape Practice** | Position the hands in the air according to the note or chord patterns, then grab the strings immediately. |
| 10. **Left Hand Strengthening Practice** | Have the left hand playing the right hand part in order to strengthen and increase the left hand’s versatility to play. This may also boost aural memorisation of the musical line. |
| 11. **Melody Alone Practice** | Play only the melodic theme in order to hear how the section should sound. If necessary, take the difficult section written for one hand and divide the notes between two hands. |
| 12. **Metronome Practice** | Start practice with the metronome at a slower tempo and then, on repeated playings, progressively increase the speed. This technique is effective for developing rhythmic evenness and the ability to play up to speed. (Note: it is also useful to practise playing faster than the intended speed for a few times, then takes it back to the intended speed. The player normally finds it easier to play up to speed then.) |
| 13. **Octave Changing Practice** | Moving a passage written in a very high or low register to a more... |
comfortable octave until the notes and the fingerings are learnt.

14. Pedal Alone Practice
Develop secure feet coordination by practising the pedal changes alone in rhythm. A variation of Pedal Alone Practice is to play one hand only while executing the pedal changes. This is also very useful when used in conjunction with memorisation works.

15. Repair Points Practice
Break down the piece into sections or phrases (usually every 4-8 bars) and practice from each repair point. This could also be the bridges which transit between sections. Pedal diagrams should be marked at the beginning of each section and emphasis should be drawn to the sections or phrases which need special attention.

16. Repetition Practice
Repetitively practice the same music, section, or fragment.

17. Separate Hand Practice
Practice the parts hands separately to secure playing and develop fingers independence.

18. Spiderfinger Practice
Playing softly and lightly on the strings at a fast tempo.

19. Slow Practice
Build a firm foundation by playing the piece accurately in a much slower tempo while counting subdivision beats.

20. Unison Practice
Have the right hand and left hand play the same part an octave apart.

Practice Tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRACTICE TOOLS</th>
<th>DESCRIPTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✷ Practice Journal</td>
<td>Write down the goals for each practice session and record the progress and outcomes. This can also be used to document personal long term or short term goals, and to keep track of the practice schedule for the purpose of performance management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✷ Self-Recording Evaluation</td>
<td>Record your own playing, listen to what it really sounds like, obtain immediate feedback, and make adjustments accordingly. Write the evaluation in the practice journal and set specific goals for future practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✷ Solfége Singing</td>
<td>Use the <em>Fixed Do</em> Solfége and sing the notes in the musical line, preferably the melody, of a particular passage. Solfége Singing develops inner-hearing skills, helps to grasp pitches, encourages better phrasing, and boosts memorisation. This would also improve harpists’ accuracy in finger replacements as they play on the corresponding strings. It is sufficient to just use basic note names (C=Do, D=Re, E=Mi, F=Fa, G=Sol, A=La, B=Ti) without getting into details with the pronunciation for sharps and flats, unless it affects the memorisation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of an important melodic line, or the pedal changes.

*For more information about the basics of Solfège, please go to:*
http://www.ars-nova.com/PracticaManual/solfege.htm

**Note:** Singing is also beneficial in the building of breathing and relaxation techniques that are transferrable in instrumental playing.

**Pedal Change Diagram**

To ensure that all pedal changes are being dealt with, especially the ones that are located at the beginning of the repair points, the researcher suggests the use of *Pedal Change Diagram*.

In *Pedal Change Diagram*, a small arrow or double arrow is to be placed above the pedal that is to be changed:

- **↑** indicates the action of the pedal going up 1 notch.
- **↑↑** indicates the action of the pedal going up 2 notches.
- **↓** indicates the action of the pedal going down 1 notch.
- **↓↓** indicate the action of the pedal going down 2 notches.

For example, to indicate that A♭ and D♭ are to be moved down 1 notch to A♮ and D♮, Pedal Change Diagram would look like the following:

![Pedal Change Diagram Example](image)

**Option:** Rather than placing an arrow or arrows above the particular pedal(s) which need to be changed at the beginning of each repair point, you may choose to *colour code* them instead.
These practice plans and exercises, which represent only a few of the approaches to effective practice, are designed for the development of advanced harp playing techniques.

All of the practice plans incorporate the technique of Repair Points Practice, in which the music is broken down into smaller sections in order to allow the harp learner to tackle specific technical spots in manageable portions. This practice technique is highly recommended by the researcher.

The section “Regarding Playing Positions” is generally based on the Salzedo Method and it is only suggestive. Please follow the playing positions your teacher advises.

* Please note that time signatures and note values used in the devised exercises may differ from the original score for the purpose of easy reading when practising.
Goals

- To bring out the melody with musical phrasing
- To secure the placing between melodic and harmonic notes in the right hand
- To develop control in finger strength and tone, keeping melodic and harmonic notes balanced

Regarding Playing Positions

- Keep the right elbow up and give support using the muscles of the upper arm in order to allow flexibility in the wrist and more freedom in the hand.
- Maintain a good thumb space by keeping it upright.
- Point the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th fingers slightly downward and curve them slightly outward. Make sure that the knuckles of these fingers do not collapse when playing.
- Because the thumb is playing the melody, make it expressive by pressing on the strings a little before playing. Follow through with fast closing and oscillation.
- Use the right elbow to lead when jumping up and down the strings.
- Make sure the shoulders are down and relaxed.

Practice Plan Example (A)

Excerpt: Variations Op.36, No.4, Bars 1-4 (Spohr)
Practice Approach I

Away from the Instrument Practice: Analyse the music and uncover the melody which is interweaved in this passage.

Solfége Singing: Sing and memorise the melody with appropriate phrasing using Solfége.

Melody Alone Practice: Play the melody with the right hand using conventional fingerings. Listen to what it should sound like with legato phrasing, and match the tone using the right hand thumb.

Practice Approach II

Fast Movement Practice: With a steady slow tempo, exaggerate the speed of jumps between the melodic and harmonic notes. It is important to remember that secured placing and fast straight line jumps are necessary.
Practice Approach III

Fast Movement Practice: With a steady slow tempo, focus on making quick jumps between the melodic and harmonic notes. Treat the short value notes, the melodic ones in this case, as grace notes, and work on grabbing the harmonic notes soon after playing the melodic ones.

![Exercise III](from Variation No.4)

Spohr
Variations Op.36

Practice Approach IV

Fast Movement Practice: With a steady slow tempo, focus on making quick jumps between the melodic and harmonic notes. Treat the short value notes, the harmonic ones in this case, as grace notes, and work on grabbing the melodic notes soon after playing the harmonic ones.

![Exercise IV](from Variation No.4)

Spohr
Variations Op.36
Practice Approach V

**Slow Practice**: Warm-up with Slow Practice. Rotate the wrists (oscillation) slowly, but articulate the fingers quickly.

**Altered Rhythms Practice**: Pause at each melodic note, and take a little time to think about what is coming next and how it should sound, and then match the playing with what the inner ear expects. This can also be practised by incorporate the Fast Movement Practice, and train the fingers to go straight to the position where the next group of notes are after each pause, without playing.

**Spiderfinger Practice**: Practice this passage very softly, then begin to distinguish the melodic notes and the harmonic notes by playing the melodic notes with more tone while keeping the harmonic ones soft.

**Self-Recording Evaluation**: Record your own playing, listen carefully to the balance between the melodic and harmonic notes. Adjust the strength used in each finger in order to allow the melody to sing out. It is also crucial to pay careful attention to the phrasing of the melodic line instead of focusing exclusively on finger techniques.

**Exercise V**

from Variation No.4

Spohr
Variations Op.36

Other Recommended Practice Techniques

**Accent Practice**, **Blocked Chords Practice**, **Metronome Practice**, and **Separate Hand Practice**.
Practice Plan Example (B)

Excerpt: On Arpeggios / Mirage, bars 1-4 on p.34
from the Modern Study of the Harp (Salzedo)

Goals

- To play the notes in both hands evenly and simultaneously
- To improve tone quality when playing the grace-notes with the notated dynamics
- To phrase the chord progressions in order to deliver the intended character

Regarding Playing Positions

- Keep the right elbow up and give support using the muscles of the upper arm in order to allow flexibility in the wrist and more freedom in the hand.
- Maintain a good thumb space by keeping it upright and strong.
- Point the 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 3\textsuperscript{rd}, and 4\textsuperscript{th} fingers slightly downward and curve them slightly outward. Make sure that the knuckles of these fingers do not collapse when playing.
- Keep the wrists loose and flexible.
- Follow through the movement by closing the fingers completely after playing.
- Follow through the movement with relaxed and controlled raising after playing each chord.
- Remember to breathe and stay relaxed.
Practice approach I

Take the 2\textsuperscript{nd} chord in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} bar as an example…

Fragment Practice:

- Place all fingers on the strings - anchor the fingers on the notes with diamond “◊” noteheads, and play only the notes with conventional noteheads. (Note: the grace notes are fast but not arpeggiated.)
- Listen carefully and make sure that the notes being played are even and together.
- Play each group of notes with different dynamics to test evenness in rhythm and finger strength.
- Repeat one group of notes until the playing is secured before moving onto another one.

Practice approach II

Solfége Singing: Focus on one hand at a time and use Fixed Do Solfége to memorise the notes. Sing out the notes in each chord and place the fingers on the corresponding strings.
Practice approach III

**Blocked Chords Practice:** Practise the whole section by playing each group of notes as blocked chords in order to increase the security of note replacements.

Practice approach IV

**Hand Shape Practice:** Position the hands in the air according to each chord pattern and quickly grab the strings. Practice each chord repetitively until accuracy has improved.

Other Recommended Practice Techniques

**Altered Rhythms Practice, Eyes Closed Practice and Repetition Practice**
Goals

- To execute the trills with firm articulation and secured rhythm
- To build up finger strength in order to play according to the notated dynamics
- To synchronise the notes in both hands on a steady pulse

Regarding Playing Positions

- Keep the elbows up and give support using the muscles of the upper arms in order to allow flexibility in the wrists and more freedom in the hands.
- Keep the space between the thumb and 2\textsuperscript{nd} finger slightly smaller than the normal hand position and keep the unused fingers relaxed.
- Keep the wrist loose and play the trills with a little oscillation.
- Keep the hands steady by maintaining a centre of resistance when playing trills.
- Articulate the fingers and follow through with closing where possible.
- Lead with the elbows and keep the shoulders down.
- Activate the thumbs and let them work together with the 2\textsuperscript{nd} fingers. I.e., open completely before playing and close completely after playing even when the thumbs are not being used.
Practice approach I

Take the left hand part of the 2nd bar in this except as an example...

**Fragment Practice:** Break down the notes and only add the subsequent note once the pattern can be played without any weak fingers. Build up the crescendo once the notes are learnt and the fingers are under control.

**Slow Practice:** Articulate the fingers with fast closing.
Practice approach II

Take the right hand part in the 1st bar of this excerpt as an example…

**Altered Rhythms Practice:** Develop finger strength and control by altering the rhythm of this passage. Other rhythmic variations, such as placing pauses on specific beats, should also be considered for practice.

**Accent Practice:** Use in conjunction with Altered Rhythms Practice. Place strong accents on certain notes, such as the dotted notes, the notes that are on the beat or off beat, or the group of shorter duration notes, when practising. Vary the placement of the accents in order to strengthen different fingers and/or finger replacements.

**Metronome Practice:** Start with a slow tempo and then, on repeated playings, progressively increase the speed after fingerwork is secured. Practise hands separately before combining the parts.

---

**Exercise II**

*On Grace-Notes and Trills*

![Musical notation](image-url)
Practice approach III

**Fragment Practice**: Playing both hands together from beat to beat. Listen carefully and make sure that the underlying pulse is constant, and that the notes, which are shaded with dynamics, are even and together.

**Unison Practice**: Choose either the right or the left hand part, and play it with both hands together an octave apart. A variation of this practice technique is to play the same part while alternating between the hands upon repetition, giving the other hand a chance to rest and relax.

**Spiderfinger Practice**: Play the whole passage (as written) very softly, aiming to synchronise the notes on the beats, then progressively increase volume once the finger actions are secured.

Practice approach IV

**Checklist Practice**: Break down the details in the music and focus on only one or a few aspects, such as notes, fingerings, rhythm, dynamics, right and left hands synchronization, character/mood, at once. It is important to make sure that the limited aspects are well mastered before combining them together in your playing.

Other Recommended Practice Techniques

**Fast Movement Practice** and **Separate Hand Practice**
Goals

- To secure hand shape changes and the movement of jumping between notes
- To execute the thumb slides smoothly with controlled tone and speed
- To accomplish precise pedal changes without making unnecessary noise or buzzes
- To create tone balance between the hands

Regarding Playing Positions

- Keep the elbows up (note: the left elbow will be slightly lower than the right elbow) and give support using the muscles of the upper arms in order to allow flexibility in the wrists and more freedom in the hands.
- Keep the left thumb high, straight and strong, and maintain a good thumb space.
- Point the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th fingers slightly downward and curve them slightly outward. Make sure that the knuckles of these fingers do not collapse when playing.
- Use arm strength, think of pushing downward, to play the thumb slides.
- Slide the thumb straight across the strings.
- Keep the hands steady by maintaining a centre of resistance.
Practice approach I

Take the 1st chord of the left hand part of the 3rd bar in this excerpt as an example…

Fragment Practice:

- Place all fingers on the strings - anchor the fingers on the notes with diamond “◊” noteheads, and play only the notes with conventional noteheads.
- Play the slides in a slower tempo first, and progressively build up the speed once they become manageable.
- Execute the slides with control and tone, and repeat the same chord until the desired effect is continuously achieved.
- Apply the exercise to the other chords and learn each of the different hand shapes.
Practice approach II

**Separate Hand Practice & Hand Shape Practice**: Prepare the notes in advance by forming the hand shape accordingly before firmly replacing the fingers on the strings hands separately.

**Blocked Chords Practice**: Place each individual group of notes as blocked chords and jump back and forth between the different registers in a straight line.

**Fast Movement Practice**: Secure the movement of jumping between notes by practising it in a faster speed while playing the passage slowly. Progressively increase the speed of the passage once the playing becomes reliable.

---

**Exercise II**

- From *On Grace-Notes and Trills* by Salzedo
- *Inquietude*

---

**Staff notation**

- **Key signatures**: A, D, C#, Ab, B, A, E, F, F, E, F, B, B, F, B
- **Tempo**: \( \text{♩=} \frac{46}{p} \)
- **Instructions**: \( \text{slow down} \)


Practice approach III

**Pedal Alone Practice:** Practise the precise action of pedal changes alone in rhythm.

Another variation of **Pedal Practice** is to practise the pedal changes while playing only one hand.

To ensure that all pedal changes are being dealt with, especially the ones that are located at the beginning of the repair points, the researcher suggests the use of **Pedal Change Diagram**. (See below)

In *Pedal Change Diagram*, a small arrow or double arrow is to be placed above the pedal that is to be changed:

- ↑ indicates the action of the pedal going up 1 notch.
- ↑↑ indicates the action of the pedal going up 2 notches.
- ↓ indicates the action of the pedal going down 1 notch.
- ↓↓ indicate the action of the pedal going down 2 notches.

Therefore, **Pedal Change Diagram**, which is to be marked at the beginning of this particular excerpt, will look like the following example, indicating that A♭ and D♭ are to be moved down a notch to A♮ and D♮:

![Pedal Change Diagram Example](image)

Option: Rather than placing an arrow or arrows above the particular pedal(s) which need to be changed at the beginning of each repair point, you may choose to **colour code** them instead.

Apart from giving harpists a reference of pedal settings as in the **Pedal Diagram**, **Pedal Change Diagram** also reminds them about any upcoming pedal changes if there are any.

**Other Recommended Practice Techniques**

**Eyes Closed Practice**, **Metronome Practice** and **Repetition Practice**
Goals

- To replace the fingers accurately in order to play the notes smoothly
- To produce the desired tone colour by following the dynamics and by carefully shaping the phrases
- To be confident in interpreting this passage with artistic freedom, based on an thorough understanding of what the music aims to portray

Regarding Playing Positions

- Keep the elbows up (note: the left elbow will be slightly lower than the right elbow) and give support using the muscles of the upper arms in order to allow flexibility in the wrists and more freedom in the hands.
- Unless the hand is in the very high register of the harp, keep the thumbs high, straight and strong while maintaining a good thumb space.
- Point the 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 3\textsuperscript{rd}, and 4\textsuperscript{th} fingers slightly downward and curve them slightly outward.
- Articulate the fingers with closing after playing.
- Keep the hands steady by maintaining a centre of resistance.
- Raise slightly at the end of the phrases where possible.
Practice approach I

**Repair Points Practice**: Mark the pedal (change) diagrams at the beginning of each repair point, and practice each short section with attention to details.

Practice approach II

**Separate Hand Practice**: Practice hands separately from ‘Vivace, ma liberamente’ to the end of the excerpt. Begin with **Slow Practice**, focusing carefully on expanding the hand and stretching the fingers and aiming for accurate note replacements, before playing this passage at a faster tempo.
Octave Changing Practice: Play the right hand melody an octave lower. Bring it back to the written register when the notes and fingerings are well learnt, and the right hand is more comfortable with the techniques required.

Eyes Closed Practice: Play the right hand melody from bar 3 to bar 7 of this excerpt with eyes closed, or with eyes looking forward. Learn to feel the distance between the notes without looking at the strings.

Practice approach III

Left Hand Strengthening Practice: Play the melody, at written register or an octave lower, with the left hand. Take this opportunity to strengthen the left hand and reinforce the memorisation of the melodic line aurally. It is also important to shape the phrases while playing the melody with the left hand.

Practice approach IV

Checklist Practice: Break down the details in this passage and make a checklist of all the aspects that need careful attention. For example: fingerings, dynamics, tempo changes, moods/characters, tone colours, dampings and resonance, phrasing, hand and finger position/action and follow-up gestures. Pay special attention to one or only a few aspects at once and, after becoming confident with the techniques involved, play this passage with the inclusion of all the performance directions.

Other Recommended Practice Techniques

Fast Movement Practice
EFFECTIVE HARP PEDAGOGY

RESEARCH PROJECT

- The Harp Learning Student Survey -

*Designed by Jo-Ying Huang*

Please return the completed survey in the envelope provided by:

*Wed 15 Dec 2010*

Thank you very much for participating in this research.

*Your input is greatly appreciated!* ☺
About Yourself

1. At what age did you start learning the harp? ______ years old

2. Did you start learning with another instrument(s)?
   □ Yes, what instrument(s)? ______________________________
   □ No

3. How many years have you been learning the harp? ______ years

4. How would you rank your level of harp playing ability?
   □ Beginner
   □ Intermediate
   □ Post Intermediate
   □ Advance
About Your Practice

5. On average, how many hours do you practice per week? _____ hours

6. How do you normally schedule your practice sessions? (Please indicate)
   □ Irregularly
   □ On a regular basis (e.g., 1 X 3 hours practice, 2 X 2 hours practice)
   ➢ Please detail: ________________________________________________________________

7. How would you evaluate your actual and intended practice time per week?
   □ My actual practice hours are MORE than my goal on average
   □ My actual practice hours are about the SAME as my goal on average
   □ My actual practice hours are LESS than my goal on average
   ➢ If you are not practising as much as you intended, What is the reason for that?
      ________________________________________________________________
      ________________________________________________________________

8. Are you able to choose the condition and time in which you practice? (Please explain)

   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
Regarding the Suggested Practice Techniques & Tools

9. To what extent have you used the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRACTICE TECHNIQUE</th>
<th>…… before this research? (Please circle: 1 being never to 5 being always)</th>
<th>…… during the period of this research? (Please circle: 1 being never to 5 being always)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accent Practice</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altered Rhythms Practice</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Away from the Instrument Practice</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blocked Chords Practice</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>Metronome Practice</td>
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### Octave Changing Practice

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### Pedal Alone Practice

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### Repair Points Practice

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### Repetition Practice

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### Separate Hand Practice

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### Spiderfinger Practice

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### Slow Practice

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### Unison Practice

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</table>

### PRACTICE TOOL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRACTICE TOOL</th>
<th>…… before this research?</th>
<th>…… during the period of this research?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Please circle: 1 being never to 5 being always)</td>
<td>(Please circle: 1 being never to 5 being always)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Journal</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Recording Evaluation</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Solfége Singing</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pedal Change Diagram</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### PRACTICE TECHNIQUE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Technique</th>
<th>How helpful is this practice technique to your learning? (Please circle: 1 being not helpful to 5 being extremely helpful)</th>
<th>When do you find this practice technique useful? During the… (Please tick as many options as applicable)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accent Practice</td>
<td></td>
<td>Note learning period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altered Rhythms Practice</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Away from the Instrument Practice</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blocked Chords Practice</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eyes Closed Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Metronome Practice</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Tool</td>
<td>How helpful is this practice tool to your learning? (Please circle: 1 being not helpful to 5 being extremely helpful)</td>
<td>When do you find this practice tool useful? During the… (Please tick as many options as applicable)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Note learning period</td>
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<td>Octave Changing Practice</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. How long did it take for you to become familiar with these practice techniques and tools?

____________________________________________________________________________________________________________

12. Were there any difficulties when you first started learning the practice techniques and tools?

□ Yes - please outline what they were:

____________________________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________________________

□ No

13. Are there still any challenges or difficulties to incorporating the practice techniques and tools into your learning?

□ Yes - please outline what they are:

____________________________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________________________

□ No

14. How well do you choose appropriate practice techniques for the technical spots?

□ Very well

□ Adequately

□ Not very well

15. How often do you consider using a variety of practice techniques and/or tools to overcome technical difficulties?

□ Always

□ Often

□ Sometimes

□ A little

□ Never
16. What differences, if any, have you experienced in the effectiveness of your learning through using the various practice techniques and tools in the following aspects?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ASPECT</strong></th>
<th><strong>Please comment in the space below</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time &amp; Energy management:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Technique Mastery:</td>
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<td>Memorizing Skills:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theoretical &amp; Structural Analysis Skills:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental Strength &amp; Confidence:</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Physical Conditions:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Aspects?</td>
<td>Please specify: ____________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
17. Do you have any other comments on the use of any of the practice techniques and tools?
________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Regarding the Devised Practice Plans

18. Which aspects of the practice plans worked especially well for you?
________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

19. Which aspects of the practice plans did not work well for you?
________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

20. Rather than relying on etudes to develop playing techniques, would you support the practice of converting technically demanding passages into isolated technical exercises / studies for yourself?

□ Yes, why?
________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

□ No, why not?
________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
Regarding Your Practice Method

21. Has your method of practice changed in the course of carrying out this project?
   - □ Yes, how so?
     ________________________________________________________________
     ________________________________________________________________
   - □ No, why not?
     ________________________________________________________________
     ________________________________________________________________

22. In your opinion, how important is it to include the learning of practice techniques and tools during lessons?
   - □ Very Important
   - □ Quite important
   - □ A little important
   - □ Not important

23. Would you continue to use the practice techniques and tools introduced in this survey in your own future learning?
   - □ Always
   - □ Often
   - □ Sometimes
   - □ Rarely
   - □ Never

24. If you are teaching or plan to teach the harp, would you incorporate the practice
techniques and tools in the lessons?

☐ Yes
☐ Maybe
☐ No
☐ Not applicable as I do not intend to teach

25. Please use this space for any other comments that you would like to add to this research?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

- THE END -
Thank you very much for participating in this research.

Your input is greatly appreciated! 😊
Regarding the Suggested Practice Techniques & Tools

1. To what extent have you incorporated the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRACTICE TECHNIQUE</th>
<th>...... before this survey? (Please circle: 1 being never to 5 being always)</th>
<th>...... during the period of this survey? (Please circle: 1 being never to 5 being always)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Practice</td>
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<tr>
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**PRACTICE TOOL**

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</table>
2. How effective do you find the Practice Techniques and Tools?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRACTICE TECHNIQUE</th>
<th>How effective do you find the suggested practice technique in your students’ learning? (Please circle: 1 being not helpful to 5 being extremely helpful)</th>
<th>When do you find this practice technique useful? During student’s… (Please tick as many options as applicable)</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Practice Tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRACTICE TOOL</th>
<th>How effective do you find the suggested practice tool in your students’ learning? (Please circle: 1 being not helpful to 5 being extremely helpful)</th>
<th>When do you find this practice tool useful? During student’s… (Please tick as many options as applicable)</th>
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3. How long did it take your students to become familiar with these practice techniques and tools?

4. Were there any difficulties when you first started teaching the practice techniques and tools? If yes, please outline what they are.

5. Are there still any challenges or difficulties to incorporating the practice techniques and tools in your teaching? If yes, please outline what they are.

6. Do your students understand how to choose appropriate practice techniques for the technical spots?
7. What differences, if any, have your students shown after implementing the practice techniques and tools in each of the following aspects?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASPECT</th>
<th>Sketch any thoughts on these prior to the interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time &amp; Energy Management:</td>
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<td>Mental Strength &amp; Confidence:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
General Physical Conditions: ______________________

Other Aspects?
→ Please specify: ____________________

8. Do you have any other comments on the use of any of the practice techniques and tools?

Regarding the Devised Practice Plans

9. Which aspects of the practice plans worked especially well for you?

10. Which aspects of the practice plans did not work well for you?

11. Rather than relying on etudes to develop playing techniques, would you support the practice of converting technically demanding passages into isolated technical exercises/studies for your students?

Regarding Your Teaching Style and Practice Method

12. Have your teaching style and/or your own practice method changed in the course of carrying out this project?

13. In your opinion, how important is it to spend time teaching practice techniques and tools during lessons?
Very Important
Quite important
A little important
Not important
It is a good idea, but I don’t have time to do it

14. Are there any other practice techniques that you would suggest to others?

15. Are there any other comments that you would like to add to this research?