Principal Themes and Intellectual Structure of Research in Piano Pedagogy:
The Mapping of Doctoral and Masters’ Research 1951-2008

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ABSTRACT

In this age of instant information with a seemingly unlimited warehouse of knowledge, where do piano teachers learn about the professional research in piano pedagogy? Given the approximately one thousand completed doctoral dissertations and masters’ theses in piano study, and the vast amounts of journal articles related to piano pedagogy, piano teachers can be bewildered and frustrated when seeking (research-based) answers to pedagogical questions. Thus, given the need, to capture, explain, and interpret the large amount of research in piano pedagogy for the benefit of piano teachers, students, and researchers, this study sought to identify and analyze the principal themes and to formulate the intellectual structure of research in piano pedagogy.

Specifically, this study analyzed 457 doctoral and masters’ research studies that directly relate to piano pedagogy. This examination of doctoral and masters’ piano pedagogy research was performed in three stages using text mapping, content mapping, and concept mapping. Results identified and analyzed an array of trends and developments in doctoral and masters’ research in piano pedagogy research completed between 1951-2008, and then offered a detailed and comprehensive map of the intellectual structure of piano pedagogy research. This map isolated the principal themes underlying research in piano pedagogy and explained how these research themes and the diversity of topic interests relate to each other to form a coherent and intellectual structure of piano pedagogy research.

By understanding these principal themes and the intellectual structure of research in piano pedagogy, piano teachers may be better able to form a connection between the professional research literature and their piano teaching. Also, by more fully comprehending the available research in piano pedagogy, researchers will be more able to create a research development agenda and possibly a clearer perspective in conducting future research in piano pedagogy. It is believed that the mapping of research in piano pedagogy may deepen our understanding of the nature and development of piano teaching and learning for the benefit of piano teachers and their students and for the advancement of piano pedagogy as a whole.
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