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## **Impact of Teachers' Previous Learning and Teaching Experience on Their Current Pedagogy and Beliefs: Multiple Case Studies on Three Hong Kong Instrumental Teachers**

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### **Abstract**

In Hong Kong, not all instrumental teachers necessarily graduate from a university or conservatory with a music major, many of them receiving performance training instead of learning pedagogical skills. In addition, unlike some professions, such as medical doctors, lawyers, and engineers, Hong Kong does not have a statutory organisation to supervise the qualifications and professional development of instrumental teachers. As a result, the development, both of pedagogical skills and the necessary professional attributes required of an instrumental teacher, have not received the attention they deserve. The purpose of this study was to explore how Hong Kong instrumental teachers perceive their professional development paths with reference to their own learning and teaching experiences. Purposeful sampling was employed as the means of selecting participants for the diversity of their backgrounds. The selected participants were three female instrumental teachers who taught the piano and violin. Perceptions of teacher evaluation and the impact of learning experiences on teachers' professional development were collected from the participants through interviews, teaching diaries, and field notes.

Several themes emerged from the data collected over an approximately six-month period. First, all the participants experienced long musical apprenticeships. Second, the teachers rarely perceived that pedagogical skills are 'learnable' skills as performing skills. Finally, all the teachers were only interested in practical, examination-oriented professional development programmes, as opposed to academic or pedagogically-oriented outcomes such as journals or conferences. After emerging the themes from data collected, this study discussed the musical apprenticeship learning experiences for teachers, dominant preference of performance qualifications and the issue of unitisation in the professional development of music teachers in Hong Kong.

There are several implications for music teachers and professional development programme providers arising as a result of this study. It is suggested that teachers should teach music as a creative art, rather than the reproduction of a series of printed pages. In addition, professional development programmes for music teachers should focus more on instructional practices than content knowledge in a bid to boost already trained musicians' pedagogical preparation. Furthermore, instrumental teachers' ability and willingness to learn from research is far behind that of other professionals, such as medical doctors and scientists. Finally, teachers should aim to develop a broader view and vision of their professional development, rather than focusing purely on following the practical performing examination path. The unitisation of professional development choices would appear to be the most urgent and pressing problem faced by instrumental teachers.