

EAR TRAINING TUTORING SESSION

Studying The Roles of An Ear Training
Tutor and Student

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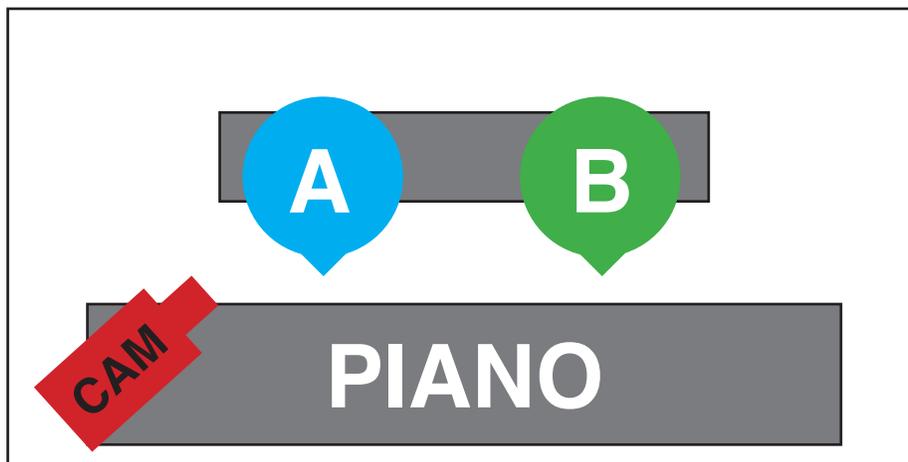
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Berklee College of Music
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The Data

The three video clips featured in this paper were collected at a small practice room at Berklee College of Music. It features a music student “A” located on the left of the video (right of the piano) and a core music (general music) tutor “B” located on the right of the video. Both are sitting on a piano bench facing a music notation book on the piano. The student, with the help of the tutor is practicing ear training which involves reading a simple melody line and singing it with the intention of learning the ability to hear music from reading music notation.

During the video clips the subjects talk about solfège syllables which are similar to the commonly known musical notes “do, re, mi, fa..” Though with a few variations in order to include the black notes on the keyboard known as accidentals. These note names instead of referring to the pitch of each note refer to the scale degree they represent. The available syllables are “do, di, ra, re, ri, me, mi, fa, fi, se, sol, si, le, la, li, te, ti”



■ Student emitting information ■ Questions
■ Tutor emitting information ■ Commands

Clip One (02:05)

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1  A ((Singing)) dodo te do- (.)
2  A ((Speaking)) °it['s d-° te ^soo aa# hh.
3  B           [>it's ok,< hehehehaha^^ha? hh.
4  A >°i'm gonna< crcle [this noote°?
5  B           [oke^e? ((Singing)) °tara tata°-
6  A NO way[t (.) >it's right]here<
7  B           -[yea °this one°] yea ((Singing)) °dodo te so°
8  A ((Singing)) dodo TE so- h.
9  A ((Speaking)) ^caus- yea hh ok >i know it's wrong.< (.)
10 A [cool
11 B ^o[kee lets try ((Note strike)) °this one.°
12 A ^from thee- [here? or >beginni[ng.<
13 B           [^^>yea<           [from here.
14 A >^Oo ke,<
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15 B ((Note strike))
 16 A °one? two? thr? four?°
 17 A ((Singing))
 18 A DODO TE Do- (.)
 19 B Yea- [let's try again because-
 20 A [dodo TE so
 21 B yea you st[^]illl- [hhahaha
 22 A [I'M STill doing the- °-hhh°
 23 B ok ((Note Strike)) one and two and three and four ^And
 24 A ((Singing Corecttly))

Clip Two (03:47)

1 A °ok[e°,
 2 B [YEA u[^]hhum. thisis great hh. ^aha.hhm[^]m:
 3 (4.0)
 4 B a:hm the one thing that I told you is hhh.
 5 B aaah# thE- th- haaah [>this was not<] yea, the phrasing hh.
 6 A [the phrasing,
 7 B aa:nd (1.5) I THink s (.) umm: sometimes you confus like- tha- it's
 8 B one? two? ^three and fo:ur. yea hh.
 9 A Okey
 10 (1.2)
 11 B i think that's all.hh[aahaha yea?
 12 A [Okey.
 13 B [gre- hh.
 14 A [>could we< DOo: just like one more time,
 15 B YEA [Sure h. aa- yea- aamm:. >e thiss isa sol right?< [Eeh,
 16 A [okey cool, [YESs
 17 B this the sa:me (.) ((Singing) So- Do sol Do: so:l ((Speaking)) yea
 18 A °okey°,
 19 B okheyh H[^]h. (.)
 20 B key, ((Note Strike)) ^one and ^two and ^three and ^four ^^And
 21 A ((Singing))

Clip Three (07:08)

1 B y[^]ea.
 2 A okey. (1.0) that was better then (.)
 3 B yea- [oh really:? (.) aHA[^]Ha °thank yOU:h[uhu- h.
 4 A [[^]when ^we started, ^[^]aam. [allrightt
 5 B aa:h ((Picks up a paper)) °how [abou-°
 6 A [so- there's this-
 7 A OK SO MY [°[^]uuhmm.~°
 8 B [uh[^]um?
 9 A they are ^no:t very:~ good. (.)
 10 A umm this ^one and then we have °there's ^two:# n seventy twoo#:.°
 11 A that are equally#: as# ba:##d.
 12 (1.3)
 13 B ^umm[mm.::

14 A [>but miy professor told me< I can't play on the keyboard,

15 A so then i'm like< HOwma suppose to:: (.) get the Pitche: [s but

16 B [uhum

17 (2.0)

18 A ^i don't kn^ow.

19 B ahhuhuha ^hi (.) this one?

20 A yeaaaa##[#

21 B [oo:u.

22 A cause this amm also changes from a minor melody to a [mm^major?

23 B [A^aaaa,aaaa.

24 B YE RIght °it [might° (.) bee minor to °of major°

25 A [yeaaa###]

26 A ûhm.

27 B uhmm: (2.0) uhhuhm.

28 A yea AN THEN SHE ^MADE US (.) change this no^otesss

29 B yea. because it's pick[u

30 A [>CAUSE IT'LL< pick you up into the-

31 B ^uhu~uuu, [right?]

32 A the [right-] key. g.hh=

33 B =hahh- h.h. (.) ok^ay ugh (0.8) ^how about this one? (2.0)

33 B is it too hard?

34 A h^um:: (0.9) it's ^not ^too hhhh>ard

35 A I just get< (0.5) cunfu:sed about the[unm

36 B [the leisure?

37 A h th >just like the< sillable:s? <^tu [s%ay?>

38 B [huu:

39 A EVEN THOUGH LI[KE I COULD GO AND SAY LIKE this is, (.)

40 B [a^AAaa:.

41 A this is what it >is but when i'm< singin i like forget? it?

42 B uhun?

43 A plUS THIS goes pretty: lllow so I'm- °kin-° i know thiss i[s so:l,

44 B [aa^ah yea.]

45 A >SO LIKE< if you ask me >i can tell you what all of these are< but

46 A when i'm singi^ng it's kind of like ughn%

47 (3.0)

48 A °you know what i meann?° [if that makes any sense?

49 B [yea%] uhum.

50 A okhay [hu^HUhu], °h.h.°

51 B [u HAha^hi] ((Note Strike)) °okay?° lets ^try- more slowly.

52 A ou[káy

53 B [(yeh ^one two three one two three. ((Note Strike)

54 A ((Starts Singing)

The three clips transcribed on this paper were selected because they contain examples of tutor and student displaying the mechanisms of an Ear Training tutoring session.

The complete video can be found at the link bellow.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0Bz5mOoccmpl6Q1ZaSnI5NI92UFE/view?usp=sharing>

Clip One

Student A sings a given melody but although she sings the correct note she sings the incorrect solfège syllable. (do instead of sol)

Correct: do do te **sol** do do te do



Incorrect: do do te **do** do do te do

The student then corrects herself while the tutor overlaps by affirming “it’s OK,” the tutor then laughs. A then tells the tutor she’ll circle the note she misspoke and B verbally grants permission but A then stops herself from circling the note and redirects to circle a different one and verbally reaffirms the correct note to circle. The tutor overlaps on line 7 confirming the correct note to circle. The student then sings the solfège syllable and informs the tutor she knows what is wrong on line 9 and B verbally agrees.

The tutor then verbally suggests a measure to start singing and strikes a note on the piano. A then asks if she is supposed to start at a measure she points to on the score, or if she should start from the beginning of the piece. The tutor confirms the measure A is supposed to start from and A verbally confirms. B strikes a note commanding the student to start singing and A counts four beats before starting to sing on line 16 confirming the command of line 15.

A makes the same mistake while singing and immediately stops singing. B then verbally confirms she noticed the mistake on line 19 and inquires the student to try again. B explains why A should repeat though is interrupted by the student who is singing the syllables with an emphasis on the note antecedent from the one she makes the mistake. The tutor then returns to her explanation that A is should repeat the exercise because she is still singing incorrectly. B starts laughing at the end of the explanation as A overlaps the laugh confirming she understands B’s explanation by repeating B’s words. B then commands a to return singing by striking a note and counting the beats adding a volume emphasis on the last eight note before A is supposed to start singing. The command is confirmed by the student’s singing on line 24.

Clip Two

The clip starts after Student A finishes singing an Ear Training exercise. The tutor verbally complements the student’s performance and moans an indication she is about to say something to the student which is proven on line 4 where B proceeds. The tutor then looks at the sheet music for four seconds and refers to a comment she made to the student in the past. The tutor continues telling the student what B previously mentioned but stops the commentary and hums. The student takes the hum as if the tutor was searching for a word evident by the student’s repair completing the tutor’s sentence with an overlap on line 6. The tutor then confirms the student’s guess is correct by repeating what the student said on line 6. The tutor then informs the student she things the student confuses the beat pattern on a portion of the exercise by counting the tempo while drawing the correct beat lines on the sheet music. The student confirms her understanding on line 9. The tutor then informs the student she has no more corrections. The student verbally confirms her understanding of the tutor’s comment.

On line 14 the student requests B to attempt the previews exercise once more. The tutor verbally grants the student’s request and asks the student if she agrees a note B points

to should be sung with the solfège syllable sol, A verbally agrees. The tutor then informs the student the solfège syllable is the same as a previously sung note. The tutor then sings the example initially making a mistake by singing the syllable Sol instead of Do but the mistake is quickly self repaired by restarting the correct musical phrase with emphasis on the down beats. The student verbally confirms her understanding. The tutor then commands the student to return singing by striking a note and counting the beats with an emphasis on the eight note before the singing is supposed to start. The command is confirmed by the student's singing on line 21.

Clip Three

This clip starts after the student is done doing another ear training exercise. The student informs the tutor that the current run through was better than a previous attempt. The Tutor responds first with verbal agreement, then she shows verbal disbelief in a question format "Oh really?" on line 3. The student doesn't respond to the question as evidence the comment was made as an expression of surprise rather than a question. The tutor then thanks the student suggesting B understood line 2 to be a complement on her tutoring abilities. The tutor then looks for a next piece to practice on the student's practice book and verbally suggests another melody. The student starts to respond the suggestion but stops speaking. The tutor then hums indicating the student to continue as evident by line 9 where the student continues. The student then proceeds informing the tutor that her performance of the melodies are bad on lines 9 and 10. After a brief pause the tutor hums but is interrupted by the student who moves on explaining her professor asked her not to practice the melody on the piano (a common practice when studying ear training because it forces the trainee to find the notes without the aid of an instrument). On line 15 the student says "so then I'm like" verbalizes the thought she had when she was told not to play the keyboard. She performs her thought humorously by altering her voice by making it more nasal, the tutor doesn't start laughing and the student pauses for two seconds before saying "I don't know" on line 18. The evidence the student's comment was made humorously comes on line 19 as the tutor starts laughing, the student doesn't laugh with the tutor. The tutor then interrupts her laugh and points at the music inquiring which melody the student is referring to, (end of line 19) and the student verbally confirms on line 20.

The student then explains that her teacher also asked her to modulate her solfège notes as the melody moves from a minor tonality into a major one (which makes it significantly harder to sing). The tutor confirms her understanding of the switch by overlapping the student's explanation with a long "Aaaah" on line 23 and by verbally detailing the tonal modulation on line 14 with scale names. The student verbally affirms the tutor's understanding on line 15 and after a 2 second pause the tutor laughs with her mouth closed. On line 16 the student then further explains the measure in which her teacher recommended her to modulate back into the original key in order to return to the A section. This explanation is interrupted by the tutor on lines 28 and 30 until the student finishes her sentence on line 32. The student then gives a brief giggle contained by her closed mouth and a smile. The tutor reacts to the giggle with a short but loud laugh. The tutor quickly stops laughing, stops smiling, pauses for 0.8 seconds and suggests another melody for the student to sing.

The tutor asks if the mentioned melody was too hard on line 33. The student hums monotonically indicating she is about to give an answer, after a 0.9 seconds pause "A" answers that the problem isn't the melody's difficulty but that she gets confused. Before the student is able to finish her thought the tutor overlaps by asking if the issue was reading leisure lines (an extension of the musical staff which students often have a harder time

reading). On line 39 the student answers that the issue is actually the solfège syllables (note names), the tutor overlaps the explanation with a hum. The student further explains she is able to look at the score and decipher the solfège syllable, however when she sings she forgets the notes. The tutor once more overlaps the explanation with an elongated “aaahh” on line 40, later nodding her head up and down on line 41. The student then adds that singing the syllables is especially hard when the notes are low (requiring leisure lines to be read). The tutor once more overlaps the student at the end of line 41 with another “Aahh.” The student summarizes her explanation on lines 45 and 46 but cuts her explanation short and verbally informs the tutor her feelings as she is singing by prompting her with the lines “it’s kind of like ughh.” The student then pauses for three seconds on line 47 and asks if her explanation makes any sense as a tag-question (line 48). The tutor interrupts by confirming her understanding of the student’s feelings by saying “yes” and later confirms the student’s question of whether her explanation made sense by saying “uhumm” granting the student sympathy and confirming the tag-question on line 49, the tutor does so while maintaining eye contact with the student. The two maintain eye contact, the student says “okay” and both start laughing simultaneously. Once they are both done laughing the tutor strikes a note on the piano and suggests the student to try the melody at a slower tempo. The student verbally agrees to do so on line 52, then the tutor commands the student to start singing by counting the beats before the singing is supposed to start and striking a key on the piano. The command is made evident by the student’s singing.

Tutor and Student Roles

On the first clip the student emits more information than the tutor, she does so by explaining the reasons for her mistakes as well as informing she’ll write notes on her practice book. The tutor transmits information to the student is on line 21 where the tutor confirms the student she is aware of her issue and on lines 11, 19 and 23 where the tutor commands the student to attempt the exercise once more, she does so either verbally or by striking the reference note on the piano and counting the beat. The only question asked on this clip is made by the student on line 12, she asks the tutor where to start the exercise from.

On clip one the tutor achieves tutoring by listening to the student’s mistakes, suggesting places for the student to start the exercise and enforcing when the student should attempt the exercise. Apart from verbally commanding the student to try the exercise again the tutor uses the piano as a way to communicate to the student she is supposed to sing a melody, she does so by performing the tonic (home key, tonal center) of the given melody. The student performs her role as a student by informing the tutor she knows she made a mistake, marking the mistake on the score and practicing the exercise.

On the second clip the tutor emits most of the information by informing the student of all of the mistakes the student made and counting the tempo for her to start the next exercise. The tutor makes one question on line 15 where she asks for the student’s agreement that a note should be sung with the syllable “sol.”

The student emits information by confirming she knows what the tutor is talking about on line 6 by completing the tutor’s sentence and by confirming she agrees with the tutor that all the mistakes were mentioned on line 16, even though the tutor later mentions one more mistake on line 17. On clip two the student makes an information request on line 14 where for the first time the student asks to attempt the exercise once more.

On this clip the tutor’s role is performed by informing the student she has approved the quality of her singing, informing the student of the mistakes she was able to hear and

indicating the correct syllables, visually showcasing the song's beat pattern and counting the beats before the return. The student's role as a student manifests by agreeing with the tutor, listening to the notes, informing the tutor she is aware of her mistakes and unlike in the first clip the student rather than the tutor requests attempting the exercise again. The request to repeat an exercise when performed by the student is made in the form of a question, when the tutor made requests to retry an exercise on clip one they were made in the form of a suggestion or a demand.

On clip three the student becomes the dominant information transmitter by telling the tutor she felt improvement from her previews attempts (line 2), informing the tutor she has difficulties performing the given melody (lines 7, 9, 11, 15, 43 46), informing the tutor how the student's professor wants her to practice (line 14), informing the tutor how the student's professor wants her to perform (lines 28, 30), informing the tutor challenging aspects about the piece (line 22) and informing the tutor why she has a hard time performing the melody (lines 22, 35, 37, 39, 41, 46). The only question made by the student happens on line 48 inquiring if the tutor understood her struggle to perform the exercise. That question is then interpreted as humorous by the mutual laughs on lines 49 and 51.

The tutor's role on clip three is performed via information requests as clarifications of understanding (lines 19, 36) and evaluation of the student's ability to perform (line 33). The tutoring role is also performed with confirmations of understanding, laughter, commands for the student to start singing and suggestion on how to practice a melody (line 51).

Most of the tutoring performed on the third clip is done through listening to the student's difficulties and commanding the student to start singing. Unlike the previews clips the tutor also suggests the student to sing slowly as a method of improving her practice.

Interesting Interactions

On lines two through four of clip three the student tells the tutor her performance improved since their first attempt. The tutor then interprets the student's comment as a complement on her tutoring ability by thanking the student. This interaction suggests the tutor's interpretation of the student's role isn't simply to practice Ear Training but also to evaluate her performance as a learning facilitator. This role interpretation may diverge from a academic teaching scenario due to the fact B is also a peer student of A and attends the same institution with the same expectation of improving her professional skills and being evaluated.

Conclusion

In the given Ear Training tutoring session the act of tutoring and being a student is performed with varying roles. The information transmitted after each performance varies between the tutor and the student though in this example the nature of the information transmitted by the student is predominantly an explanation of the student's difficulties. The tutor primary mechanism of tutoring are suggestions to the student on where and when to start singing a given melody, an act which can be performed verbally or with the use of the piano as an interaction device.