

jvj262

IB Personal Project

MYP Personal Project – Learning to Play and Understand the Piano

Criteria A: Planning

Learning Goal:

As I was tasked with creating my objective for the personal project, I came up with various different goals, all artistically based and centered around creativity, these goals included creating physical art like statues or paintings, or even photography. But then I realized I could do something not physical, but audible, by learning to play the keyboard. The best thing about learning to play the keyboard for my personal project was that I was already doing so in my spare time, although rarely, which also gives the reason for me to consistently continue my effort into learning yet another instrument, right alongside the clarinet, which I have been playing since I was in 4th grade. I've always wanted to learn more than one instrument, even before I started playing the clarinet, including the piano, so when I had the opportunity to learn through a keyboard, I didn't hesitate. Although I very desperately wanted to learn, and even had the necessary tools to do so, I never fully got around to doing it daily so that I could actually learn it, and not just have it in my room. But with the option of learning something that I actually really wanted to learn, and given the time to do so, I was ecstatic. I was finally going to turn my mediocre piano skills into something that I could effectively use during my musical education.

Product Goal:

My product goal is to successfully complete my learning goal so that I can use my newfound information to further my education in the musical world and be able to, on my own, play simple works

of music that I can truly understand the innerworkings of. This project is not about learning to play music, but to understand how it's written on a page and why. It's less about making music, as I already do most of that on my clarinet, and more on how parts of the music connect to others.

Success Criteria:

To consider how my success was measured, I needed to set myself limits, as being able to professionally play the piano and fully understand the behind the scenes of it all, simply called music theory takes years of ones life with multiple hours of practice every day, and as I didn't nearly have that amount of time, I could only allow myself to go for a goal that was reasonably achievable given the minimal amount of time that I was allowed.

Product Success Criteria	Description
<p><u>Basics:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Learn the note placement ● Get comfortable ● Simple melodies ● Different BPM ● Read sheet music (clefs) 	<p>It was necessary that I got the feeling of a keyboard so that I could proceed with learning everything else. I already knew the note names, so I only had to memorize the proper placement for my fingers so that notes could be played smoothly and without error. Playing simple melodies with one hand was not difficult for me, as I already had experience, but to master fingerings, playing at different tempos (BPM (Beats per minute) was extremely helpful, as was to for reading sheet music, as there is not one line of music for piano, but two, so that it's easier to read on average what the left-hand plays, and</p>

	<p>the right-hand. Normally, the left plays the bass clef, and the right the treble clef, respective to their placement on the piano. During the basics phase, I did not use my left hand, so the bass line was not needed, but would eventually come up, so learning it then was helpful later on.</p>
<p><u>Intermediate:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Easy scales/key signatures• Accidentals• Different BPM• Two hands separately• More than quarter and whole notes• Time signatures	<p>After learning the basics, I was ready to move on to the intermediate part of my project, being the notes other than the white keys, as those were the only keys I needed to use, because I was only playing a C major scale, scales being either major or minor depending on the pattern you follow up or down the piano. To explain the patterns, you need to understand whole and half-steps.</p> <p>Half-steps are the keys directly left or right of the starting note, whether or not the key is black (sharp (#) or flat (<i>b</i>) depend on if it's to the right (#) or left (<i>b</i>) of a white key). Whole-steps are the keys exactly two half-steps left or right of the starting note, so a half step to the right of F would be F#, and one whole-step to the left of B would be A. Now, a major a pattern to the right of</p>

the starting note going W, W, H, W, W, W, H, the letters representing whole and half-steps to the right, and minor scales are the same but follow the pattern of W, H, W, W, H, W, W. So, to go back to the basic C major scale, it starts on C and follows the major pattern to the right, which happens to be only on the white keys. Key signatures play off of scales, meaning they take the notes that are sharp or flat, and mark their placement at the beginning of a piece to tell the musician that those notes are sharp or flat the entire song, unless however the composer puts a natural sign next to a note that would normally be played sharp or flat for the remaining measure, so a G minor key signature would take the *Bb* and *Eb* from the respective scale and have only those two notes be played like that for the rest of the song, unless an accidental, whether it be to sharpen, flat, or make a note neutral. At this point I was be practicing with my right and left hand, but separately, so that I could get the hang of playing two different parts, as well as playing slower to get better. I had started to play notes not worth a quarter, or half of the measure, but

	<p>notes worth an eighth of the measure, or just an eighth note, in the general time signatures of 4/4, 3/4, and 2/4, where there are either 4, 3, or two beats per measure.</p>
<p><u>Hard:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Memorize harder scales/keys ● Hand placement muscle memory ● Two hands together ● Random note markings ● Exaggerated BPM ● Pedal 	<p>At this point, I was just heavily reinforcing my past skills, but did start using two hands at the same time, being able to play more complicated pieces. More difficult keys popped up with even more accidentals, causing frustration, along with faster BPM. I introduced the pedal, an extra piece to the piano that you press your foot on like the pedal in a car. The pedal sustains notes, so if you wanted a note to last just a tad bit longer before you get to the next note, you can press it down for a second.</p>

Plan for achieving Goal:

To achieve my product goal, I would spent roughly a month on each category of skill level that I determined, giving myself plenty of time at the beginning to improve, but giving myself the same amount of time to improve proportionally more than before as this would motivate me to continue to achieve my goal. I watched videos on music theory and how to properly finger different notes, as well as how to practice efficiently.

Section 2: Applying Skills

Learning Goal Approaches to Learning Skills:

Research was the biggest factor in how I approached to learn more about being able to learn the piano to a mediocre level in a short time. I went through countless sites about learning to play the piano, only to find few that could actually benefit me. If I had not gone through all that research I would have been stuck, probably leading to a sense of failure and wanting to give up and switch projects. Only through research was I able to effectively be able to learn something that was otherwise up to me to do in my own little free-time.

Product Goal Approaches to Learning Skills:

Having the ability to reflect upon myself while doing this project was one of the most important parts, due to my reflection only providing aid onto my own mistakes, so that I could improve on them and fix them, instead of doing nothing, only to lead to failure and no real achievement gained. Having reflected so much during this project has led me to reflect onto more than just how I take tasks apart so that I can understand them, but how I see myself as an individual in society, and what I can do to improve not only myself, but others too.

Section 3: Reflecting

Product:

- Two-hand pedaled playing
- Common note marks
- Basic difficult songs
- Understanding basic music theory

Product Success Criteria:

I was able to successfully complete each area of my criteria list to a reasonable ability, to the point that my overall goal was indeed met.

Impact of Product:

The impact of my product was minimal, to the community at least. But to me, the project has had an everlasting effect that will forever change how I see my current and future goals, as well as how I can help in others creating their dream goals come true. If I can take full advantage of my success, I can allow others to take advantage of it too, allowing for them to jumpstart their own futures and passions.

Product Feedback:

The only feedback I had gotten were from close friends and family who only found out about by new mini talent from this project. They were pleased, and did enjoy the very short subpar performances that I only did so that I could write for this section of the project. If I had tried to gain a larger audience, I believe the overall idea would be that it was impressive what I could do in just a few months, but would ask questions like what will you use this for? Or is it even important?

Conclusion:

To conclude, this journey was one of the most educational experienced I have ever gone through, as it was intriguing, enticing, and most of all, fun. This project allowed me to dive deeper into something that I had planned to, but hadn't marked a date for. I will forever see this as a moment of importance that changed forever how I put my mind to things and how I see other people's objectives. No longer will I not push for something that catches my eyes, as it could possibly be something that will end up helping the future of not just me, but everyone.