Plain Language Statement

Faculty of Fine Arts and Music

Project:
Teaching and Learning Adaptive Musical Instruments

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Introduction

Thank you for your interest having your child participate in this research project as part of Melbourne Youth Orchestra's Adaptive Music Bridging Program. The following few pages will provide you and your child with further information about the project, so that you can decide if they would like to take part in this research.

Please take the time to read this information carefully. You may ask questions about anything you don't understand or want to know more about.

Your child's participation is voluntary. If they don't wish to take part, they don't have to. If they begin participating, they can also stop at any time.

What is this research about?

There is currently limited information available about the best ways to support students with disability to learn a musical instrument and participate in music ensembles, especially if they require a specially designed or modified instrument.

In order to better support music students with disability and learn more about their needs the University of Melbourne is teaming up with Melbourne Youth Orchestras to host an Adaptive Music Bridging Program. The Bridging Program is designed to help students with disability choose or adapt a musical instrument that is appropriate to their needs, and then provide them with specialised tuition to support their learning. Our research will be used to continue improving the services we offer students with disability in the Bridging Program, and to provide information about how best to support music students with disability more broadly. The results of this research will be published in academic publications and seminars, as well as in articles and presentations aimed at music teachers and therapists and people with disability and their parents.

What will my child be asked to do?

Should your child agree to participate we will invite you to accompany them to an initial assessment where we will discuss your child's musical preferences and access requirements in order to find an instrument that meets their needs. This might be a standard instrument with minor adaptations or additional stands or braces, a commercially available adaptive instrument, or one designed by our team especially for your child. Families will be expected to purchase their own instruments and associated equipment. Instrument prices vary, however in most cases the costs will be similar to purchasing a standard musical instrument. If our team needs to design bespoke instruments or equipment for your child, that equipment will be provided free, or for the cost of component parts.

Once your child has chosen and obtained their instrument, they will be invited to take part in a series of small group lessons to learn instrument technique, music literacy, music appreciation and ensemble skills. Lessons will take place on Saturday mornings and consist of one hour sessions, increasing to 1.5 hours as your child progress with a short break halfway through the session (if sessions of this length would be too tiring for your child, please let us know and we can develop a specialised program).

The number of lessons will depend on the needs of each student. Some may just need initial support to design appropriate stands or braces before returning to lessons at school or in a mainstream setting, while others may benefit from ongoing learning support. At the end of the program students will be supported to find ongoing tuition in the instrument of their choice, and if they wish, to prepare an audition for an ensemble within the Melbourne Youth Orchestra.

In order for us to learn more about the best methods for supporting instrumental music students with disability, we will video record the initial assessment interview, the music lessons and related Bridging Program activities such as concerts. Some of these videos will also be transcribed using Zoom audio transcription. The last 10 minutes of each lesson will involve a group discussion reflecting on the lesson, and what students would like to see in future lessons.

What are the possible benefits?

Students participating in this study will receive a detailed assessment of the types of instruments that would meet their musical preferences and access needs. They will also get a chance to try out a range of commercially available adaptive instruments before deciding which one to learn. All music lessons conducted as part of this pilot study will also be subsidised.

As well as providing music tuition to participants, this study will also benefit future music students with disability, by enabling a better understanding of their learning needs and the strengths and weaknesses of currently available adaptive music technology.

What are the possible risks?

Playing music is a physical activity and can sometimes cause minor injuries, like blistered fingers or sore muscles, however we will work with you and your child to ensure that the instrument they choose is suitable to their needs and does not further exacerbate any disability or medical condition.

There is also a small risk that participants will experience minor distress, as a result of frustration with learn new skills, or from discussion of previous experiences of inaccessible music education. However, our team members are experienced with interacting with children with a wide range of disabilities and will work with you to ensure that the Adaptive Music Bridging Program provides a safe space for all its members.

The videos created during this study will be used in academic presentations. If you would prefer that your child's face be blurred in these presentations, you may indicate this on the consent form. Your child's name will not be mentioned in the research, however as there are only a small number of people in Australia learning adaptive musical instruments, it is possible that people still may be able to identify them through publications and presentations.

Does my child have to take part?

No. Participation is completely voluntary. Your child is able to withdraw at any time, and can miss scheduled weekly rehearsals (although we ask that you notify us, if possible, when they'll be away). However, group recordings of lessons cannot be withdrawn once they have been collected.

Will I hear about the results of this project?

We will send you a summary of the findings in a written form. Alternatively, if you have a particular request about a more accessible format for the information, you can let the research team know.

What will happen to information about my child?

Data from this project will be stored on a password secured file on the University of Melbourne's server that will only be accessible by members of this research team. In keeping with the University of Melbourne's Data. We will keep recordings for 15 years after your child turns 18. We are also planning more research on this topic, and so we would like to have the option to include recordings and interviews in any relevant future research. If further research takes place, we will keep your interview for a further 5 years after any publications or conferences/seminars take place. The consent form provides an opportunity for you to consent to your interview data being used in future projects.

Who is funding this project?

This project is funded by an Australia Research Council Industry Fellowship (IE240100007),

Where can I get further information?

If you would like more information about the project, please contact the researcher:
Dr Anthea Skinner anthea.skinner@unimelb.edu.au

Who can I contact if I have any concerns about the project?

This project has human research ethics approval from The University of Melbourne 36684. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this research project, which you do not wish to discuss with the research team, you should contact the Research Integrity Administrator, Office of Research Ethics and Integrity, University of Melbourne, VIC 3010. Tel: +61 3 8344 1376 or Email: research-integrity@unimelb.edu.au. All complaints will be treated confidentially. In any correspondence please provide the name of the research team and/or the name or ethics ID number of the research project.