

Journal of Music, Health, and Wellbeing

Journal Homepage: www.musichealthandwellbeing.co.uk



Professional music training in times of COVID-19: The impact of distance education on teaching methods and wellbeing at work

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Article Info.

Date Submitted:
August 2020

Date Accepted:
March 2021

Date Published:
October 2021

Abstract

The COVID-19 crisis has heavily impacted the world of higher education. Universities and colleges around the world have had to rethink and redesign their teaching methods. Teachers have had to mobilise the digital tools at their disposal to pursue their training tasks. In this distance education context, unusual in Swiss and French higher music education institutions (conservatories, colleges of music, universities) until March of 2020, teachers and their students developed new modalities of pedagogical relationship adapted to the unprecedented circumstances. Our contribution presents a first assessment of this totally unforeseen period of distance education, looking at how it was seen by instrumental and vocal teachers, what advantages they perceived, and what difficulties they encountered, whether they observed changes in their pedagogy, and finally, what they noticed in terms of the impact of the distance education period on their wellbeing at work.

Our paper is based on data collected through an online survey, responded to by N=56 higher education music teachers in France and Switzerland at the end of the lockdown period, as well as semi-structured interviews conducted with a sub-sample of three volunteers.

Keywords: Music pedagogy, pedagogical continuity, distance learning, wellbeing

1. A pre and current COVID-19 context of instrumental music tuition in France and Switzerland

The COVID-19 health crisis led to a lockdown affecting millions of people in Europe and around the world. The world of education has not been spared, and schools and universities – including in higher musical education – have had to rethink their teaching methods. Pedagogical continuity and distance education, two terms that describe the same reality, became the watchwords during the first movement restrictions (i.e., lockdown). Although the world of higher music education in Switzerland and France had remained hardly affected by digitalisation until March 2020, the COVID-19 health crisis and the need to ensure pedagogical continuity propelled Swiss and French conservatories and music universities into the digital age in the space of just a few days.

This paper presents some of the results of a survey conducted in two Swiss and French institutions of higher music education at the end of the first period of restrictions in June 2020. It will

explore the way this first contact with distance education was seen by instrumental and vocal teachers, the advantages and disadvantages that they perceived, the difficulties that they encountered, the impact on their pedagogy that they noticed, and finally, the way in which they described their wellbeing at work. A brief review of the literature on distance education and pedagogical continuity will be presented first. This review is not exhaustive, given the large number of studies on distance education. Instead, it will place its focus on higher music education. Furthermore, the concept of wellbeing, more specifically wellbeing at work in the context of music education will be addressed. A selection of both quantitative and qualitative results will then be presented. The article will conclude with some thoughts on the scope, implications for practice, and limitations of our study.

2. Literature review and specifics

2.1 Distance education – what is it?

The element common to all definitions of ‘distance education’ is the explicit mention of the physical or geographical distance between the teacher and the learner, who do not share the same space, at least for part of the duration of training. Some definitions stop at this characteristic, such as the definition advocated by the Office québécois de la langue française¹: “A mode of teaching that allows for training to be received at home or in the workplace.” However, definitions limited to just the notion of an unshared space seem to lack specificity. Other elements need to be taken into account, e.g., simultaneous or delayed communication between the learner and the teacher; mediation of distance through technology; the requirement for education to be planned, formal and offered by an accredited institution. The following definition, which includes all of these elements, will be retained for this paper: “Teaching and planned learning in which the teaching normally occurs in a different place from learning, requiring communication through technologies, as well as special institutional organization” (Moore et Kearsley, 2012, cited in Moore, 2013, p. XV).

Key reports on distance education dating from the beginning of the 20th century (CNED², 2000; NCES³, 2004; OECD⁴, 2005) agree that distance learning comes with both advantages and disadvantages, in terms of education and training as such, but also of institutional management and policies. Some advantages are common to all forms of distance learning, e.g., flexibility in planning, adapting to rhythms and levels of learners, facilitating access to information, allowing learners to select which courses to follow, choosing whether or not to synchronise time and place, providing for a variety of media, a familiar working environment, individualisation of the work rhythm, greater autonomy on the part of the learners, to name but a few. The same is true for the disadvantages: less flexibility in interaction with learners, lower levels of control regarding pedagogical follow-up, lack of human contact, fostering procrastination, less commitment to work and motivation, loss of temporal reference points (Garrot, Psillaki, & Rocchia, 2009; Romiszowski, 2003; Raby, Karsenti, Meunier, & Villeneuve, 2011; Terrien, 2010, 2018).

More specific research studied the effectiveness of distance learning (Albero, 2004; Clark, 2009; Fenouillet & Dero, 2006; Raby et al., 2011). Other research has focused on the artefacts used, such as software or tutorials (Romiszowski, 2003; Schumacher, 2018; Terrien, 2010, 2018). It has been shown that the pedagogical efficiency of teachers depends not so much on the characteristics of the materials, tools, software or devices used, but on the way these tools are integrated to transmit content (DeRouin, Fritzsche, & Salas, 2004; Güsewell, Coen, Paukovics, & Cartulano, 2018; Ponnuswamy & Manohar, 2016; Terrien, 2018). A body of work deals with the collaborative or cooperative dimension that distance education can induce (Devauchelle, 2014; Giovannini-Cartulano, Coen, Güsewell, & Paukovics, 2018; Paukovics, Coen, Güsewell, & Giovannini-Cartulano, 2019). Research conducted by Garrot, Psillaki, and Rocchia (2009) underscores the importance of following-up on learning, as a way of supporting the learner’s effort and commitment, particularly by establishing and developing a sense of belonging to a

¹ http://gdt.oqlf.gouv.qc.ca/ficheOqlf.aspx?Id_Fiche=1299441

² Centre national d'enseignement à distance (France).

³ National Center for Education Statistic (U.S.A.).

⁴ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

community despite the distance (Ellis, Oldridge, & Vasconcelos, 2004; Fontainha & Gannon-Leary, 2007; Gibson & Manuel, 2003; Kirkup, 2002). The need to build and maintain ongoing interactions that allow for a shared understanding as well as common values is highlighted as well (Amin & Roberts, 2006; Gibson & Manuel, 2003).

2.2 What about distance education in higher music teaching?

Digital technologies are now firmly established in music education programmes, and there is abundant literature on the use of general ICT tools, e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones, digital cameras, in this context. However, there is scant research or literature on distance education as a method of education “where teacher and learner are physically separated” (Kentnor, 2015) and where a combination of technologies are employed to bridge the gap, especially with regard to the tertiary or professionalising context. Moreover, extant publications mainly concern the training of future music teachers for the school system, and seldom the training of instrumentalists or singers.

In the first decade of the 2000s, some institutions started offering degree programmes in music education with elements of distance-learning combined with on-campus courses (Sherbon & Kish, 2005). In 2010 Groulx and Hernly identified and studied the nine online (i.e., 80% or more of the programme) graduate music education programmes accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music in the United States at the time. They were able to show that these online programs offered significant benefits in terms of convenience for students, but entailed reduced interpersonal interactions and limited curricular options. Koutsoupidou (2015) examined distance learning as applied to adult music and music education programmes from both the instructors’ and the learners’ perspectives. Online music education was described as an inclusive and flexible form of instruction, very well suited to theoretical courses, but poorly adapted to instrumental lessons, due to practical issues and the limitations of technical equipment. According to Koutsoupidou (2015), further technological progress would be required, e.g., higher internet speeds, to make distance learning a real alternative to face-to-face instrumental and vocal teaching, as would better constructed virtual environments that diminish the socio-psychological gaps that distance learning may entail.

2.3 Wellbeing

There is no consensus around a single definition of ‘wellbeing’, but there is general agreement that, at a minimum, it includes the presence of positive emotions and moods (e.g., contentment, happiness), the absence of negative emotions (e.g., depression, anxiety), satisfaction with life, fulfilment and positive functioning. In simple terms, wellbeing can be described as judging life positively and feeling good. Research on wellbeing can be subdivided into two traditions (Ryan, Huta, & Deci, 2008). In the hedonistic tradition, the focus is on happiness, generally defined by life satisfaction, the presence of positive and the absence of negative affect (subjective wellbeing; Diener, 1984) concerning different life domains (e.g., work, family, leisure, health). In the eudaimonic tradition, the focus is on living one’s life in a deeply satisfying way and countering existential challenges in daily life (psychological wellbeing) concerning aspects like autonomy, engagement, mastery, meaning, optimism, and relationships (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Ryff & Singer, 2008).

Different multidimensional models of wellbeing have been proposed over the years. Ryff (1989) analysed various approaches to happiness in different subfields of psychology and introduced a six-dimensional model of wellbeing comprising the following factors: self-acceptance, environmental mastery, autonomy, positive relations with others, personal growth, and purpose in life. The self-determination theory (SDT) formulated by Ryan and Deci (2000) came to the conclusion that there are three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence and relatedness. When these needs are satisfied, they foster wellbeing. In a positive psychological context, Seligman’s (2002) authentic happiness model distinguishes three types of life that together make up a ‘good life’: a pleasant life, an engaged life and a meaningful life. Later, Seligman (2011) revised his early model of happiness and, in a new wellbeing theory, proposed five pillars of human flourishing: Positive emotions, Engagement, positive

Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment (PERMA as an acronym). According to Seligman (2011), each of these five elements contributes to wellbeing and is pursued for its own sake. High PERMA is considered to be a state of optimal wellbeing termed ‘flourishing’ (Seligman, 2011).

2.4 Music teacher wellbeing

Little is known about music teacher wellbeing, and about the conditions and factors that impact it, either positively or negatively. Research on this topic mainly concerns pre-service or early-career school music (and not instrumental or vocal) teachers. According to Ballantyne and Zhukov (2017), the development of a productive and realistic professional identity is crucial. Teachers whose expectations of teaching do not match up with the realities of their professional life are likely to experience stress, lower self-efficacy, and greater emotional exhaustion. A productive identity evolves over the course of lifetime, as a result of life challenges, stressors and conflicts, and allows for teacher agency (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Kroger, 2015). It positively affects self-concept and contributes to teacher wellbeing (Sivanathan, Arnold, Turner, & Barling, 2004). Other predictors of music teacher wellbeing mentioned in the literature are relatedness, the feeling of competence (Yoo & Yoo, 2019), and own artistic practice (Pellegrino, 2011).

A study by Ascenso, Williamon, and Perkins (2016) which took the PERMA model as a starting point to identify enhancers and challenges for musicians’ wellbeing is worth mentioning, although their sample does not include instrumental or vocal teachers. It appeared from the analysis of in-depth interviews conducted with six professional musicians that “positive emotions seemed to be highly related to musical moments, while varying repertoire and experiencing different ensembles appeared as central sources of engagement. Meaning emerged as linked to the shared nature of music-making, and accomplishment was built on internal goals and oneness in performance with others” (p. 65). As the authors write, a major finding of their study is the role of ‘meaning’, through the construction of a solid sense of self, supporting the possibility that being ‘psychologically well’ as a musician is sustained primarily through the eudaimonic route.

2.5 Aims of the research

As already mentioned, the aim of this study was to examine how the unexpected distance education period in the spring of 2020 was experienced by Swiss and French instrumental and vocal teachers, what advantages they perceived and what difficulties they encountered, whether they observed changes in their pedagogy, and finally, whether they noticed an impact on their wellbeing at work. In the light of our brief literature review on distance education in the field of music and on the factors that appear to contribute to musicians’ wellbeing, we have formulated two hypotheses. First, as the transition from face-to-face to distance education was made almost without preparation, in the space of only a few days, and since the period of restrictions did not last longer than 8 to 10 weeks, questioning and evolution of instrumental and vocal teachers’ pedagogical approaches and practices are predicted, but not any in-depth modifications. Secondly, we expect the identity stakes linked to this questioning, as well as the loss of meaning stemming from the impossibility of performing on stage, to negatively impact instrumental and vocal teachers’ wellbeing at work.

3. Method

3.1 Overview

A survey created using the software *Sphinx iQ 2* was sent to the entire teaching staff of the Conservatoire national supérieur de musique et de danse Paris (CNSMDP, France) and the University of Music Vaud Valais Fribourg (HEMU, Switzerland) at the beginning of the gradual easing of lockdown (end of May 2020) that followed the period of distance education in both institutions (March to mid-May 2020). This survey (duration 10-15 minutes) consisted of closed and open-ended questions and covered some socio-demographic indicators (subject(s) and level(s) taught, institution(s), age, gender), problems encountered, the digital tools and specific modalities of implementing distance education/pedagogical continuity used by teachers, assistance requested/received, perceived advantages and disadvantages, and finally, the impact on pedagogy. The questionnaire was anonymous, but respondents were given the

option of providing an e-mail address if they agreed to be contacted for a follow-up interview. These semi-structured interviews, lasting 30 to 45 minutes, focused on teachers' wellbeing at work during the distance learning period. In terms of input, respondents were asked to provide a rating of their subjective level of wellbeing, and then to comment on it. The rest of the interview focused on factors (personal, institutional, technological, etc.) that had contributed to their wellbeing at work.

3.2 Participants

A total of 56 instrumental and vocal teachers (40 men and 16 women) took part in the survey: 11 from CNSMDP, 43 from HEMU, and two who described their place of work as 'other institution'. The average age of these participants is relatively high, with 49 (71.4%) of them reporting to be 50 years of age or older, 13 (23.2%) between 40 and 49 years of age, and only three (5.4%) under 40 years of age. Of the 25 teachers who indicated at the end of the survey that they would be willing to participate in an in-depth exchange on the subject, two men (P1, P2) and one woman (P3) were interviewed during the summer holidays.

3.3 Data analysis

The data collected through the questionnaire were exported to Excel and then imported into SPSS (Version 24). Quantitative variables were cleaned and recoded. Only descriptive statistics (i.e., frequencies for categorical variables, mode or median for ordinal variables, means and standard deviations for interval variables) were calculated. Concerning the responses to the open-ended questions, a categorical content analysis of a thematic type (Dany, 2016) was carried out.

Interviews (conducted and recorded using Zoom) were transcribed in full and then anonymised. A directed content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) was carried out (categories derived both from the PERMA model and from emerging significant meaning/thematic units).

4. Results

4.1 Implementation of distance education

When asked how distance education was implemented, 53 of the 56 teachers (94%) indicated that they had offered 'face-to-face' courses online (i.e., they tried to replicate almost 'identically' what they were used to doing). In addition, 47 (83%) and 42 (75%) indicated that they had commented, respectively, on video and audio recordings made and sent by students. No less than 32 (57%) tried to set up online group lessons, and 30 (53%) made video recordings themselves to illustrate or reinforce an aspect seen in class. Finally, nine (16%) tried alternative pedagogical methods: written material sent by email (e.g., exercises, scores, copies of diagrams for breathing exercises); use of email or WhatsApp to send links to accompaniments available online or to 'good versions' to listen to on YouTube or Spotify; telephone calls to provide feedback; live lessons by telephone to enable accompanying the student on the piano, to work on transposition, reductions or sight-reading.

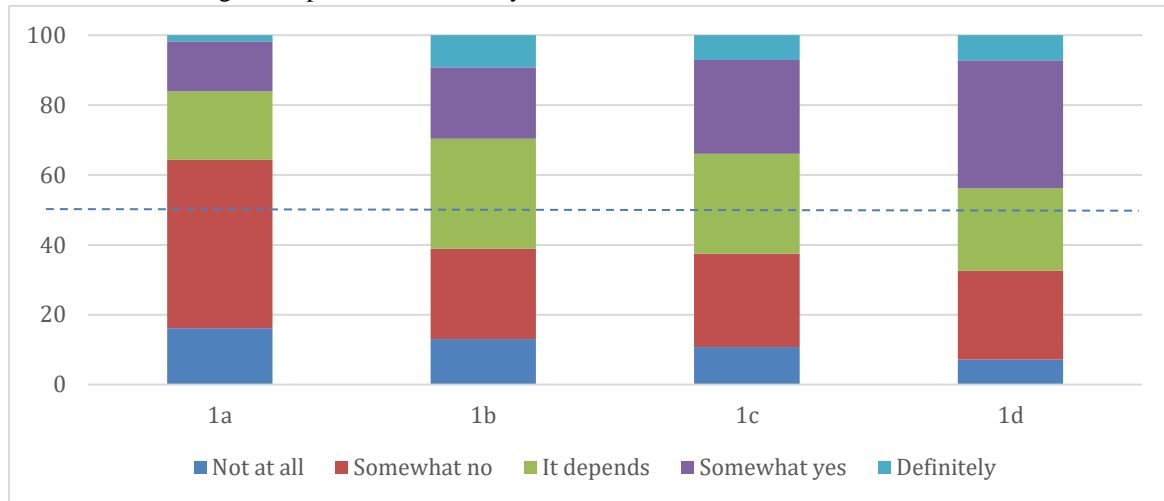
Regarding the platforms used for distance learning, Zoom, used by 42 respondents (75%), WhatsApp (69%), Skype (62%), and FaceTime (26%) clearly headed the list. Other tools such as Skype Enterprise, RENAvision, Adobe Connect, Microsoft Teams, Cisco Webex Meeting or Blackboard Collaborate were only mentioned anecdotally by one or two subjects and therefore appear to be less popular.

4.2 Difficulties, advantages, disadvantages and efficiency of distance education

When asked if they had encountered any difficulties in implementing distance education, the majority (64.3%) of respondents indicated 'not at all' or 'somewhat no' (Fig. 1). The difficulties mentioned mostly concern connectivity problems, unsatisfactory network/wifi, inadequate or missing tools (computers, tablets, software), very poor sound quality, stress during the first week, the fact that the new teaching system was very time-consuming to get up and running, and the difficulty of reconciling family life and work.

As to the question of whether distance education had been advantageous or disadvantageous, and whether it had led to the development of a more efficient pedagogy, no clear trend emerges: in both cases, the median is three (i.e., ‘it depends’), and the ‘somewhat no’ and ‘somewhat yes’ response choices are very evenly represented (20.4-26.8%). It seems, therefore, that what may be an advantage for some is a disadvantage for others, and that, overall, the views on the distance learning period are nuanced. Finally, 43.8% of respondents considered that they had developed a more efficient pedagogy during the two months of distance education.

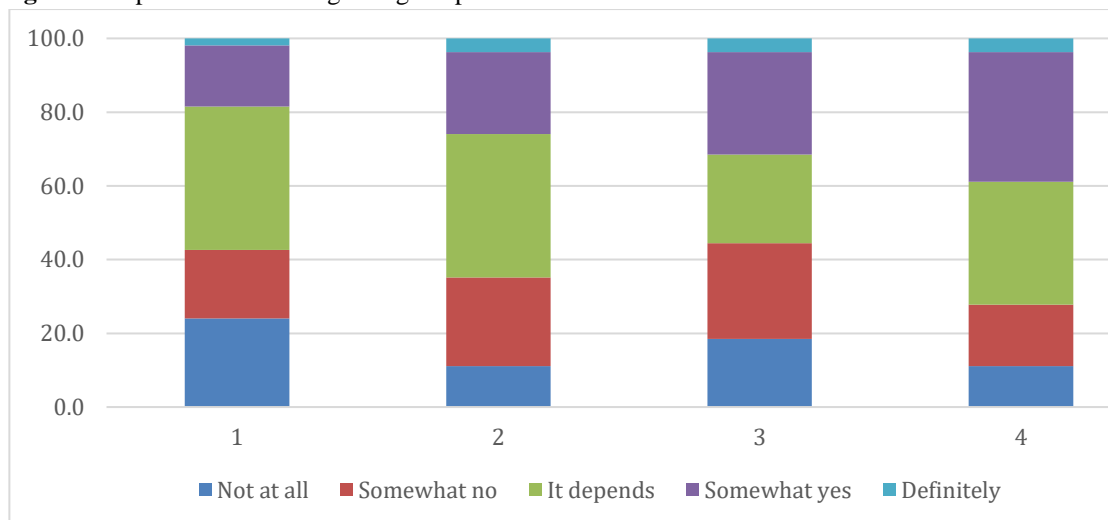
Fig.1. Distribution of responses to general questions concerning the difficulties, advantages, disadvantages and perceived efficiency of distance education.



Note. *N* = 56. Y-axis: % of respondents. Dotted line: median. 1a. Have you encountered any difficulties in implementing instructional continuity or distance education? 1b. Have you found continuity of instruction or distance education to be an advantage? 1c. Have you experienced a disadvantage in implementing instructional continuity or distance education? 1d. Do you feel that you have developed a more efficient pedagogy?

A closer look at the advantages and disadvantages reported by teachers reveals that 38.9% feel that distance education facilitates feedback on elements of the preceding class (‘definitely’ and ‘somewhat yes’), 31.5% feel that it facilitates the internal organisation of the course, 25.9% feel that it facilitates the clarification of concepts, and only 18.6% feel that it facilitates the explanation of a skill (Figure 2).

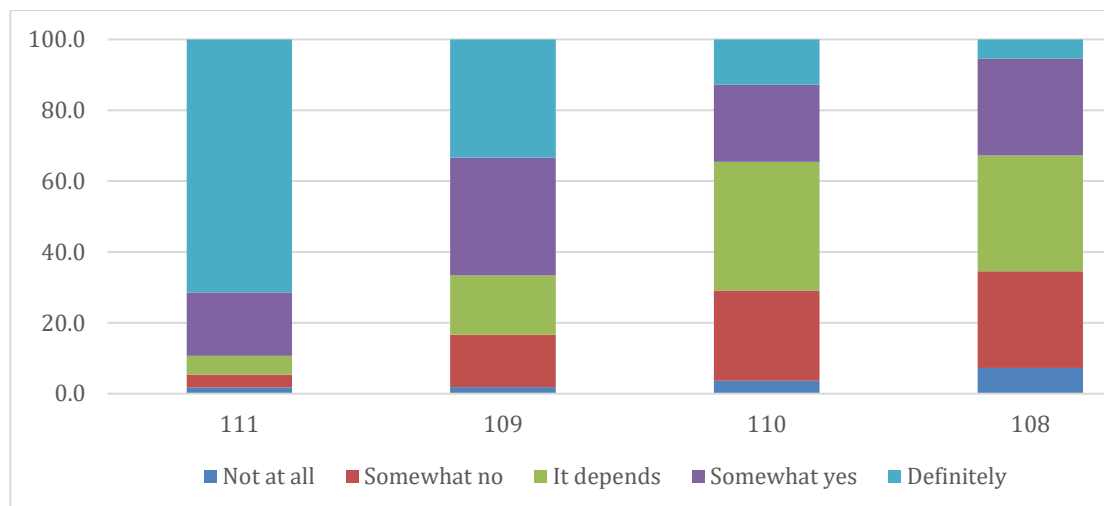
Fig. 2. Responses to items regarding the perceived benefits of distance education



Note. *N* = 56. Y-axis: % of respondents. Q1. Facilitates the explanation of a skill. Q2. Facilitates clarification of concepts. Q3. Facilitates the internal organisation of the lessons. Q4. Facilitates feedback on elements of the preceding class.

In terms of difficulties (Fig. 3), 89% of teachers reported having encountered difficulties in working with their students on sound quality ('quite' and 'somewhat'), and 66.6% mention difficulties related to the transmission by imitation or demonstration of gestures. The description of gestures and the transmission of knowledge seem to have been less of a problem for them (34.5 and 32.8%, respectively). Therefore, although distance learning allows for exchanges and explanations of fairly high quality, the non-verbal part of instrumental or vocal instruction – listening, fine analysis of sound quality, demonstration, observation, or accompaniment of instrumental gestures or posture – is difficult to transmit over distance using a computer, tablet or smartphone.

Fig. 3. Responses to items concerning the perceived drawbacks of distance education



Note. N = 56. Y-axis: % of respondents. Q111. Difficulties working on sound quality. Q109. Difficulties working on gesture. Q110. Difficulties describing a gesture. Q108. Difficulties in transmitting knowledge and know-how.

In the open-ended comments section, subjects addressed elements not included in the closed questions and that seem noteworthy. Raised in terms of advantages were: first, having the means to preserve the relationship, to continue instrumental or vocal work already begun and to provide a framework to the students; second, having the means to motivate students and at the same time provide for the development of their autonomy. Some teachers saw in a very positive light the need to “find solutions”, “develop new ways of working”, and take “a different point of view on their teaching”. According to them, “being inventive was meaningful” and the period was “rewarding inasmuch as certain basics were reviewed”. Finally, some personal comfort — less travel, more flexibility in scheduling — and “greater availability on both sides” were noted. Some disadvantages often noted were the inability to play together and the inability to accompany the students. Moreover, teachers also had to face a high workload of preparation for classes, the lack of motivation of some students and some organisational difficulties (e.g., time zone differences with students returning to Asia or America, family logistics).

4.3 Impact of distance education on pedagogy

Our starting hypothesis was that distance education or pedagogical continuity would have an impact on teaching and induce changes in the pedagogical approaches and practices of instrument and vocal teachers. We can now look at how it holds up against teachers' responses.

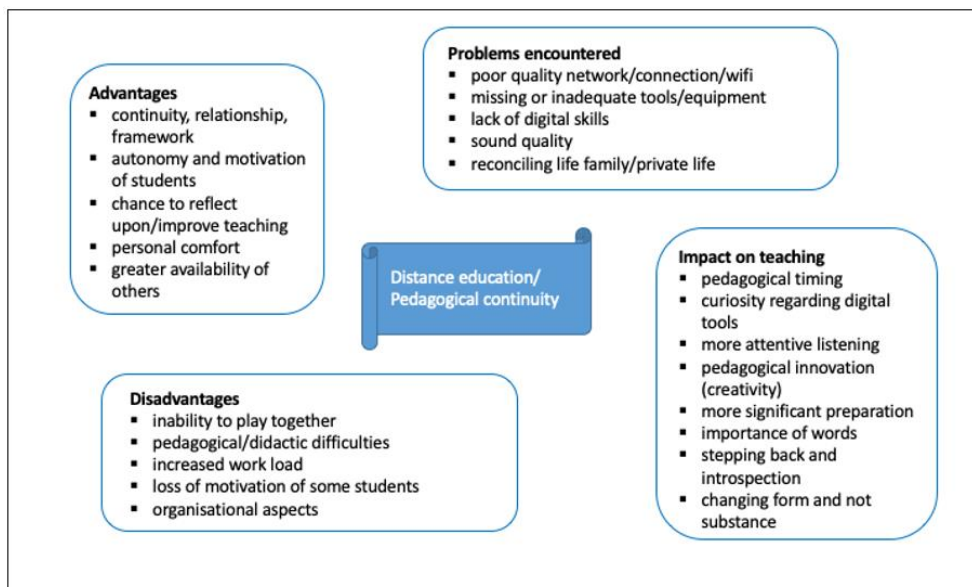
Fig. 4. Means and standard deviations of items concerning the impact of distance education and changes induced by distance education.

Impacts of pedagogical continuity or distance education on:	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Changes to your pedagogy:	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
91. Meeting learning goals	1.43	0.57	114. Changes in class preparations	3.20	1.23
92. Education quality	1.52	0.54	115. Greater depth of didactic reflection	3.30	1.04
93. Student motivation	1.82	0.58	116. Personal reflexion	3.11	1.07
94. Student engagement/ participation (proactivity)	1.91	0.72	117. More targeted remarks to students	3.12	1.21
95. Teacher-student relationship quality	1.98	0.52			

Note. N = 56. Q91-95: three-level Likert scale (1 = worse to 3 = better). Q114-117: five-level Likert scale (1 = not at all to 5 = definitely).

Analysis of the closed questions on these two aspects (Fig. 4) shows that distance education has had a negative impact on the quality of education and on the possibility of achieving learning goals. Indeed, the means for these two items ($M = 1.42$ and 1.52 , respectively) are clearly below the midpoint of the scale (2 = unchanged). Student motivation ($M = 1.82$), student engagement and participation ($M = 1.91$), as well as the quality of the relationship between faculty and students ($M = 1.98$) appear to have been less affected, but still negatively so. It should be noted that the difference between the means for items concerning the quality of teaching (Q. 92) and student motivation (Q. 93) is significant ($t(55) = 3.605$, $p = 0.001$). Concerning possible pedagogical changes, all means are above the midpoint of the scale (3 = ‘it depends’). Hence, some respondents felt that their course preparation had changed, that their didactic thinking had deepened and that their ability to provide targeted feedback to students had been stimulated. No significant differences were found among the averages of these four items.

Fig. 5. Content analysis: emerging themes



In addition to answering the short (inevitably reduced and incomplete) list of questions, the teachers used the text fields to add further information that we will now develop in more detail, given that it relates to the main hypothesis of our research. Content analysis identified eight main themes relating to the impact on pedagogical continuity on instrumental and vocal teaching (Fig. 5). The first theme is changes to pedagogical timing: “I was led to think about adapting pedagogical timing with the students (varying the time between lessons with the highest levels) to respond to the natural, sometimes irregular,

rhythm of artistic work”. The second theme was [some] teachers developing curiosity and appetite for digital tools: “Today I want to experiment more with digital tools”. Third, there was more attentive listening, both for the teacher – “more intensive” – and for the student – “more demanding”. Third, and in connection with this, is the pedagogical interest in asking students to record and listen to or observe themselves: “We have also occasionally resorted to video exchanges, something I intend to keep afterwards, because the positive aspects of autoscoping are no longer to be proven, even if students rarely use them on their own”. Fourth, there was a need for creativity, flexibility and pedagogical innovation: “We need to reinvent ourselves”, and, “we had to think about other ways... which was a lesson in itself (for the teacher)”. Fifth, there were changes to preparation, often in terms of the extent: “Many technical elements must be anticipated because they cannot be as easily adjusted as in the classroom. Distance learning therefore implies greater class preparation and anticipation”. Sixth, there was an awareness of the importance of words: “Naturally, relying on the written word – sometimes orally by telephone or WhatsApp – is a change. Sometimes it’s valuable because you can take the time to choose the right words, to explain and advise more adequately”. Seventh, a certain amount of distance is necessary to be introspective: “Change certainly makes you see things in a different light and allows you to discover other aspects of your abilities as well as those of students”. Finally, it seems one repeatedly occurring observation – each time formulated a little differently – was unanimously accepted: Although the form has changed, there has been no change to the substance, e.g., “without modifying the pedagogy itself, the situation has changed in terms of means and tools, by offering something new, which I will very probably use in the future outside this imposed situation, particularly commented recordings”.

4.4 Impact of the distance learning period on the wellbeing of teachers

As an introductory question, the three teachers interviewed were asked to rate, on a ten-point scale, their wellbeing at work during the distance learning period. All three chose values around the mid-point of the scale — two indicated 5/10, the third 6/10 — stressing that their choice reflected a sense of ambiguity regarding the experience. P1 explains: “It was a difficult time for me. But I chose an average rating, because I find it still generated a lot of personal research on new tools to be invented and new ways of working. So, I’m divided”. P3 answers similarly in saying: “I’m going to put in the middle, i.e., five. Because there was this side that was really difficult, but it was counterbalanced by the... by a lot of positive things”. P2 started with two separate scores, then averaged them: “The first score looks at being distanced, at home, in front of your computer. And, it’s no secret, I score that very low. The second score balances it out because of all the new approaches and new paths, forcing us to move. And this is very good. So, with three, four for the first and eight for the second, that’s gives an overall score of about six”.

Although the discourse of the three interviewees contains few categorical references to their emotional experience, there are many allusions to a generally negative emotional state: difficult, disconcerting, destabilising, harmful, complicated to manage; uncertainty, negative feelings, feelings of abandonment or isolation; survival situation, anxiety-provoking; moments of great fragility. This lexical field reflects neither the presence of positive affect nor the absence of negative affect, which would otherwise characterise subjective wellbeing or the ‘good life’ (Diener, 1984). The organisational, pedagogical and technological difficulties already widely declared in the questionnaires recur in teacher discourse. However, they emphasise other aspects and associate them to their overall negative experience of the distance education period. First of all, there was a profound questioning of identity: “So it was a perfect moment for us all to put everything into question, our artistic life, which had been reduced to nothing. One’s teaching life too. That made it difficult, having to put everything into question” [P1]. The identity crisis was all the more profound because there was total uncertainty about the resumption of artistic activities: “I had a very bad experience as an artist. We have to get back on our feet. The rebound won’t be as usual. I have no certainty” [P2]. Second, there were health problems related to prolonged work and an unusual posture in front of the computer screen: “So I personally have never had any physical problems until now and I’m sure that this immobility, although I am trying to do sports and everything, has caused my current back problems. So I’ve completely locked my back and I have really bad problems there, I’ve never had that. So that’s a very strong sensation I have, because I really feel like my health has

been affected” [P3]. Finally, there was a feeling of a total loss of control over work schedules and work time: “No control over the number of hours or work schedules, since we were at home anyway, so there was more... that barrier between private life and work life stopped existing. I have the impression that I worked non-stop, I mean, that I didn’t stop from morning to night. And seven days a week. So I felt more tired than if I’d been out running” [P3].

The psychological or eudaimonic wellbeing (Ryff, 1989) of the three teachers seems to have been much less impacted than their subjective or hedonic wellbeing. Two of the five pillars of human flourishing (PERMA, Seligman, 2011) figured prominently in their discourse and provided an important counterbalance to the emotionally difficult aspects of the period of lockdown: the meaning of their work, on the one hand, and the quality of their relationships with students and colleagues, on the other. The fact that they had been “pushed around in [their] daily lives a little bit” [P3], that they had to “invent many new methods of functioning” [P1], and that they had to “move around, and even change paradigm” [P2] seemed to them to be very promising, even “meaningful” [P1]. They saw the pedagogical innovations and changes brought about by the sudden change to distance education as being the continuation of a long and ongoing shift: “The position of the teacher had already moved, and, well, it had to move again given the uncertainty and the distance. And despite everything, despite this constraint, it forced us to dig deeper and to push even further into this kind of context to see at what point something could be achieved” [P2]. Consequently, far from being perceived as an interruption, the period of “survival, where it was necessary and urgent to find alternatives” [P1], was seen as a very positive opportunity for professional and personal development.

The three professors talked a lot about the relationships they had tried to maintain with students despite the distance, especially with those who were very unsettled by the lockdown. According to them, the primary urgency was not to teach classes, but to nurture the relationship: “What was important and what we all did was to immediately try to keep in touch, so that we didn’t lose anyone” [P2]. Indeed, according to P3, some students at the CNSMDP were “frankly, uh... confined to nine rotten square metres, that’s it, and it was very difficult for them. So it was also a mission to keep them in pretty much the same condition morally and then just carry on”. She feels that she was able to “bring them something”, just like her colleague P2, who found that “the students quickly found the central core of the relationship” and so were not “too lost”. Paradoxically, just as the lockdown and social distancing contributed to strengthening the ties between teachers and students, they also fostered collaboration and exchange among teachers: “There was much more exchange between teachers than in normal times. That’s a fantastic thing. I think that being on lockdown has changed the way we’ll exchange ideas with other teachers in the future. We realised we had bonds that unite us. Think about it: when we’re living out our own lives, we run into one another, and we’re happy. But here, we really... we created a stronger bond than before. And besides, this way of making videos together, I think it has really bonded us. We’ll look back on this as a great moment of sharing. We’ll keep the ties, and this way of working together more” [P3].

5. Discussion

In higher music education, the COVID-19 health crisis required the implementation of pedagogical continuity based mainly on distance learning. When questioned about the difficulties of this period, vocal and instrument teachers mentioned connection problems, poor wifi/network, unsuitable or missing tools, very poor sound quality, high levels of stress and discomfort, the very time-consuming nature of implementing a new teaching system, and problems in reconciling family life and professional activity. Despite these objective difficulties, the period of pedagogical continuity was not viewed as solely detrimental. To the contrary, teachers noted many positive aspects, particularly on the pedagogical level, and interesting spill-overs for their teaching.

In-depth interviews conducted with three teachers to understand if and how the period of pedagogical continuity had impacted their wellbeing at work showed that levels of satisfaction and subjective wellbeing were not as high as that. This negative overall emotional experience seemed to be linked first and foremost to a profound questioning of identity. The fact that their artistic activity had

come to a clear halt and that the prospects for a rapid resumption were very uncertain strongly unbalanced the dual identity of musician-teacher. The literature on the subject shows that the articulation between the identity of a musician as performer and that of a music teacher takes time to build and is not automatic. Instrument and vocal teachers spent hours during their childhood and adolescence working on their instrument/voice; the social recognition of their talent and their above-average, even exceptional, performances contributed to their primary identity construction as “performing musicians” (Joliat, 2010). They therefore tend to study music with the goal of becoming singers, pianists, violinists, or trumpeters, not necessarily teachers (Roberts, 1991), and aspire to an identity as performers prior to considering – often much later – a second identity as teachers (Welch, Purves, Hargreaves, & Marshall, 2010). The teachers who took part in our study teach in departments that train high-level performers. They were recruited primarily on the basis of their careers as soloists, chamber musicians or orchestral musicians, which therefore constitute central elements of their professional identities, even as teachers. It is thus not surprising that the impossibility of expressing oneself on stage as a performer and artist is received badly. The negative emotional experience can furthermore be explained by health problems that have appeared as a result of the long hours spent in front of the computer screen. Lastly, there is the feeling of a total loss of control over schedules and working time. This last point reflects one of the six pillars of wellbeing mentioned in the model by Ryff (1989), i.e., environmental mastery.

Despite this generally negative emotional experience, the teachers describe the period of distance learning as one of psychological wellbeing. Two pillars of the ‘good life’ or of flourishing (PERMA model, Seligman, 2011) occupy a significant place in their discourse and their responses to the survey, respectively. Looking first at meaning: the total paradigm shift induced by the obligation to ensure optimal pedagogical continuity using the digital tools available to them has forced teachers to rethink their teaching methods, course materials, proposed repertoire, content, goals, accommodation of explanations and verbalisation, and rhythm and temporality of classes. The professional development that these pedagogical innovations have enabled was seen as stimulating and, above all, very satisfactory by almost all respondents. The second pillar of psychological wellbeing that recurs in most of the responses and accounts is positive relationships. Paradoxically, physical distance and isolation allowed for more frequent contact and closer ties, both with students and with fellow musicians and teachers, which clearly favoured the satisfaction and eudaimonic wellbeing of the respondents.

The results of the present study, which was conducted in two higher music education institutions, one in Switzerland and the other in France, with a small sample of participants, should be considered with all due caution, and there is of course no pretence that they are representative. It is worth recalling that, depending on the country, distance music education is more or less widely implemented and that the degree to which it is integrated into teaching practices depends on the institutional context and the interests of the teachers themselves. That being said, our data bring to the fore some of the challenges, but also the opportunities related to distance education in the field of vocational music training: the needs in terms of technological tools, the avenues for pedagogical development glimpsed during distance learning period in the spring of 2020, and the subjective experiences of teachers ensuring pedagogical continuity in the absence of preparation. But only time will tell if the experience is to have a long-term impact on music teaching at the two institutions concerned, on the professional identities of the teachers concerned, and/or on their mental health. In this sense, the present study is a starting point and will have to be followed by further surveys at the same institutions in order to enable the documentation of further evolutions (all the more so in the light of the duration of the pandemic, longer than anyone had imagined in the summer of 2020).

At this stage, it seems possible to draw two conclusions. First, and not at all new, the integration of new technologies in teaching is not without difficulty and is never self-evident. On the one hand, it depends on various contextual elements, e.g., the establishment (or otherwise) of an appropriate framework to support and involve the range of stakeholders, their initial levels of technological or digital literacy (Larose, Grenon, & Palm, 2004), their perceptions and age (Larose, Grenon, & Lafrance, 2002), and their familiarity with IT tools (Coen & Schumacher, 2006). On the other hand, it involves changes in

teachers' practices and profoundly affects their perceptions of learning, their methods of collaboration and assessment and their relationship to knowledge (Charlier & Peraya, 2003; Karsenti, Savoie-Zajc, & Larose, 2001). On this subject, Coen and Schumacher (2006) write that "the integration of ICT in the classroom today should be seen more as a means of reflecting on teaching-learning practices with a view to changing them than as a mere addition of teaching aids available to teachers" (p. 9). Our results are fully aligned with this statement. The second conclusion is related to professional training in music teaching. In the context of a potentially prolonged pandemic and given the nascent 'new normal', it is no longer optional to prepare future musician-teachers for a complex, uncertain and constantly changing world. It has become a necessity: a *sine qua non* for wellbeing at work.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank all the participants for their involvement. In addition, they would like to thank the institutions that supported this research: the University of Applied Sciences HES-SO, Switzerland; the University of Music Vaud Valais Fribourg, Switzerland; Aix-Marseille Université, France; the Conservatoire national supérieur de musique et de danse Paris, France.

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