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Classroom Management in Elementary Group Piano Ins

by

Angela Schmitt

B.M.E., Grand Valley State University, 2017

A thesis submitted to the
Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Colorado in partial fulfillment
of the requirement for the degree of

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Classroom Management in Elementary Group Piano Ins
Thesis title

Angela Schmitt
Written by

For a ___Master's___ Degree in ___Piano Performance and Pedagogy___

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find that both the content and the form meet acceptable presentation standards
of scholarly work in the above mentioned discipline.

Abstract

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Classroom Management in Elementary Group Piano Ins
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This thesis aims to bridge the gap between group piano instruction and classroom management strategies in general education and music education. Classroom management courses are not normally listed as degree requirements in piano pedagogy programs, neither is instruction on classroom management an in-depth component of most group piano pedagogy curricula. A teacher's influence on the growth and development of children is impactful, and when discipline is not executed correctly, can be harmful to children. Positive behavior management and positive psychology have been proven to be the roots of current best practices of behavior management. This document provides an overview of these management strategies, many practical approaches, and imaginary first and fifth class piano narratives that illustrate these strategies in action.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT IN ELEMENTARY GROUP PIANO INSTRUCTION

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Date: _____

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Schmitt, Angela (M.M., Piano Performance and Pedagogy, College of Music)

Classroom Management in Elementary Group Piano Instruction

Thesis directed by Dr. Alejandro Cremaschi

Abstract

This thesis aims to bridge the gap between group piano instruction and classroom management strategies in general education and music education. Classroom management courses are not normally listed as degree requirements in piano pedagogy programs, neither is instruction on classroom management an in-depth component of most group piano pedagogy curricula. A teacher's influence on the growth and development of children is impactful, and when discipline is not executed correctly, can be harmful to children. Positive behavior management and positive psychology have been proven to be the roots of current best practices of behavior management. This document provides an overview of these management strategies, many practical approaches, and imaginary first and fifth class piano narratives that illustrate these strategies in action.

Introduction

Classroom management courses are not normally listed as degree requirements in piano pedagogy programs, neither is instruction on classroom management an in-depth component of most group piano pedagogy curricula. Oftentimes, this means that group piano instructors first enter their classrooms with little experience in classroom management, and are not fully prepared to handle multiple children at once. This gap in training is reflected in the lack of literature on classroom management in texts specific to group piano instruction. Current literature does lightly address management, discipline, and behavior, but does not provide a holistic overview of the topic, nor does it present scenarios or examples of ways to deal with disruptions or misbehavior.

The role of teacher is important when working with groups of children. Teachers have a great deal of influence on learning, development, sense of self, and future success and growth. To set up students to succeed both in and out of the classroom, it is important to understand how to help them regulate their behavior, how to control the energy of the group, and how to set and enforce behavioral expectations while effectively delivering content. Failure to manage behavior in the classroom can lead to poor instruction, developmental barriers in students, and a great deal of teacher and student anxiety. As a certified public-school music educator and graduate student in piano performance and pedagogy, this is a topic of great interest to me. The goal of this document is to bridge the gap between studies on classroom discipline in the field of music education, and group piano instruction of children, as there is not much published research that links these two areas together.

This thesis provides an overview of classroom management strategies, as well as an imaginary narrative for the first day of an elementary group piano class. The strategies discussed in the body of the document are compiled in Appendix A. This overview presents music

education-specific research as a tool to inform the field of piano pedagogy in this area of teaching. As a starting point, the literature review that follows will discuss the importance of strong classroom management skills as a group music instructor, how early classroom experiences can affect the growth and development of children, and the importance of teaching social skills, emotional regulation, and problem solving through management.

Classroom management is defined as "the process by which teachers and schools create and maintain appropriate behavior of students in classroom settings" (Kratochwill et al., 2010). Managing student behavior, and more specifically, behavior of groups of children is imperative for the instructor to maintain an appropriate environment for delivering information to students. Without behavior management, there is a risk for distractions or barriers to come between the student and teacher in their learning process. Kratochwill et al. (2010) also states that classroom management:

- Establishes and sustains an orderly environment in the classroom.

- Increases meaningful academic learning and facilitates social and emotional growth.

- Decreases negative behaviors and increases time spent academically engaged.

The outcomes listed above are essential to student growth and success. Thus, it is concerning that new teachers still feel underprepared in classroom management skills when they enter the profession (Bergee, 2009), and, that there is limited in-depth literature on this topic for the training of group piano instructors.

History of Classroom Management

Classroom management approaches have changed drastically from corporal punishment in the 1800s to current approaches based in positive psychology. In *A review of classroom discipline in American schools* (Butchart & McEwan, 1998) the history of classroom discipline is examined in order to make a case for social constructivism over behaviorism as a management philosophy. Social constructivism is defined by VandenBos (2007, p. 863):

> [T]he school of thought that an individual's motivations and emotions are shaped predominantly by cultural training in modes of acting, feeling, and thinking, rather than being largely determined by biological influences.

Behaviorism is defined by VandenBos (2007, p. 111):

> An approach to psychology, formulated in 1913 by John B. Watson, based on the study of objective, observable facts rather than subjective, qualitative processes, such as feelings, motives, and consciousness. To make psychology a naturalistic science, Watson proposed to limit it to quantitative events, such as stimulus–response relationships, effects of conditioning, physiological processes, and a study of human and animal behavior, all of which can best be investigated through laboratory experiments that yield objective measures under controlled conditions. Historically, behaviorists held that mind was not a proper topic for scientific study since mental events are subjective and not independently verifiable. With its emphasis on activity as an adaptive function, behaviorism is seen as an outgrowth of functionalism.

Burchart and McEwan (1998) aim to begin a crucial dialogue about how discipline works, and to discuss the pitfalls of the mainstream practices that were current in 1998, when this

book was published. From corporal punishment in the 1800s, to the first educational reform, and the second educational reform fostering "soft" or "New England pedagogy," there is a common theme of authority and how to maintain it (Butchart & McEwan, 1998) . The biggest change we see over time is how to do this. Corporal punishment and earlier models of management include the use of fear to maintain authority via physical punishment. Perhaps the most common example would be a teacher striking a student on the knuckles with a ruler. This type of punishment is no longer used or permitted, as new research shows repeatedly the benefits of positive psychology and behavior reinforcement.

Currently, positive behavior reinforcement and positive psychology are the mainstream approaches of public education classroom management. The application and execution of these ideals by individual teachers and schools vary, but are derived from a few overarching principles that stem from research on working with groups of children and observing their growth and development. Backed by a number of research studies in psychology and education, Caldarella et al. (2017) states that, "positive behavior support is an evidence-based framework for preventing or eliminating challenging behaviors by teaching and reinforcing appropriate social skills" (p. 23).

While other group management tactics can involve conditioning behavior, extrinsic reward systems, and internalized shame, this approach is centered around positive reinforcement, social skills development and group work. The main elements of positive behavior reinforcement are "a) fostering students' positive relationships and interactions with peers and adults, b) defining and teaching clear behavioral expectations during instruction time, and c) providing students feedback on their use of appropriate social skills throughout the school day" (Benedict et. al, 2007, as cited in Caldarella, et al., 2017, p. 24). Closely related, Seligman (2009) argues

that happiness, well-being, and meaning should be taught in school systems not only to prevent depression in students, but because these things act "as an aid to better learning and more creative thinking" (page 4). By teaching emotional regulation through classroom management, we help students understand how to behave and create a safe space for them to make mistakes and continue to learn from them without judgement. This also makes delivering content to students easier, as the amount of misbehavior and disruption will inevitably lessen.

Group music instruction is the prime place for teaching social skills, as the content is often more emotive, and requires a collective effort. In this format, one student can affect the outcome of the group. Additionally, "music teachers in particular experience unique behavior challenges because of large class sizes, uncommon pacing requirements, and performance-based outcomes." (Caldarella et al., 2017, p. 23). For this reason, it is imperative that group music instructors of both public school and private group lessons receive high quality training in this area.

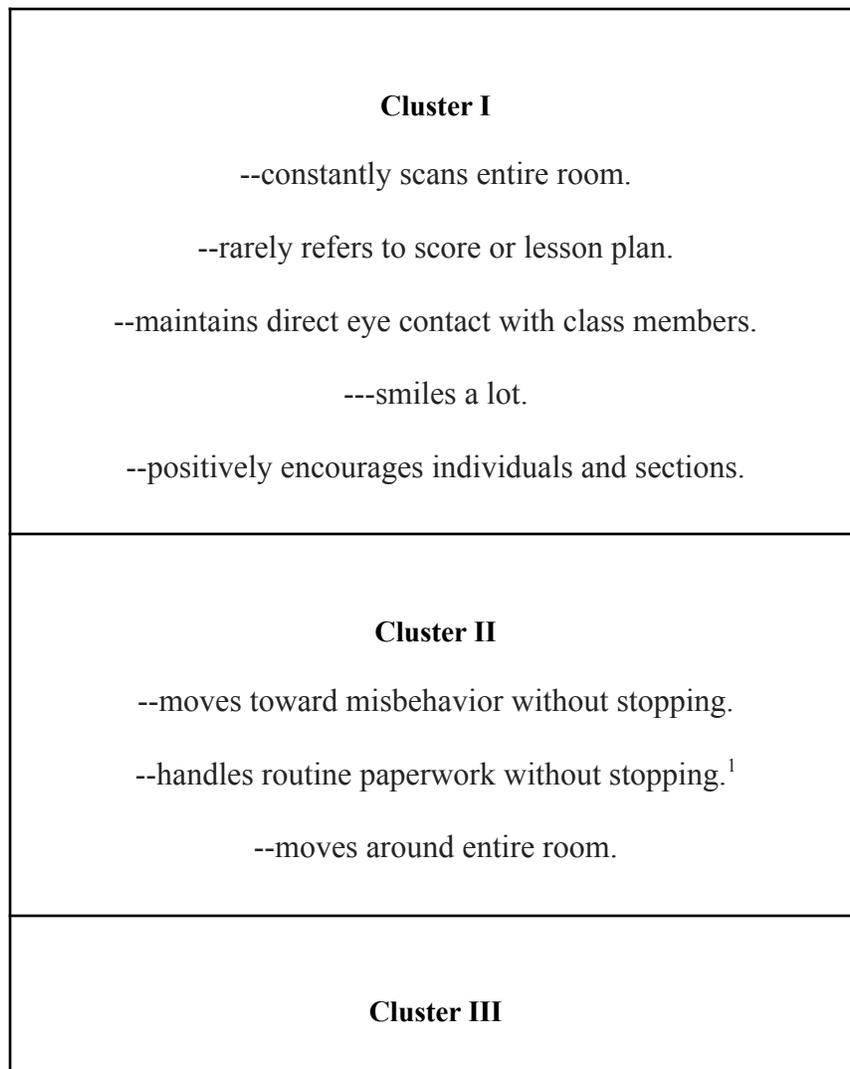**Training Teachers to Manage Behavior**

It is important to discuss how teachers are trained to manage their classes. Bergee (2009) examined the impact of direct and mediated experiences in training pre-service music instructors in classroom management. The study is valuable because, commonly, teacher preparation programs are not able to offer enough "real world" experiences in classroom management to develop those skills before employment (Bergee, 2009). The comparison between teaching classroom management skills via direct, live-simulated classroom behavior disruptions, and passive, visual, mediated scenarios showed a large difference in self-efficacy of teachers. Those who went through the simulated classroom management scenarios and practiced handling them

with coachings in between scored themselves higher in self-efficacy. Bergee (2009) also supplies

a tiered model of clear, explicit behaviors that aid in music classroom management. This model

is included in Figure 1 below. These clusters are not hierarchical, but are groupings of related

behaviors.

Figure 1

Effective Classroom Management Behaviors. The effective classroom manager (Bergee,

2009):

Cluster I

--constantly scans entire room.

--rarely refers to score or lesson plan.

--maintains direct eye contact with class members.

---smiles a lot.

--positively encourages individuals and sections.

Cluster II

--moves toward misbehavior without stopping.

--handles routine paperwork without stopping.[1]

--moves around entire room.

Cluster III

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[1] The phrase "without stopping" is intended to mean approaching or confronting misbehavior or routine paperwork without hesitation, second-guessing, or over-worrying.

--paces quickly.

--uses gesture during performance to communicate.

--uses verbal direction no more than necessary.

--keeps students on task.

In a collective case study, piano pedagogy researcher Pamela Pike (2013b) began to identify best practices for group piano instructors. She explains that there is a gap in training of group piano teachers, unless they pursue a pedagogy degree. Additionally, she notes a presence of anecdotal writing and a lack of empirical research in group piano instructor training texts. In her observations, she finds that clear instructions, comprehensive curriculum, carefully sequenced content, and high frequency of playing time are successful teaching practices. These findings mirror the ones presented in Bergee's article and many others. This type of research is a valuable advancement for group piano pedagogy students and teachers.

Common approaches suggested by Bergee and Pike include: clearly stated and communicated objectives, positive behavior supports, and detailed lesson planning and preparation. Pike's study does not delve too much into classroom management, nor does she discuss student misbehavior or strategies to address it. Still, from her research, we can begin to discern clear best practices of classroom management while recognizing this is an area for further research. In group piano teacher training, emulating the direct approach to teaching classroom management seen in Bergee's study would be effective. Providing simulated experiences, trials, and clear lists of actions to handle a variety of disruptions sets up group instructors for confidence, higher self-efficacy, self-control and patience to handle student behaviors in their classrooms.

The literature above highlights two important aspects. The first is that proper classroom management training and preparation is imperative for beginning group teachers. The second aspect is that positive behavioral reinforcement and positive psychology are the most beneficial approaches to classroom management, as they teach social skills and emotional regulation to children.

Negative Effects of Poor Classroom Management

A common error made by teachers is the passive, subconscious assumption that students have negative intentions in their misbehavior. Normally, children are unaware of the reasons behind their actions, and it is the role of the teacher to be aware of this. The lack of this awareness in teachers can pose a number of additional struggles and barriers between young students and their learning and development. When teachers assume students have negative intentions in their misbehavior, it can be more difficult for students who misbehave to get back on track.

By responding to misbehavior personally, teachers may harm the learning environment or the self-view of the student by using unhealthy shame as a disciplinary tool. Dr. Marie McKay, a clinical psychologist specializing in shame-based disorders, developed an assessment tool to differentiate healthy versus internalized shame. McKay (1992) referred to concepts of healthy shame as an important part of social and emotional development, while internalized or unhealthy shame can lead to devaluation of self in a toxic way. Obviously, shame plays a large role in student learning in the group learning setting. She states in her interview that, "the impact of teachers' administration of discipline has potential to be emotionally positive or negative to each student. Teachers have the potential to be a significant adult in each child's life. They are part of

the dynamic in the classroom. It's like a mobile. The teachers have a role in how everybody is perceived."

One quote from the interview with Dr. McKay clearly summarizes her most important points (McKay, 2020):

It is important for teachers to know that students may be trying their best in particular situations even when their behavior is different from what is expected in the classroom. There are multiple contributing factors that can have an effect on behavior. Teachers can, unknowingly, contribute to more misbehavior, increased esteem issues and decreased academic performance by disciplining, or responding to students in shaming ways. When teachers take students' actions personally, and are emotionally then negatively engaged with a student, the rupture in the teacher-student connection is evident to all in the class. Relationships between students and teachers also then can be reenacted within the student peer group. For example, a child who is frequently called out in a shaming way and with a shaming tone, can start to hear similar comments from peers as to their behavior outside of the teacher's presence (i.e. on the playground, with other teachers, with substitutes). Teachers, being human, have their own reactions to each child and their behavior. Children all want to be liked and respected, especially by their teacher. Belief in a student, even who is a challenge in a group, can be tough to feel and convey while responding but it is vital. Giving students clear direction and caring to help them figure out a different way to handle themselves in the moment can be stabilizing for the group as well. This allows for instruction that is less stress-filled and based on acknowledging the emotional connections inherent in teachers' relationships with students.

In connection with positive psychology and positive behavioral supports, giving the benefit of the doubt to students is an overarching aspect of effective classroom management. How teachers handle disruptions can determine how effective their teaching is. It is important to remember the impact of response in all types of group teaching of children.

Classroom Management in Group Piano Texts

Piano pedagogy degree programs often do not cover classroom management information in depth. Group piano teaching has existed in practice for nearly a century (Pike, 2013b). While it is an older tradition, in the last decade we have seen a massive increase in student enrollment in group piano classes, which has resulted in an increase in new group piano teachers. Pike (2017) notes that, "In reality, at present, many of the pedagogy students and teachers who will teach group piano have had little exposure to the kind of teaching that takes place in a piano lab" (p. 7). This means there is a need for further focus on how group piano teachers are trained, especially in behavior management.

The available textbooks focusing on group piano teaching do not contain sufficient information on classroom management. One of the main group piano texts in the US, *Teaching Piano in Groups* by Christopher Fisher (2010), suggests general approaches and strategies in group piano classroom management, but only briefly (pages 100-101). In those two pages, tips about class length, using respect to maintain authority, and student ownership in rule making are discussed. In relation to handling challenging behavior or disruption, he does not have specific actions or explicit directions listed about how to respond or redirect students. When discussing awareness of student behavior, Fisher (2010) states:

Sometimes students express boredom or act out when they are confused or when they need an additional challenge. Again, it is important that we are sensitive to student's needs, meeting the students where they are and being perceptive of the roots of their behavior on any given day. For instance, the particularly active child might be asked to lead a movement activity, thereby channeling his energy toward a productive outcome (p. 100-101).

Fisher hints at the importance of instructor awareness and empathy for student actions and behavior by his statement about "being perceptive of the roots of their behavior on any given day" (p. 100-101). This statement implies understanding of student growth and development, and acknowledges the unawareness most children have about the implications of their behavior and actions.

Pamela Pike's book, *Dynamic Group-Piano Teaching,* provides an in-depth overview of group piano history, development, and execution, but only a paragraph on classroom management. In many sections of the book, Pike mentions certain practices that can help control or avoid misbehavior, but they are dispersed throughout the text in sections on group dynamics, expectations for students and families, common pitfalls of new group teachers, and establishing trust within the group. Strategies generally focus on how to structure teaching to avoid misbehavior; little information is provided on how to handle misbehavior when it occurs. Pike discusses group dynamics and makes statements about multitasking ability, preparedness, and awareness that are all directly applicable to group behavior management, but do not explicitly break down how to achieve and execute these skills.

Pike addresses pacing as an important component of maintaining order in the classroom by stating:

Properly sequenced and paced, the transitioning from one activity to the next can be masterful, allowing the class objectives and music making to develop innately (and providing little opportunity for disruptive or off-task behavior.) If the teacher is unable to keep all of the students engaged throughout the lesson, chaos may erupt among children, and learning may become haphazard. It can be helpful to be able to spot potential disruptions and thwart them before problems arise; however, this is a skill that teachers develop over time. (p. 21-22).

Pike correctly acknowledges the importance of sequencing and pacing to avoid disruption, but does not specifically address how to manage disruption when it arises.

As seen above, general management approaches and strategies in group piano teaching are not covered in-depth. Because of this, children in group piano classes are at a risk of receiving instruction from a teacher who is more likely to discipline them in an uninformed way. This can be detrimental to their growth and development. To remedy this risk, group music instructors must work to fill this void on their own. The following sections are intended to bridge this gap in training by providing several strategies and practical approaches to managing the classroom and handling misbehavior. The first section is a review of best practices backed by research, and the second section provides examples of application of these strategies in the form of a narrative with commentary.

Classroom Management Overview and Strategic Outline

This manual provides a thorough overview of steps to create a classroom management plan for group piano instruction, followed by an "imaginary first day" and "imaginary fifth day" narrative that employs the strategies detailed below. This model is applicable to groups of 10-15 elementary-aged children, but can be adapted to a variety of settings.

Written with group music instruction in mind, these approaches are modeled after several sources on classroom management in music, as well as literature on effective discipline strategies, rule making, and behavior reinforcement. Management in the group piano classroom presents an additional host of challenges through the use of manipulatives. Other variables involved in the teaching process include instruments, group activities and technology, among others.

This manual is modeled after Ertel and Kovarik's suggestions in their book, *The ABC's of Classroom Management* (2014). Their text lays out six areas or "steps" to establishing a classroom management plan. According to this segment, the six processes that stand out are: finding strategies that encourage and affirm positive behavior, establishing rules, establishing constructive consequences, including student input in rule-making, establishing classroom

procedures, and sharing the management plan with parents. Below, I have used these six processes as an outline, but have reordered and altered them. I have added a section for addressing misbehavior and disruption, a crucial component of classroom management, and have combined the sections of "sharing the management plan" with "establishing rules" and "including student input in rule-making".

Again, this manual is meant to serve as a resource and a basis for the reader to create his or her own detailed classroom management plan. This guide should be altered and adjusted as necessary, so that the instructor can best meet the needs of a particular group of children in a particular setting.

Strategies that Affirm and Encourage Positive Behavior

Being able to to affirm and encourage student behavior in the classroom is crucial. Having background knowledge and awareness of multiple ways to do this prior to establishing behavior expectations and classroom procedures is advantageous. In public school systems and tiered educational environments, there is opportunity for school-wide behavioral intervention systems. I label these as large-scale systems, as they affect and include a large number of children and instructors across a handful of classrooms with many groups of students. Within each classroom or group of students, there are smaller-scale systems in place to reinforce and manage behavior, for example, clip up clip down systems[2] or rewards systems that encourage good, consistent group behavior. One step smaller yet is one-on-one reinforcement and

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[2] This is a small scale behavior system that involves students moving a clip with their name on it up or down depending on their behavior and actions in the classroom. If a student acts undesirably, the teacher might say, "Alex, please go clip down." Alex would go move her clip down, farther away from all of the other students' clips in front of the class. If Alex behaves well, the teacher might say, "Alex, great job, please clip up." Alex then gets to move the clip up, closer to her peers' clips again. This system makes it hard for students to recover when they make a mistake or mess up earlier in the day.

affirmation. So, overall, there are large scale school wide systems, smaller scale classroom systems, and one-on-one teacher to student interactions.

This manual will primarily focus on small-scale systems and one-on-one interactions that exist in environments where there is one instructor and a group of students. Before further examination of these approaches, it is important to define some behavior-related terminology. Positive reinforcement is the presentation of a reward or stimulus that increases the likelihood of the desired response (Corsini, 2001). Negative reinforcement is the removal of an undesired stimulus that increases the probability of a response (Corsini, 2001). Rewards can be a type of positive reinforcement, and are either extrinsic or intrinsic in nature (Corsini, 2001).

The small scale systems and individual interactions discussed below will primarily utilize positive reinforcement to encourage desired behavior. This positive reinforcement can include rewards of tangible or intangible nature. A balance of both can be beneficial depending on the group of students, but it is easy for tangible rewards to become shallow incentives for students to demonstrate the right behavior, without fully understanding the importance of why that behavior is necessary (Ertel & Kovarik, 2014). On the other hand, this source also suggests that "When not overdone, stickers and prizes can be constructive, especially for young students." (p. 215).

Intangible rewards are desirable and include the broad categories of verbal feedback and praise. The most effective approach, as is detailed in the literature review, is positive behavior support that centers around positive praise and feedback. Caldarella et al. (2015) describes the key elements of this approach as, "(a) fostering students positive relationships and interactions with peers and adults, (b) defining and teaching behavioral expectations clearly during instruction time, and (c) providing feedback on students' use of appropriate social skills throughout the day" (p. 358). Through frequent, positive feedback, teachers teach their students

how to behave successfully within the classroom. It is additionally important to provide specific feedback. Caldarella et al. (2015) states:

> It is better to ask teachers to give what is called informative feedback rather than empty positive feedback like 'Good job!' or 'Awesome!' Make it informative. For example, 'That came out well, the way you built the bridge right there.' The feedback should refer to something the child does or says in terms of its significance. (p. 358)

By providing informative or specific feedback, students can understand the difference between desired behavior and disruptive behavior. The ultimate goal is student understanding, so positive verbal feedback serves as a form of modeling how students should think about and understand their behavior and its impact.

Suggested Strategies

The strategies below are broken into verbal reinforcement and non-verbal reinforcement. Verbal reinforcement includes two subcategories: tangible rewards and intangible rewards.

Non-Verbal Reinforcement

Non-verbal reinforcement normally takes the form of physical cues to a student that they are doing something right. The most common forms of this are giving a student a thumbs up, a head nod, a smile, a high five, or picking up the students work and using it as an example. This type of reinforcement is effective because it allows the teacher to continue with content instruction verbally while non-verbally communicating with a student and cueing to reinforce the desired behavior. Though this involves a high level of multitasking ability and awareness of the teacher, it is efficient and effective for instructional purposes.

For elementary group piano classes, I suggest using all of these cues whenever possible. Students do better when they know they are doing the right thing behaviorally or content-related,

so the more the instructor can communicate to them, "yes, this is right, keep it up!" while continuing to teach and move forward in the lesson, the better.

- Thumbs up.

- Head nod.

- Smile.

- High five.

- Use the student's work as an example.

Verbal Reinforcement

Verbal reinforcement is probably the most common type of reinforcement, and also has the broadest variety. It is important to provide students with specific feedback during this reinforcement, if possible, so there is no confusion in the student of what they did that was right. Verbal reinforcement must be balanced appropriately with verbal instruction, and transitioning between the two effectively and efficiently takes a great deal of multitasking ability and awareness.

In the elementary group piano classroom, this type of reinforcement is imperative not only for behavior instruction, but for content instruction. Verbal reinforcement can be given to the class as a whole, to an individual student in a one-on-one conversation, or it can be given to an individual student in front of the class. This can be pivotal to student confidence, pride, and work ethic.

- "You have really improved on _____(behavior/task/content), that is awesome. Good for you!"

- "I really admire how you stuck with _____ (behavior/task/content) even though it was hard."

- "You have come a long way! I know _____ (behavior/task/content) wasn't easy."

- "That was a smart thing to do!"

- "Wow, I am so impressed with _____ (behavior/task/content)."

- "_____ (behavior/task/content) has really improved since you started this class!"

- "Great job being a team player. I noticed how well you were working with _____."

- "It is so encouraging to see _____(behavior/task/content). When we do this, we have so much more time to learn fun things!"

Tangible rewards

Tangible rewards are physical rewards or activities that students are given in praise for meeting a behavioral goal or standard. Awarding students tangible rewards helps to reinforce their behavior. For young students, stickers are always popular, but sometimes small snacks do wonders. Tangible rewards can be an individual game or class game, a class "party" to celebrate a group behavioral achievement, or an individual or group performance for the class. Small tangible rewards like stickers and snacks should be awarded at the end of the class to avoid supplying students with an additional distraction. They can also be presented prior to an activity or lesson as an incentive for behaving well.

In group piano for elementary students, I suggest giving individual stickers at the end of each class for good behavior, and awarding the class with a "party" with music games and performance opportunities for five consecutive classes of good behavior as a whole group. This reinforces individual behavior AND fosters teamwork and collaboration from the students to work together to earn a prize.

- Stickers.

- Snacks.

- Games (individual or group).

- Group "party" with fun activities, and music games.

- Individual performance for the class.

- Group performance for the class.

Intangible rewards

Intangible rewards are rewards that are not physical. These rewards are normally some type of verbal reinforcement, but differ in that they normally mean more than standard in-class verbal reinforcement. Some examples include verbal praise to the parent or guardian before or after class, and any other kind of verbal praise given to the student individually or in front of the group, or even possibly at a concert.

- Specific verbal praise to parent/guardian in front of the student.

- Specific verbal praise to the student individually or in front of the group.

Constructive Consequences

Consequence is a term that is often interpreted in a variety of ways, but according to Anderson (2018), the term can be broken down into three large sub categories: natural consequences, logical consequences, and punishments.

Natural consequences are defined by Anderson (2018) as:

> Not requiring any adult action or intervention; they simply happen. If Maria doesn't wear a coat to recess on a chilly day, she'll be cold. If Markus cheats while playing a game with other students, they might not want to play with him anymore. Natural consequences can be great learning opportunities for students, as long as they're not overly damaging. (p. 28)

Logical consequences are defined by Anderson (2018) as,

> Differing from natural ones in that they require adults to implement them. If Brad is getting overly silly while working with a friend, his teacher might tell him to find another spot to work. According to Jane Nelsen, effective logical consequences fit four criteria: they must be *related* to the behavior, *respectful* of the student, *reasonable* for the student to carry out, and (whenever possible) *revealed in advance* so the student knows the potential consequences of their actions ahead of time. (p. 28)

Punishments are defined by Anderson (2018) as,

> The antithesis of logical consequences. They're often harsh and frequently involve shaming students. Kelly is building towers with her base-10 blocks instead of using them to solve math challenges. Her teacher calls in an exasperated tone, "Kelly! Clip down!" Kelly walks to the front of the room with her head drooping and moves her clip from the yellow to red….Punishments do more harm than good. They can breed resentment and diminish students' sense of self, often leading to even more disruptive behavior in the future. They can even model bullying, in which people with more power (teachers) impose their will on others (students) through force. (p. 28)

Negative reinforcement involves reinforcing behavior by removing a stimulus or reward. Negative reinforcement can also be viewed as a type of consequence. A consequence is a result of a behavior or action and is a broader term. Consequences can involve negative reinforcement, but will not always. As defined above, consequences can be natural results or responses to behaviors.

As Anderson (2018) explained there are beneficial ways, and toxic ways to correct student behavior. Anderson has grouped negative responses to behavior as "punishments". Labelling them as such is helpful so that instructors have clarity in how they respond to behavior and correct it. This section will primarily focus on logical consequences, as teachers cannot control natural consequences.

Both logical consequences and negative reinforcement can either be specific to an individual student, or can involve the full group or class of students. It is important to have a balance of both. Anderson (2018) suggests the necessity of having a list of logical consequences that work as well as a list of strategies other than consequences that reinforce and affirm positive behavior. Logical consequences involve things like a teacher telling a student to set their cell phone on the teacher's desk, going back and walking into the classroom if they were running, taking away recess or access to a desired activity (also a form of negative reinforcement because of the removal of a stimulus), and many others.

Schieltz (2020) studied the impact of positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, and instructional strategies on problem behavior and found that there is a link between problem behavior and students struggling to understand and learn the content. These findings demonstrate that there is not a "one size fits all" approach, and that positive reinforcement can be equally as effective or more effective than negative reinforcement. Schieltz (2020) explains these findings as follows:

> Similarly, other brief experimental analyses have shown that the MOs [modes of operation] for problem behavior maintained by negative reinforcement can be abolished by the provision of positive reinforcement (e.g., Gardner et al. 2009; Schieltz et al. 2017b). For example, Gardner et al. (2009), showed an abolishing effect for two children

with escape maintained problem behavior when positive reinforcement, in the form of high quality attention, was paired with academic tasks. That is, both children chose to engage in the academic tasks they previously escaped when those academic tasks were paired with high quality attention….These results support previous studies showing that positive reinforcement can compete effectively with negative reinforcement, thereby resulting in reductions in problem behavior maintained by negative reinforcement (e.g., Golonka et al. 2000; Lalli et al. 1999; Zarcone et al. 1996). (p. 341)

Just as Anderson (2018) cautioned against shaming and harsh punishments, McKay (2020) speaks about the importance of understanding the difference between healthy and toxic shame. Dr. McKay notes that the teacher has great power over how a student views themself following a misbehavior, and that the teacher's response to this behavior can drastically change how a student behaves in the classroom. Therefore, how a teacher manages a misbehavior has a strong impact on a student's success or lack thereof.

In Ertel and Kovarik's book, consequences and punishments are examined in older systems of behavior management that are shaming, outdated, and ineffective (2014). Their section titled "Names on the Board--Not!" questions the older practice of writing a student's name on the board when they misbehave (p. 159). They suggest writing a student's name down quietly and removing a reward privately to avoid the humiliation of name writing and punishment in front of the group. With a name written down privately, the student has an opportunity to recover and improve their behavior, whereas, if their name is written on the board, it is there for the entire class and it can be more challenging for the student to get back on the right track.

There is an overall importance of approaching behavior management in an individualized way. Students have a variety of needs, and there is not one prescribed way to deal with each behavior. Anderson (2018) explains that "[u]sing consequences requires taking a nuanced view of disciplinary situations -- and that's hard" (p. 27) These findings show that behavior management and disciplinary strategies are fluid, and behavior management is not black and white. As teachers, there is an understanding that positive reinforcement and feedback are better for student learning and development than negative reinforcement and punishments, though at times logical consequences are necessary.

Suggested Strategies

Below, logical consequences have been broken into individual logical consequences and group logical consequences. There are two other categories describing redirection, which is less about responding to a specific undesired behavior, and more about helping a student or students have the space/time/support needed to prepare to get back on track and re-enter the learning space following an outburst or negative interaction.

Individual Constructive Consequences

These are logical consequences that can be implemented when rules are broken or deliberately not followed at the individual level. The examples below are also forms of negative reinforcement as they involve the removal of a stimulus or experience.

In group piano for elementary students, these consequences could take the form of less individual performance time, restriction from touching the instrument(s), restricted group activity or game privileges, or being removed from an ensemble piece.

- Removal of individual reward.

- Removal of experience.

- Removal of certain group privileges.

Group Constructive Consequences

These are logical consequences that can be implemented when rules are broken or deliberately not followed by the majority of the group. The examples below are also forms of negative reinforcement as they involve the removal of a stimulus or experience from the group as a whole.

In group piano for elementary students, these could involve less individual practice time, removal of a tangible reward such as stickers or a snack, removal of a group game, or quiet time if absolutely necessary.

- Removal of group reward.

Individual Redirection

Individual redirection is meant to provide individual students with the space/time/support needed to prepare to get them back on track to re-enter the learning space following a misbehavior, outburst, or harsh interaction. Redirection is not a form of consequence, but a way to guide students back to being functional members of the group. Sometimes this guidance is necessary for their success.

In the group piano classroom for elementary students, this can take the form of a few minutes of individual coloring time, a quick walk outside of the classroom, going to get a drink of water, writing down what is upsetting them, drawing what is upsetting them, or taking deep breaths among many other strategies. The teacher can follow up with these write downs individually or as a group if the situation warrants that response.

- Coloring corner.

- Go for a quick walk.

- Write down what is upsetting.

- Take deep breaths.

Group Redirection

Group redirection is meant to provide the group with a reset option following a majority of the students engaging in rule breaking behavior. Redirection is to give the group opportunities to make the right choices, learn from them, and move on with the learning process. It is important to address this openly when it happens to provide a learning opportunity for the students.

In the group piano classroom for elementary students, group redirection can take the form of an open conversation with the group about why there is misbehavior. I have listed options for this below. Additionally, when there is a lot of group misbehavior, it may be time for the instructor to change their instructional approach or activity.

- Group brainstorm.

    - "Why is this not working for us?"

    - "How can we change our behavior so we can complete this activity/task?"

    - "Is this how we should be acting or working?"

    - "What can we do to change this?"

    - "What should we do so that we can better move on?"

    - "How can we change our behavior so that we can work together and follow directions while having fun?"

- Group walk.

- Three deep breaths together with a student leader or teacher leader.

- Instructor changes activity. As simple as it sounds, this means that the instructor does a cold cut to a new activity because the current activity is unsuccessful for the group i.e. misbehavior or too much trouble controlling the environment.

- Group facilitation of individual write downs or drawings about what is the hardest part of the activity or what they are struggling to understand (similar to an exit ticket, but may be done during instruction or class).

Rule Creation and Distribution

In order for any group to function effectively, rules must exist and be enforced. Most research supports the importance of clearly defining and modeling rules before enforcement, and that including students in the rule-making process can be beneficial and instill a sense of ownership. Alter & Haydon (2017) find that a smaller number of rules is better, and that the ideal number is usually smaller than seven. Ertel & Kovarik (2014) suggest that between three and five rules are sufficient, and that the rules should be positively stated. One example of a positively worded rule, as opposed to a negatively worded rule, is "Be respectful of yourself and others" instead of "Don't disrupt other students from learning".

If students are going to be involved in the rulemaking process, it is important that this process take place before instruction, so that there is time to model the rules, and for students to understand the expected behavior and consequences of misbehavior. Posting the rules in the room and wording rules clearly and positively can increase their effectiveness (Ertel & Kovarik, 2014). In most classrooms, this takes the form of a large poster with the rules clearly stated and visibly readable from anywhere in the room. Once the rules have been established, sharing these

rules with parents and any administrators is necessary to maintain support and understanding from all important adults who impact the child's growth and development.

When it comes to rule specificity or generality, Alter & Haydon (2017) suggest that a large majority of successful rules are specific in nature. Most rules examined in their study were broken into four main categories and are as follows: "(a) compliance with adults, (b) managing verbal behaviors, (c) appropriate recruitment of teacher attention, and (d) work preparedness/work completion." (Alter & Haydon, 2017, p. 120-121) Therefore, the research shows that establishing 3-5 specific rules in collaboration with students that are worded positively, taught, and include consequences is the most effective practice. Then, these rules must be posted clearly in the room and distributed accordingly to parents and other staff.

Capizzi (2009) describes a thorough classroom management plan design that includes examples of effective rules that are specific and positively stated. Examples of rules in this article include the following: "Be prepared, be responsible, be respectful of others and property, be safe" (p. 9). Another example includes the acronym "PACK: Pride, Ambition, Citizenship, Kindness" (p. 9). Obviously the PACK acronym is intended towards older students, but acronyms like LEARN, that stands for "Listen to your teachers; Effort; Always try your best; Act your best; Ready: always be ready to go; Nice: treat yourself and others with respect" can work for younger students, especially when it comes to memorizing or remembering the rules.

Suggested Strategies

Below are suggested rules for an elementary group piano class. These rules cover how to ask questions, listen, take care of equipment, and maintain a positive attitude in class. These rules can be altered, broken down into smaller, simpler rules, or expanded to better fit another classroom setting.

Classroom Rules

- Respect yourself, others, and the instruments.

- Raise your hand to speak and listen when others are speaking.

- Always try your best and ask questions when you need help.

- Follow directions to the best of your ability.

- Keep your hands to yourself.

Classroom Procedures

Establishing clear classroom procedures is crucial when it comes to behavior management. In addition to teaching rules, classroom procedures and routines help to provide structure and clear expectations to students. Ertel & Kovarik (2014) describe classroom procedures as "the foundation of classroom management on which you develop additional management plans and build a cooperative community" (p. 195). Providing structure in the form of clear procedures for students and instructions on what actions they must take eliminates many opportunities for misbehavior that occur when changing activities, entering or exiting the classroom, or during down time.

Capizzi (2009) states that "Meaningful routines that fully disclose the expectations for student behavior during classroom activities decrease inappropriate behavior by encouraging appropriate classroom behavior" (p. 9). When students don't know how to act and expectations have not been defined, it is much more likely that they will display undesired behavior. Ertel & Kovarik (2014) provide a list of common procedures that include entrance and exit routines, any emergency drills, materials (instrument) management, bathroom and water breaks, non-instructional tasks (attendance, etc), and transitions between activities. It is important to not

only verbalize these routines, but to take time to teach procedures and routines at the beginning of the course (Capizzi, 2009). It is likely that students will not fully understand how to complete the routine without practice, especially in the younger elementary grades. For these reasons, reinforcement and practice at the onset is crucial.

Specific to the music classroom, Koops (2018) lists "employing thoughtful, music-rich transitions" and "communicate clear expectations to children and adults" as two of six classroom management strategies for early childhood music settings. In further depth, Koops (2018) shares an example of a good music transition between activities as follows:

> For example, when we finish our gathering drum songs at the beginning of the Music & Movement class I teach, I chant "Ifidom the Village Drum" (Unobagha & Cairns, 2000) while rolling the drum back to its closet. Parents chant along, and some children walk with me to put the drum away, then return to the circle for the next activity. The music transition also cues the children that we are done with the drum; this routine helps them know what is next and trust that the drum will be there again next week (p. 83).

It seems that transitions such as the previous example are most beneficial to use with younger students. However, transitions can be adapted for older elementary students as well, and can take the form of written instructions on the board, or posting instructions on a Powerpoint and waiting for students to read it and respond by following the direction at the end of one activity. With older elementary students, transition songs can still be used, but might employ less singing/chanting and more playing of their instrument. Often this can be in the form of call and response or by using "repeat after me." Anytime transitions can begin to feel like a game, students become more engaged and invested in behaving well.

Suggested Strategies

Listed below are three of the six classroom procedures by Ertel & Kovarik (2014) as well as the addition of "gaining the teacher's attention" suggested by Capizzi (2009). Adjusted for the elementary group piano setting, they read from top to bottom in order of perceived importance to the music classroom. Procedures from Ertel & Kovarik (2014) such as emergency drills, bathroom/water breaks, and non-instructional tasks are much less applicable to the elementary group piano class, so they are not included below.

Most of the above sources do not provide specific suggestions for these routines, but explain the importance of having routines for the following procedures. All of these ideas can be adapted for a variety of settings. Personalizing these ideas for each particular group of children is encouraged.

Entrance/Exit Routines

- Form a line outside the classroom. Pick a new person to lead the class into the room each day. Walk in like a different animal while listening to music. The student at the front of the line gets to pick which animal the class enters as.

- Form a line outside the classroom. Pick a new person to lead the class into the room each day. Play music while the students enter. (Students could also sing a song while they enter.) Pose a question to them about the music before they enter the classroom so as they are seated, they are listening attentively for the answer.

- Provide students with an individual activity at the start of each class so they are actively engaged individually at the start of class.

- Begin with individual practice time on headphones.

- Use a hello and goodbye song to indicate the start and end of class. Always sing the song before speaking, so students always know to listen for the beginning of the song. If possible, use a call/response song that requires student listening and participation.

Transitions

- Use a whisper voice to deliver instructions.

- Sing the instructions to the students. This can be done while playing simple I-V boom chucks on the keyboard in a recitative style (very informal) or without keyboard accompaniment.

- Ask students to move to their new place in slow motion.

- Write the instructions on the board and point to them without speaking. Students will read them and respond. When making transitions an attentiveness "game," students are more likely to eagerly comply.

Materials/Instruments

- Designate a "materials/instruments" helper or two.

- Select student helpers to set up instruments (open piano lids) who are behaving well. When helping becomes a reward, students are likely to adjust behavior quickly.

- Select students one by one to go sit at their keyboard/piano depending on who is showing good behavior.

- Use a song to sing or play that indicates this is the last song to play on the instruments.

Gaining the Teacher's Attention

- Raising your hand.

Addressing Misbehavior and Disruption

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, is what to do following a misbehavior or disruption. Deciding how to address the behavior is the most important part of behavior management. Oftentimes these moments are filled with stress and anxiety in both the students and the teacher, but it is the responsibility of the teacher to respond in a way that maintains control of the classroom, corrects the behavior, and keeps the rest of the students comfortable in their environment and able to learn. Doing all of these things at once is incredibly difficult, and there is not always one right way or best way to respond. Responses will always depend on the environment, particular student, setting, and many other factors. The best thing a teacher can do, is to be aware that the misbehavior or disruption occurs, and then make decisions about how to proceed.

In *The Caring Teacher's Guide to Discipline,* Marilyn Gootman devotes an entire chapter to handling misbehavior, and breaks down all possible responses into seven categories: verbal signaling, nonverbal signaling, reminding, warning, ignoring, praising, and doing nothing (2008). Verbal signaling and nonverbal signaling may also be known as cueing, or giving social cues to students to remind them to continue demonstrating the desired behavior. These are the most common types of responses to misbehavior. Reminding and warning students can fall under verbal signaling, but are more specific in nature. If a student is breaking a specific rule, normally the reminder is, "Remember, we walk in this classroom because if we run, we might get hurt." A

warning might sound like, "Oh no! It looks like you are not doing _____ like we are all supposed to be doing. This can be a warning, but it can't happen again."

Ignoring misbehavior can occasionally be beneficial depending on the situation. Doing nothing means that the teacher stops whatever they are doing and just pauses for a moment, does not say or do anything, but provides enough silence for the students to be slightly uncomfortable and know something is not right. Normally this pause is enough of a reminder to get a misbehaving student or students back on track. Doing nothing should not be overused in a teacher's disciplinary tool box, because if overused, it can easily become less effective.

The above responses are considered forms of "low key" discipline, which imply the misbehavior is not severe or majorly disruptive. Gootman (2008) describes the importance of modeling and teaching problem-solving skills to students when misbehavior is more severe and low key discipline will not do the trick. Furthermore, Gootman (2008) states that "By guiding students to figure out what *they* can do rather than threatening them about what *we* will do, we help them develop responsibility for their own behavior." (p. 110) This approach involves teaching students to have greater awareness of their actions, their behaviors, and their responses which leads towards helping students learn the necessary skills for emotional regulation.

There is a great deal of research on teaching children problem-solving skills through behavior management (E.g. Robison, 2019, 2020; Gootman, 2008; Anderson, 2018; etc.) There are many ways to do this, most commonly by modeling, verbalizing information, and asking questions that direct students to come to their own conclusions. Robison (2019) supports question-asking as a disciplinary strategy and states that, "Asking questions is an important subset of the language we use with students. While it often necessitates more time… that time is usually a fruitful investment in helping students manage or even prevent their own undesirable

behaviors over the middle and long terms, all while contributing to bigger constructs like metacognition or self-esteem." (p. 40) Robison (2020) examines more questions that prove to be effective in classroom management and teaching problem solving.

Gootman (2008) includes an outline on the basic steps of problem solving to help teachers guide students through this process. These steps are: 1. Identify the problem 2. Brainstorm ideas/solutions 3. Evaluate ideas/solutions 4. Select an idea/solution 5. Try the idea 6. Evaluate effectiveness 7. Decide if this solution is ideal or if returning to step 4 is necessary (Gootman, 2008). If there is time for individual time with a student who has engaged in a misbehavior that warrants this type of problem solving, it is helpful to walk through these steps with them. Realistically, if the teacher can narrate and model these steps when there are problems in the classroom, students will learn that way as well.

In alignment with current educational trends rooted in positive psychology and positive reinforcement, problem solving and question asking teach students to take ownership of their behavior. This can lead to self-efficacy and resilience through their understanding of their thoughts and feelings, and the power that comes with the ability to change their actions. This can only make for a more functional classroom with minimal behavior issues. As Dr. McKay (McKay, M.A. 2020) described in her interview on shame in educational settings, teachers must give children the benefit of the doubt and show care for all students, no matter what behavior they display. Demonstrating care and investment in student success even when a student may present challenging behavior is imperative.

Helping students to understand their behavior and helping them learn how to adjust can be difficult. As McKay (2020) suggests, it is crucial to respond to student misbehavior objectively, not personally. It can be difficult to allow students the chance to be successful after

many failed attempts, but it is imperative for the growth and development of the child that this chance be offered to them. Confronting misbehavior is not always comfortable, but as Bergee (2020) finds, highly effective classroom managers are teachers who "move toward misbehavior without stopping" (See Appendix A).

Responding to behavior is the most complex part of managing groups of children. It is remarkable how quickly teachers must be able to assess behavior, decide how to respond, administer a response, redirect the misbehavior, and resume content instruction all while keeping the rest of the group on track. This requires extensive multi-tasking skills and extremely high levels of awareness. Having background knowledge of multiple approaches and many strategies to use can only help speed up this process and maintain an efficient and effective learning environment for children.

Suggested Strategies

Listed below are ideas and examples in the seven categories suggested by Gootman (2008) and the added "question" category supported by Robison (2019, 2020). I also include ideas from my personal teaching experience.

Verbal Signaling

- "Let's settle down just a bit here. We have to keep moving through this information."

- "_____ I see you have a lot of energy which is great, but turn it down a few notches, please."

- "I am concerned that the noise in the room won't allow us to finish learning the song we started today."

- "I know it is hard to focus right now, but we need to work together to complete this activity."

Non Verbal Signaling

- "The look" (a longer stare that communicates expectations are not being met).

- A raised finger to the lips without the accompanying "shh".

- Using a hand sign to signal it is quiet time.

- Counting down 3-2-1 on the fingers so when 1 is reached, it is silent.

- Pointing somewhere on the page.

Reminding

- "Can someone remind me what the rules are when we do work by ourselves?"

- "Remember, we always treat the instruments carefully and with kindness. We wouldn't want to hurt them in any way."

- "What should you be doing right now?"

- "Look at what the others are doing. Wouldn't it be a good idea to do that?"

- "Let's see if we can remember how to put the instruments away the right way."

Warning

- "This is a warning. If you can't settle down enough to finish the activity with us, you won't be able to play your keyboard at the end of class."

- "If you can't hold on to _____ (some sort of object) quietly, I will have to hold on to it until the end of class."

- "_____(insert name) you are being too distracting right now. I need you to try to focus quietly so we can all play the game at the end of class."

Ignoring

- Ignoring misbehavior is a helpful strategy but depends on the individual situation. It seems to be most effective to ignore the following behaviors: a child standing to stretch during class, the occasional neighbor whispering session, if the same child who frequently struggles to focus is distracted for a moment (this gives them the chance to get back on track before a warning), certain types of attention seeking behavior. Sometimes, children who seek attention really do need it. Other times, it is important to NOT give attention to disruptive or harmful types of attention seeking behavior. When a teacher responds to negative attention seeking behavior, this shows the student that negative behavior will end in them earning attention. This is a hard pattern to break, and normally only occurs in more severe disciplinary situations in students with recurring struggles.

Praising

- See Strategies to Affirm and Encourage Positive Behavior on page 2.

Doing Nothing

- This strategy must be used sparingly for it to continue to have a lasting effect. Doing nothing means the teacher simply stops and does not give any verbal cues, but waits. This can be accompanied by "the look", or a slow raised finger to point to the instruction on the board. Silence and slow movement can be a much needed contrast to disorderly or chaotic behavior/settings. Doing nothing works the best when there are multiple misbehaviors occurring, and it can almost act as a reset, or a shocking reminder to the whole group that what is happening is not okay and that behavior must change.

Questioning

The following questions are quoted from Robison (2019, 2020).

- "Can you explain to me why you should be able to do that and what you were thinking?"

- "How did that make you feel? How do you think that made them feel?"

- "Remember that time you owned that activity? How can we work toward that?"

- "Who would be a good partner for you? How can you make progress together?"

- "Do you remember when you could not do this first part? Look how far you have come."

- "What are your feelings telling you?"

Steps to Process Misbehavior

The outline below summarizes the steps typically taken to address disruptive behavior in an effective way.

1) Triage behavior (analyze and determine best response)

2) Address behavior (confront, move towards)

3) Resolve (conclude)

4) Resume instruction (back on track)

Strategies in Action

This section will serve as an example of how to apply concepts and recommendations. It is organized in the form of two narratives: the first one describes the first class, and the second focuses on the fifth class. They examine a range of mild to severe misbehaviors.

Imaginary First Class Narrative

This is the first day of an elementary piano class consisting of 10 students ages 5-7 at the beginner level. It is assumed that these children have no musical background or knowledge of how to play the piano. It is required that they have a parent or guardian wait with them outside of the classroom until the class begins.

The classrooms contain five keyboards for student use and one acoustic grand piano for the teacher to model on or use for group performances. There is a whiteboard and a projector connected to the teacher's computer. Each keyboard has two pairs of headphones and is designed so there are two students per keyboard. The instructor has a control panel and is able to pair the

keyboards as well as mute them on headphones if needed. The text in the left column below

narrates the actions and behaviors of the teacher and students. The right column contains

commentary on strategies and approaches used by the instructor.

About ten minutes before the first class, Mrs. Weaver waits outside the door to the room to greet the students and the parent who brings them to the class. "We're going to wait outside before we go into the piano room so we can learn how to go into the room the right way. We have very nice and expensive instruments in there that we are lucky to play, so we have a special way we walk in together every week." She explains this in similar ways to each student and parent or guardian as they arrive.	In this paragraph, Mrs. W is establishing entrance procedures and is teaching the students and parents clearly how class will start each week. She not only shows them this through her actions, but she verbally tells them that we will always enter this way. Additionally, she explains why this is important, in an attempt to help students learn and understand why these rules and procedures are necessary. This leads to self efficacy, independence, and can establish a respectful environment where there is consistency from the teacher in discipline and expectations. Mrs. W takes this time to talk and interact with parents and students before formally getting everyone's attention. This time is invaluable in creating a good rapport, and more importantly, trusting relationships with parents and students so she can begin teaching content without any barriers.
Once each student is present with their parent or guardian she says, "Hello everyone! Welcome to piano class. I'm Mrs. Weaver, and I'm so excited for us to have our first day of piano together! For our piano class, we will always meet outside the door and line up against the wall just like this." She gestures toward the wall where the students and parents/guardians are standing. "Now, I'm looking for someone who would be willing to help me out and lead our line into the room so we can	Mrs. W is finally able to address everyone at once, and displays genuine excitement through her information delivery. She is clear and explicit with how she wants students to line up before class. She explains where to do this, how to do this, and verbalizes that this is the expectation. Mrs. W immediately engages the students by looking for a student to pick the animal they will enter the classroom as. Her warm and kind demeanor makes students comfortable volunteering and generally excited, but likely also anxious, to begin the class. Mrs. W guides the student to give a successful response by telling the student, Kaya, she needs to pick an animal that lives in the water (to match the mood of the entrance song playing). This sets Kaya up to be successful, and when Mrs. W responds positively and excitedly to Kaya's suggestion, she continues to develop great rapport with her students and their parents.

begin our class…" She raises her hand while asking for this volunteer, and students begin raising their hands. "Kaya, you raised your hand right away, would you mind being the leader for today? I need you to pick an animal that lives in water, like a lake or an ocean, and we're going to walk in like that animal. A starfish? Great idea!"	
Mrs. Weaver sticks her arms out to the sides in her best imitation of a starfish, and the children giggle as they do the same. "Aquarium" from Carnival of the Animals is playing on the speakers in the classroom. Before she leads their line of starfish into the classroom, she says "I love how great our starfish look right now. Our starfish are very quiet because we live underwater! Follow me into the room, and when we get inside, I need you to not touch ANY of the instruments, and to sit quietly on the floor until I play the first song. It is a very fun song, and it would be really sad if we couldn't sing it together… so let's all try really hard to listen and follow directions when we get inside. Here we go!" Mrs. Weaver then walks into the room, slowly as a starfish, all the while giving positive verbal reinforcement like "Wow, I love	Spending no more time discussing the animal selection, Mrs. W immediately models what she wants the students to do by sticking her arms out in her best starfish imitation. This shows students what to do, and she gives them positive reinforcement throughout, beginning with verbalizing to them that the starfish look great, and are quiet because they live underwater. This creates a clear expectation within the storyline she creates for this activity, making it more fun. While giving directions to the students while they walk into the room as starfish, Mrs. W is keeping them physically occupied with an activity they are focusing on (walking like starfish) while verbally telling them not to touch the instruments, and to sit on the floor in a moment to sing a song together. This occupies their focus physically and mentally, leaving minimal room for distraction, misbehavior, or anxiety. She is clear about expecting that they do not touch the instruments, while also engaging them by telling them what activity is coming next. Mrs. W continues to sprinkle in positive reinforcement to individual students in this entire process, increasing her rapport and building more trust.

your starfish Ernest, so quiet very straight," and "Mika, remember our starfish are quiet! You're really doing great."	
As the children enter quietly and peacefully as starfish, Mrs. Weaver says, "Ok, now our starfish are going to sink down to the ground and sit quietly with hands in our laps, just…. like… this." She models her descent to the floor, moving slowly from starfish, to sitting on the floor with her hands in her lap. Ernest has wandered off towards one of the pianos. Right now he is just staring at the buttons on it, and Mrs. Weaver says "Ernest, you're right, the keyboard is *really* exciting. We will be playing them very soon, but I need you to sit here with us as sleepy starfish right now. Come join us!" Ernest quickly snaps out of it and sits down next to his peers.	Mrs. W continues to give instructions that align with the starfish narrative which makes following her instructions fun. She models the instructions as she speaks them to the students, which engages them. She quickly confronts Ernest as soon as she realizes he has wandered off, not allowing for any time for him to touch the piano or continue without following the directions. Her tone is kind, but aware and authoritative when she speaks to him. Mrs. W acknowledges Ernest's desire to touch the keyboard while also explaining to him that now is not the time. Her calm demeanor and matter of fact delivery of information is most effective for Ernest to respond to her instructions.
She has gathered the children in a group near the acoustic piano she plans to begin teaching from. "Repeat after me," she says, and then gestures to them as though it is their turn. "Repeat after me," they answer. Mrs. Weaver then begins singing a call and response hello song that involves students using their singing voice, speaking voice, whisper	Mrs. W doesn't give a lot of explanation before launching into the song. By starting with instructions that require their response in an activity format, they likely will be fully engaged and will have less time or space for misbehavior or disruption. Again, Mrs. W throws in some positive verbal reinforcement with her "Great job. You are all very good at music." With beginners any extra reinforcement can be helpful. Usually, children experience a lot of anxiety in new situations or settings, especially when they are trying their best to be good at a new activity. It is important that they know their teacher believes in them, and that they have the potential to do well.

voice, and calling voice. At the end of the song, she says, "Wow! Great job. You are all very good at music. We will sing this very same song and sit in this very spot at the beginning of every single class. You have it mastered! I am so impressed. Oh, Ernest! Remember, we still aren't touching the keyboards. We will very soon. First, we have to go through our rules together. If we do this well, we can play the keyboards sooner. We need to know the rules so we can play the keyboards and learn how to read music and have fun together! Could someone tell me, what might happen if we didn't have rules?" Kaya answers, "If we didn't have rules, we can't learn. We wouldn't know what to do." A few others share similar responses. Mrs. Weaver says, "You are so right. We need rules so we know what to do."

When Ernest wanders off again, Mrs. W is very quick to simply redirect him by objectively reminding him with care that we still are not touching the keyboards. She explains that in order to play the keyboards, we must know the rules for this class. By providing a short explanation for why rules are important, the children can understand the rationale, and can begin to learn why rules and guidelines are important. This also teaches them some basic elements of problem solving. Mrs. W allows them to think about why rules are important by having a few students answer. This way, they contribute directly to the flow of the class, and have an opportunity to hear from each other why rules are important. This creates an environment and group mindset that values rules and can recognize why they must be followed.

"Our rules for piano class are easy peasy. Look, there are only four of them! How many? 4!" Mrs. Weaver holds up four fingers to show the children how little there are. The rules are posted in large letters on the whiteboard. Mrs. Weaver says, "Repeat after me! Number 1 (she holds up one finger) respect the instruments. Number 2 (holds

Mrs. W does a great job making the rules digestible by these young students. Emphasizing the number 4 by holding up her four fingers, she provides a physical stimulus that the students can link to remembering the rules. With young children, physical stimuli are especially helpful with recognition and recall. Making the rules easily readable from all areas of the room is also beneficial in reinforcing these rules. By having the students echo after her and hold up the corresponding finger, she provides the physical stimulus (an action) and a verbal response for each rule. On top of this, her rules are short in word count and easy to understand, which are both important for young learners. Perhaps the most

up finger number 2) follow directions. Number 3 (holds up third finger) try your best. And number 4 (holds up fourth finger) have fun!" Mrs. Weaver turns to the piano behind her and sits on the bench. "Now, before we play the pianos, which we will very soon, I have to be sure you know how to take care of them. Aren't they amazing? So pretty and they make so many fun sounds. When it is my turn to play the piano, should I pound on it?" Mrs. Weaver pretends to pound on the keys but doesn't actually touch them. Her face contorts a little in a sort of grimace when she does this, which cues the students to respond with "No way!" and "Ewww" and "*Gasp* no!" Mrs. Weaver then asks, "Can I play the keyboard when the teacher is talking?" The students all answer together, "No!" "Should I slam the lid when I'm done playing?" They answer again, "No!" "What about the headphones, should I hold them by the chord or swing them around?" The students answer, "No!" Mrs. Weaver concludes by saying, "Exactly. You are very smart. We have to be very careful with the headphones and keyboards. If we don't follow these rules, we will not be able to play the keyboards together. I think we can all

important part of this paragraph is how Mrs. W allows the students to correct her. By saying "Should I ever do this?" and doing the wrong thing, she explicitly demonstrates to them what they SHOULD NOT DO. So, she has listed to them the rules (stated positively, short, and understandable) and has also demonstrated actions that would NOT be allowed. But, instead of telling the students "This will not be allowed," she has provided them with an opportunity to be the ones to think about and then decide, "Would this be allowed?" By doing this, students almost always come to the desired conclusion, and if they don't this is a new teaching moment for the instructor to make clear what the right answer is. Again, Mrs. W uses as much positive verbal reinforcement as possible with phrases like "Exactly. You are very smart." In the end, after completing her overview of the rules and what students should and should not do, she checks for understanding and willingness to follow directions by asking for a thumbs up. By asking for a physical response, it is clear how students should respond. They have two options, either give a thumbs up, or don't. When teachers ask open ended questions like, "Do you think we can follow these rules?" students are generally unsure if they should blurt out "yes" or nod their heads, or raise their hands. There are too many decisions to make and they will become anxious. This leads to a lack of response or silence. When an instructor encounters silence, DO NOT assume students understand. It is imperative to check for understanding in specific ways, and be explicit about ways students should respond to questions.

definitely do this, and take care of our instruments. Give me a big thumbs up if you think we can follow these rules."	
"I am so glad to see that! I think we are ready. I notice Mika sitting especially quietly, Mika, why don't you come sit at this piano right here. Please keep your hands in your lap and don't touch the piano yet. I'm looking for others who are ready to sit at a keyboard. I see Ernest is ready. Ernest, please come sit right here." She gestures Ernest to a new seat, and continues in this fashion until all the children are quietly seated. Mrs. Weaver says, "I need everyone to hold up all ten fingers just like this. Great! For our first song, we are only going to use this finger on our right hand." She moves her pointer finger on her right hand as she walks around the room making sure all students have the correct information. "Now, repeat after me please with your best singing voice and your best squirrel." Mrs. Weaver makes a squirrel on her arm with finger numbers 2 and 3 of her right hand. She teaches Charlie Chipmunk from Piano Safari Repertoire Book 1 (Fisher, K. & Knerr, J., 2018, p. 16) by rote using the hand squirrel to hop up	Mrs. W continues to show care, excitement, and genuine investment in the success of her students with the phrase, "I am so glad to see that!" It is important that statements like these are genuine. Students can quickly pick up on false or fabricated statements. Mrs. W notices a student working hard to behave well, and allows Mika to sit at the keyboard first. By rewarding positive behavior this way, she creates an example for other students to want to follow. Occasionally, individual recognition for good behavior can be helpful, but it is important to not make students feel bad if they are not recognized or rewarded in that particular situation. For example, in this instance, Mrs. W is seating children who she sees are ready to sit at the keyboard based on their behavior. After seating about four students of the 10-15, she will continue to seat them by giving individual permission, but she will no longer say "Kaya is doing a great job, Kaya, have a seat," when there are only two students left. If she does, she will be extra careful to reward the final student to be seated with extra positive reinforcement by saying something like, "Wow, thank you so much Merlin. You were doing well along, and finally you may find a keyboard. Thank you for waiting so patiently." She continues by giving specific directions on how to respond by having students hold up all 10 fingers before isolating which finger will be used. A very important strategy used here is proximity control. By circling the room, just walking around while instructing the class, she is being sure she is extra aware of student responses, which students need help, and her presence becomes comforting. When the teacher confines themself to a corner of the room, some students can more easily become disengaged and might begin to fly under the radar. Continuing to teach with physical gesture and verbal response, Mrs. W is keeping students engaged by circling the room during her echos and connecting with individual students via eye contact and facial expression while teaching the song.

and down her other arm with the contour of the singing line. She repeats this with echos twice until the students have a stronger understanding of the song.	
It appears that Mika is getting angry with herself for not remembering all the words to the song. She starts to drop her head and fold her arms across her chest while glaring at the keyboard. Mrs. Weaver has just finished completing the song in echos again. "Great job everyone. I know this song is hard to master, but we *just* learned it. Remember this is all new and you are doing great. Let's sing it one more time all together, and then we will move on." While Mrs. Weaver verbalizes this instruction, she tried to give Mika a thumbs up, but Mika did not seem to take to that encouragement. After Mrs. Weaver noticed this, she continued to give the instruction to sing the song again just so she could have a moment to walk over to Mika and give her some individual encouragement and direction while the rest of the students were still participating in the activity (singing and learning the song) together.	As soon as Mrs. W notices Mika is upset, she moves towards her. Mrs. W doesn't ignore students who need help or guidance when experiencing an overwhelming emotion. Mrs. W first wants to comfort Mika, and express she is in a safe place. She first does this by reminding the group that this is all new information, and it's ok if mistakes are made. By stating this, she is creating a safe environment for students to give effort at the risk of making an error (necessary for a good learning environment). She immediately engages the whole class in another repetition of the song so she is able to try to connect with Mika by giving her positive reinforcement in the form of a physical cue (thumbs up). When Mika doesn't respond, she decides it is time to give Mika individual encouragement verbally.

Quickly and quietly, Mrs. Weaver leans over to Mika and says, "Mika, what's wrong? I think you're doing a great job. I know this is tough stuff, but we will get to play soon, and you will have this down!" Mika answers, exasperated, "I just can't get the words!" Mrs. Weaver says, "Don't worry, it is okay. You don't need to know all of the words to be able to play it. I'll stay here to help you with this next part." Mika begins to cry in frustration, putting her hands over her face and turning away from Mrs. Weaver. Mrs. Weaver chooses to let Mika have a moment and continues to teach the group while circling the room. She has the whole class sing the words together once more. After this, she returns to teach the group from close to Mika's keyboard, but not too close so Mika feels like too much attention is drawn to her. She will continue to give Mika bits of encouragement after allowing her space to let her frustration out and recover from crying.	Mrs. W speaks with Mika quickly and quietly. The paragraph that narrates this interaction might make this seem like a longer interaction than it would need to be in real life. These moments happen very fast, and they need to in order to reach the full group, and the individual student and continue to balance teaching both. When Mika responds in frustration, Mrs. W finally can fully understand what is upsetting her. She attempts to tell Mika it is okay and there is no need to be frustrated. This unfortunately does not provide Mika with comfort, and the pressure Mika is placing on herself pushes her to tears. By turning away from Mrs. W, Mika indicates that she might not be fully comfortable with her help, and Mrs. W decides to give her space to recover. In a first day scenario, this likely is the best decision. Mrs. W is still a new person in Mika's life, and does not have the right amount of trust built to continue to insert herself while Mika is struggling. Yes, it is sad to leave Mika to her tears for a moment, but Mrs. W is very aware of the situation, and plans to keep moving along in hopes that she can re-engage Mika with a new activity that she can be successful doing. She will continue to check in with Mika. If the crying were to continue into the next activity, perhaps Mrs. W would have responded differently, but luckily, Mika seems to recover with the space she is given, and her personal interest in the next activity.
"Everyone, please turn to look at me and give me a thumbs up when you are ready to move on. The next part is playing the song on the keyboard, how exciting! Great, I am so glad you are all ready. I	Again, Mrs. W is checking for understanding by asking for a specific response (thumbs up). She conveys excitement for the next activity, which the students will mirror. She is clear about her expectations when she states, "I need you to pay close attention. Look at my hand." Visual models help young learners a great deal. By showing students this visually, moving around the room, and having them try to do what she does, Mika

need you to pay close attention. Look at my hand." Mrs. Weaver is holding her right hand up and setting her fingers on her left forearm to model good technique and how she wants students to curve their pointer finger when they play this song. At this point, Mika is reinvested in trying to play the song on the keyboard, she visibly appears engaged and excited, just like the other students. Mrs. Weaver says, "I am looking for a curve in your pointer finger just like this. When I move my finger to play the piano, the curve stays, and my forearm moves slightly just like this. Try this with me." The students try this motion on their forearms and Mrs. Weaver goes around helping fix and adjust their hands, saying things like, "Wow, Kaya, looking great," "Ernest, this is promising. Keep that wrist flexible and keep the curve in the finger solid like this!" and "Mika, you're such a pro. Very nice!"	becomes re-engaged and recovers from her teary withdrawal. Again, Mrs. W is clear with her instructions by saying, "I am looking for…..". Then, she goes around to check and provide individual feedback to students on whether or not they were able to do this the right way. A balance of group feedback and individual feedback is imperative for student learning. There is clarity in her instruction, "Try this with me." Again, she is able to provide individual feedback, normally coupled with positive verbal reinforcement.
"Now I need everyone to look with their eyes at the keyboard and rest your squirrel hands in your laps. On the keyboard there are black keys and white keys. We are looking for a group of two black keys, like this. Listen while I play, and then	Mrs. W is continuing with specific instructions and guiding students to recognize and understand the patterns she points out on the keyboard. She takes a moment to give individual praise in front of the group not only to help encourage other students to behave similarly, but also to help provide Mika with a little extra confidence following her emotional outburst earlier. Mrs. Weaver guides the students to put their pointer finger over the correct key without over saturating them with information. She simply says, "find this

we will try together. Oh! I love how Mika is sitting quietly listening and watching carefully what I am doing. I know when it is time for us all to try it, she will be ready. Ok, my turn." Mrs. Weaver plays and sings just the first line and pauses at the top in anticipation. To the students, she says, "Wasn't that cool? Now, before we all play this together, please quietly put your pointer finger over a group of two black keys. Now move your pointer finger so it is over the *left* black key in the group of two. I will help you." She is circling the room, checking and fixing students' fingers while giving individual feedback, praise, and reminders like, "Looking great, Ernest! Kaya, it's this note, you were so close. Mika, don't forget we are playing with the *right hand*."	key," without explaining the key name, or other information. Sometimes, teachers make the mistake of giving students too much information for the task at hand. It is important to be aware of the information given to students, and to think about what might be too much information for the time being. She has students stop with their finger over that key so she can circle around and help students fix any errors. She verbally gives corrections and encouragement while doing this. All corrections are given with a positive, encouraging but matter-of-fact tone, which the students recognize as genuine and caring.
Mrs. Weaver has all the students ready. "Wow, you are all doing so well! Thank you so much for being great listeners and being ready to go. Now, let's try playing this together. One, two, ready, go!" The students try playing while Mrs. Weaver sings and circles around the room fixing hand positions. After the first attempt, she says, "Good try! That was our first time and we can only get	Again, Mrs. W is taking a moment to give praise to the group for their good behavior, effort, and attentiveness. She moves directly from this praise into the activity. Her transitions are quick, which is good for young learners by keeping them on track. By eliminating downtime or silence, she sets them up to be successful.

better from here. If you can, I want you to try to remember this song for next time. Now that you know how piano class works, we will be able to learn so much more together next time!"	
"We are almost out of time, but we have one thing left to do. First, I need you all to quietly and carefully move in sssllllllooooooowwwwwwwww mmmoooottttiiiioooonnnnn to the floor by the piano where we sat at the beginning of class. Ready go," Mrs. Weaver whispers. "Oh, Kaya, it looks like you ran here. I thought we were supposed to be moving in slow motion! Why didn't you move in slow motion?" Kaya shrugs. "Ok, well I really need you to think more about why you do things in piano class, Kaya. I know you can do it. This can be a warning. We can't have more running in this classroom because of the pianos. It is dangerous!" Mrs. Weaver says individually to Kaya before moving to the acoustic piano in front of all the students.	Mrs. W does a great job communicating to the students the structure of the class. She tells them what comes next, and what is left in the class. This, again, eliminates a great deal of misbehavior and disruption that comes with student anxiety when activities and structure are unclear. Her "slow motion" transition is helpful in giving the students a clear expectation of how to move from one activity to the next. In addition, it's fun! When Kaya runs instead of moving in slow motion, Mrs. W states the action before fixing it by saying, "Oh, Kaya, it looks like you ran here." When she says, "I thought we were supposed to be moving in slow motion," she gives Kaya the opportunity to think and understand that the way she moved was wrong. By asking Kaya why she didn't follow the instruction, she gives Kaya an opportunity to explain herself i.e. if she didn't hear the instruction, or if she was just excited, etc. This helps scaffold to student behavioral self-awareness and reflection. Kaya indicates she doesn't know why she didn't follow the direction, so Mrs. W can then say that she wants Kaya to be more thoughtful of her actions, and gives a warning. She also explains why running is not allowed. Again, her tone is calm and caring, so Kaya does not feel excluded or like she is unwelcome for the next activity.
"Alright everyone. You did so wonderfully today. You are so smart and so good at listening! I can't wait to make more music together next time. Now, I have a song to play for you, and I'd like for you	Mrs. W begins to close the class by offering group praise in the form of, yet again, more positive verbal reinforcement. She is specific in her praise, stating that the students are "good at listening." She provides clarity in her instructions for them to, "put on their listening ears" and "raise your hand when you think you know what song I am playing." In addition, she models to them how to

to put on your listening ears so you're ready to guess what it is. When you think you know what song I am playing, please raise your hand. I will call on people sitting nicely and quietly, trying their best." After pretending to put on her listening ears, Mrs. Weaver sits down and performs Colors of the Wind from Pochahontas. A few children raise their hands, but Ernest mistakenly yells, "Pocahontas!" Mrs. Weaver completes the excerpt she was playing and says, "Yes, Ernest, you are right! It was Pocahontas. I know you knew the answer, but I really needed you to raise your hand. I need you to remember to do that next time so people have a fair chance to guess."	put on their imaginary listening ears so they know what to do. When Ernest mistakenly yells the answer, Mrs. W expresses some disappointment visually and verbally, though not too much to harm Ernest's self-confidence. She is clear with Ernest in her words and her tone that yes, he was correct, but he did not share his answer the way the class needed. He is more likely to learn that this was wrong because of her positive, but clear feedback to him. She also explains why she needed him to raise his hand.
"Now, I have a song to teach you before it's time to go, but first, I am looking for someone to remind me what we learned today," Mrs. Weaver raises her hand to model the response she is looking for. A few students raise their hands. "Ernie, start us off. What is one thing we learned?" She says. "We learned the Charlie Chipmunk song!" Ernie says excitedly. Mrs. Weaver answers, "YES! We sure did. What a fun song! What else did we learn? What about how to	Mrs. W is trying to help her students scaffold their understanding by asking them to remind the group what they learned today. This gives students the chance to share an answer in front of the group, and to learn from each other. Students tend to remember information more when it is information they have realized on their own, or it is shared from a peer. If students only receive information from their instructor, they will likely struggle to learn how to come to conclusions autonomously. Mrs. W is clear about the response she wants from students, and selects Ernest to begin by listing one thing they learned. He answers well, and continues probing for answers. She throws Kaya some positive reinforcement for being patient and lets Kaya share. When Kaya mentions the rule about not "hitting" the pianos, Mrs. Weaver has the opportunity to emphasize this rule by saying "Yes! That is SO important isn't it? We have to remember the rules so we can keep learning fun things and making music together."

come into the classroom… or how to use the instruments? Kaya, you're sitting so patiently, tell us something else we learned." "We learned the rules, and not to hit the pianos!" Kaya responds. "Yes! That is SO important isn't it? We have to remember the rules so we can keep learning fun things and making music together. Great answer. Does anyone else want to tell us something else we learned today? We really learned a lot…" Mrs. Weaver offers. When no other hands come up, she says, "Sure thing, those were the biggest things, right? We learned the rules, how to treat the instruments, and how to sing and begin playing Charlie Chipmunk. So last, I have one short song for us to sing together."	Mrs. W closes by providing a verbal overview of the answers, so students are reminded two times about the main things they learned in the class.
She then sings the goodbye song, which emphasizes sol-do, and has the children try it with her. "Thank you so much for a great first piano class together. I can't wait to see you all next week! Remember, how will we come into the classroom next week?" She calls on Ernest who says, "We will line up outside and walk in like starfish!" "Exactly, Ernest! You are so right. Remember to line up outside for next time. I am	Mrs. W takes this time at the end of the class to give more positive verbal reinforcement, solidify classroom behaviors, and keep the children excited for the next class. She reminds them of how to enter the room by asking them if anyone remembers, providing another opportunity for a student to recall and share information individually. Mrs. W selects students individually to leave based on good behavior. This gives a confidence and self-esteem boost for the first few kids selected, but when she gets close to the end, she lets a group of students go. If she were to release them one by one, there is a risk that students near the end might feel like their behavior was bad. That is not the intention of this approach. Mrs. W only wants to show that positive behavior will be rewarded, but after a certain point, all students will demonstrate that good behavior, and letting the last five or so line up together avoids

looking for people who are sitting quietly so I know who is ready to leave first. Kaya, great job, you may go. Mika, you may go." Mrs. Weaver continues until all children are gone. Once she reaches four students remaining, she lets them all leave to avoid any child feeling left out for being last.	instilling toxic shame.

Imaginary Fifth Class Narrative

This narrative is set to occur in the fifth class with this group of students. It takes place in the same setting, and demonstrates other behavioral challenges and solutions that are more likely to occur with a group of students that are more comfortable in this learning setting. Normally, this is around the time that students might have more outbursts. The first day of class likely will not have severe behavior issues if rules and procedures are explained, modeled, and taught. This narrative will cover an isolated, severe behavioral outburst, and will take place during the middle of the class time.

Mrs. W has begun to teach a new song by rote to the students. She has already noted that Ernest was having a rough day by demonstrating some negative responses verbally and with body language. "All right, everyone! Good job practicing individually on your headsets. You are so responsible. It's time for us to try the first line	Mrs. W is demonstrating high levels of awareness. She noted Ernest's frustration and disengagement earlier and was actively monitoring his actions and behavior to help him stay on track to the best of her ability. She continues to give positive reinforcement to the group as a whole as Ernest begins to withdraw. She tries to redirect his behavior and offer him another opportunity to rejoin the activity with, "Ernest, I know it's felt like a longer class today, but I really need you to try this with us." This doesn't work for Ernest, and his emotions bubble over resulting in his yelling outburst. This likely has nothing to do with Mrs. W or the piano class, as his behavior has been a bit reactive for the whole period of

of this song together. 1, 2, ready, go," Mrs. W instructs. "Ernest, I know it's felt like a longer class today, but I really need you to try this with us," she attempts to redirect. Somehow, this has set Ernest off and he stands up with clenched fists at his sides and yells, "I don't want to!" The other children are clearly alarmed and anxious due to this behavior. He begins walking conspicuously towards the acoustic grand piano at the front of the room. Kaya murmurs in a frightened voice, "He's going to hurt the piano!" A few other students gasp and stare out of concern.	instruction. Mrs. W does a great job conveying a calm demeanor that keeps the other students feeling safe even though Ernest is having a severe outburst.
Mrs. W responds calmly, "Ernest isn't going to hurt the piano. He knows the rules and the right thing to do, right Ernest." Ernest glares at Mrs. W and pounds his hand onto the piano keys. The students gasp and jump a little. Some cover their ears with their mouths open in shock. Mrs. W walks to the acoustic piano to close the lid, and as she moves towards Ernest, he runs towards the door. There are still about 15 minutes left in the class. "He's going to run away!" Mika exclaims. Mrs. W calmly says, "Ernest, why don't you come back and sit at your keyboard? I can tell you're	Mrs. W is simultaneously providing Ernest with a positive narrative for his actions as well as acknowledging to the other students that yes, rules still exist, and yes, Ernest is still expected to follow them. She also is conveying her belief in Ernest to do the right thing outwardly. It is clear she cares for him and wants him to make the right choices. Ernest, for whatever reason, cannot seem to redirect his emotions, and may not even be aware of them, or what they are caused by. He displays anger by pounding on the piano. This definitely is a bid for attention, and Mrs. W chooses not to react with anger, but maintains the safe learning space by calmly moving towards Ernest and the piano to keep the space safe. She does not move in a threatening way. She does not intend to restrain Ernest, as there are many laws about this, and many ways to go wrong. She simply is reclaiming the space at the acoustic piano, and showing Ernest that she has no problem calmly moving towards him and the misbehavior. Ernest, in another bid for more attention, probably feels lost, anxious, embarrassed, and frustrated he is in the situation he is now in (because of his choices, of course).

upset, but we don't behave this way in this class. We must be respectful of the instruments, and it's really sad that you chose to hurt this piano. You normally do a very good job, and I know you can do this. Why don't you have a seat?"	When another student suggests Ernest might run away, Mrs. W takes the opportunity to again offer Ernest encouragement and another chance to re-enter the group without shame. She acknowledges his misbehavior, but also states factually that "we don't behave this way in this class," and "You normally do a very good job, and I know you can do this."
Ernest looks back and forth between Mrs. W and the door, and moves a little towards the door before looking back at Mrs. W for a response. Mrs. W matter-of-factly says, "Ernest, it wouldn't be smart to leave this room. Piano class is almost over for today and we can talk about it after class together." She walks towards Ernest and the door, but Ernest runs to the door, opens it, looks back at Mrs. W, and leaves. Mrs. W says with a caring tone and straightforward delivery, "Okay Ernest, we will miss you." The students in the class are clearly shocked and anxious due to this disruption. They have generally been sitting quietly with occasional verbal contributions that convey their shock and disapproval of Ernest's behavior.	In these moments where Ernest looks back and forth from the door to Mrs. W, it is clear he is waiting on her response to determine his course of action. This is precisely why Mrs. W chooses not to respond in a way that provides attention. She again, gives him the facts in a caring, straight forward way and does not chastise him personally for his mistakes and misbehavior. When Ernest doesn't answer, she knows she must continue to engage the other students and this interaction cannot dominate the rest of the class and learning environment. She walks towards Ernest to either close the door behind him, or close the door in front of him and help gesture him to his seat (again, never touching him or infringing upon his space). Ernest runs out the door, and Mrs. W's response to him is necessary. She conveys care, and acknowledgement for his action.
Mrs. W lets Ernest run out the door. His behavior is clearly attention-seeking, and if she were to pursue him, she knows he would just run farther. She cannot leave the rest of the class unattended.	By deciding to stay in the room, Mrs. W shows the students that she is still in control of the environment, and they can trust her. If she were to also lose her temper, express personal frustration, or run after Ernest, the situation would read as though Ernest has control and power in this interaction. Mrs. W has set her expectations clearly, has reminded Ernest numerous times what

Mrs. W addresses the class, "Well, that was not what we had planned, was it? Thank you for being so calm, patient, and kind while Ernest hurt the piano. It is hard when people don't follow the rules, but we know Ernest is just having a hard day today. I hope he can join us again. We love having him in class with us. Now, I need us to move to sit on the rug quietly. I have a special video to show you!" Mrs. W gathers the students on the floor by the whiteboard to project a short video about music theory from youtube for them to watch so she can place a quick phone call to Ernest's parents.	the rules are, and has encouraged him to make the right choices. He continued to misbehave despite all of this, so she must keep moving on, all the while making sure he is unharmed. Of course, this is a worst case scenario. Teachers want all students in the classroom learning at all times, but with severe issues such as this, safety of the student is the number one priority. Mrs. W addresses the situation with the class, which is very important. If teachers do not address the incident, students will be left in anxiety and will not know what is expected of them or how to respond. She is able to convey to the students that she appreciates their behavior, and that she understands it was not a comfortable situation for them. *Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, she communicates that the rules are important, but Ernest was just having a bad day and that we hope he can rejoin us.* By communicating to the students that she values Ernest and cares for him within the group, the students are likely to also accept him back into the class without exiling him or being frustrated with him for his outburst. Were Mrs. W to speak negatively of Ernest, his return to the learning environment would be at risk of involving toxic shame and isolation from his peers and instructor. She quickly moves to another activity to keep the students engaged so she can continue to monitor Ernest and call his parents to conclude this incident and be sure Ernest is okay.
After calling Ernest's parents, who luckily answer and can confirm they are en route to pick him up, Mrs. W walks by the door to see if she can locate him. He appears to be sitting further down the hallway. Mrs. W chooses to let him be, in hopes he will either re-enter the classroom, or wait there until the class period ends and his parents arrive to pick him up. She keeps walking past the door to check that he hasn't legitimately run away while	This type of monitoring is important. Following a severe outburst such as this, sometimes a child needs space to recover on their own. Though she isn't 100% sure this is what Ernest needs, it seems to be an option that is already working, as he isn't participating in further attention seeking behavior that threatens the structure of the learning environment. Continuing to check on him without asking more questions or looking to resolve allows Ernest the space to potentially say something to Mrs. W, or walk back into the room.

concluding the class with their normal exit routines.	
Mrs. W approaches Ernest and his parents after class to speak with them. "It seems that Ernest was very upset with me in class today. He may have gotten frustrated during our new song, and then he ran up and pounded on the big piano. One of our most important rules in class is to respect the pianos, and never hurt them. I need to be sure Ernest can commit to respecting the pianos for him to return to class. Do you think that's fair?" Mrs. W asks. Ernest's parents answer, "Yes, that's very fair. Ernest, what happened? You know following the rules is important." Ernest seems to feel bad as he stares at the ground. Mrs. W says, "Perhaps we can meet 10 minutes before class next week to talk and be sure we have a good plan in place. Ernest, I'd really like for you to have fun and learn piano with us still! I just have to know I can trust you to follow the rules. I'm excited to have you back in class. Have a good week, and we will talk before class next time!"	Speaking with Ernest and his parents after class is crucial. It is wise that Mrs. W chooses to talk with all of them at the same time, instead of just talking to the parents without Ernest. This way, she can convey care for him as well as clarify the expectations for behavior and discuss how they can be met. By involving his parents, there is a greater likelihood that whatever made Ernest more on edge can be resolved, or at least his parents are now aware. Parents can also serve as encouragers and positive reinforcers that only make positive behavior more likely. Mrs. W suggests to meet next week before class. This is wise because it allows Ernest a week of space and time to recover, because he is clearly emotionally spent and has been overwhelmed by the situation. Then, Mrs. W can try to talk with Ernest and see what he has to say. Insight from the parents before the next class can be helpful and there is opportunity to develop specific strategies so that Ernest is able to be successful in enjoying and learning in class piano.

Conclusion

In review, positive behavior support is the best way to approach classroom management. In addition to the above steps and strategies, objective discipline without lasting judgement that results in unhealthy internalized shame is the best approach. Student success is based on the environment created and controlled by the instructor, and content can easily be lost based on the dynamics of that environment. It is up to the instructor to use discipline and classroom management as a vessel for teaching students how to regulate their own behavior. When instructors assume students understand how their behavior is wrong, they do that student a disservice. Children need guidance, modeling, and scaffolding to learn self awareness, self efficacy, and regulation. By teaching students these skills through behavior management, students are able to learn much more efficiently.

Group piano training programs should further refine their curriculum to include these approaches not just in readings, discussions, and scenario viewings but in real life or simulated practice. With proper training, group music instructors can continue delivering high quality content to their young students without any unwanted barriers or challenges in the form of classroom management. All students deserve this opportunity.

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Appendix A

Elementary Group Piano Management Plan

1) **Strategies that Affirm and Encourage Positive Behavior**

    Non-Verbal Reinforcement.

- Thumbs up.

- Head nod.

- Smile.

- High five.

- Use the student's work as an example.

Verbal Reinforcement.

- "You have really improved on _____(behavior/task/content), that is awesome. Good for you!"

- "I really admire how you stuck with _____ (behavior/task/content) even though it was hard."

- "You have come a long way! I know _____ (behavior/task/content) wasn't easy."

- "You're so smart!"

- "Wow, I am so impressed with _____ (behavior/task/content)."

- "_____ (behavior/task/content) has really improved since you started this class!"

- "Great job being a team player. I noticed how well you were working with _____."

- "It is so encouraging to see _____(behavior/task/content). When we do this, we have so much more time to learn fun things!"

Tangible rewards.

- Stickers.

- Snacks.

- Games (individual or group).

- Group "party" with fun activities, and music games.

- Individual performance for the class.

- Group performance for the class.

Intangible rewards.

- Specific verbal praise to parent/guardian in front of the student.

- Specific verbal praise to the student individually or in front of the group.

2) **Constructive Consequences**

Individual Constructive Consequences.

- Removal of individual reward.

- Removal of experience.

- Removal of certain group privileges.

Group Constructive Consequences.

- Removal of group reward.

Individual Redirection.

- Coloring corner.

- Go for a quick walk.

- Write down what is upsetting.

- Take deep breaths.

Group Redirection.

- Group brainstorm.

  - "Why is this not working for us?"

  - "How can we change our behavior so we can complete this activity/task?"

  - "Is this how we should be acting or working?"

- - "What can we do to change this?"

  - "Shouldn't we try to find a good way to do this so we can move on?"

  - "Isn't it more fun when we can all work together and follow the directions?"

- Instructor changes activity.

- Group facilitation of individual write downs or drawings about what is the hardest part of the activity or what they are struggling to understand (similar to an exit ticket, but may be done during instruction or class).

- Group walk.

- Three deep breaths together with a student leader or teacher leader.

3) Rules

- Respect yourself, others, and the instruments.

- Raise your hand to speak and listen when others are speaking.

- Always try your best and ask questions when you need help.

- Follow directions to the best of your ability.

- Keep your hands to yourself.

4) Procedures

Entrance/Exit Routines.

- Form a line outside the classroom. Pick a new person to lead the class into the room each day. Walk in like a different animal while listening to music. The student at the front of the line gets to pick which animal the class enters as.

- Form a line outside the classroom. Pick a new person to lead the class into the room each day. Play music while the students enter. (Students could also sing a song while they enter.) Pose a question to them about the music before they enter the classroom so as they are seated, they are listening attentively for the answer.

- Provide students with an individual activity at the start of each class so they are actively engaged individually at the start of class.

- Begin with individual practice time on headphones.

- Use a hello and goodbye song to indicate the start and end of class. Always sing the song before speaking, so students always know to listen for the beginning of the song. If possible, use a call/response song that requires student listening and participation.

Transitions.

- Use a whisper voice to deliver instructions.

- Sing the instructions to the students. This can be done while playing simple I-V boom chucks on the keyboard in a recitative style (very informal) or without keyboard accompaniment.

- Ask students to move to their new place in slow motion.

- Write the instructions on the board and point to them without speaking. Students will read them and respond. When making transitions an attentiveness "game," students are more likely to eagerly comply.

Materials/Instruments.

- Designate a "materials/instruments" helper or two.

- Select student helpers to set up instruments (open piano lids) who are behaving well. When helping becomes a reward, students are likely to adjust behavior quickly.

- Select students one by one to go sit at their keyboard/piano depending on who is showing good behavior.

- Use a song to sing or play that indicates this is the last song to play on the instruments.

Gaining the Teacher's Attention.

- Raising your hand.

5) **Addressing Misbehavior**

Verbal Signaling.

- "Let's settle down just a bit here. We have to keep moving through this information."

- "_____ I see you have a lot of energy which is great, but turn it down a few notches, please."

- "I am concerned that the noise in the room won't allow us to finish learning the song we started today."

- "I know it is hard to focus right now, but we need to work together to complete this activity."

Non Verbal Signaling.

- "The look" (a longer stare that communicates expectations are not being met).

- A raised finger to the lips without the accompanying "shh".

- Using a hand sign to signal it is quiet time.

- Counting down 3-2-1 on the fingers so when 1 is reached, it is silent.

- Pointing somewhere on the page.

Reminding.

- "Can someone remind me what the rules are when we do work by ourselves?"

- "Remember, we always treat the instruments carefully and with kindness. We wouldn't want to hurt them in any way."

- "What should you be doing right now?"

- "Look at what the others are doing. Wouldn't it be a good idea to do that?"

- "Let's see if we can remember how to put the instruments away the right way."

Warning.

- "This is a warning. If you can't settle down enough to finish the activity with us, you won't be able to play your keyboard at the end of class."

- "If you can't hold on to _____ (some sort of object) quietly, I will have to hold on to it until the end of class."

- "_____(insert name) you are being too distracting right now. I need you to try to focus quietly so we can all play the game at the end of class."

Ignoring.

- Ignoring misbehavior is a helpful strategy but depends on the individual situation. It seems to be most effective to ignore the following behaviors: a child standing to stretch during class, the occasional neighbor whispering session, if the same child who frequently struggles to focus is distracted for a moment (this gives them the chance to get back on track before a warning), certain types of attention seeking

behavior. Sometimes, children who seek attention really do need it. Other times, it is important to NOT give attention to disruptive or harmful types of attention seeking behavior. When a teacher responds to negative attention seeking behavior, this shows the student that negative behavior will end in them earning attention. This is a hard pattern to break, and normally only occurs in more severe disciplinary situations in students with recurring struggles.

Praising.

- See section 1 on strategies to affirm and encourage positive behavior.

Doing Nothing.

- This strategy must be used sparingly for it to continue to have a lasting effect. Doing nothing means the teacher simply stops and does not give any verbal cues, but waits. This can be accompanied by "the look", or a slow raised finger to point to the instruction on the board. Silence and slow movement can be a much needed contrast to disorderly or chaotic behavior/settings. Doing nothing works the best when there are multiple misbehaviors occurring, and it can almost act as a reset, or a shocking reminder to the whole group that what is happening is not okay and that behavior must change.

Questions.

The following questions are quoted from Robison (2019; 2020).

- "Can you explain to me why you should be able to do that and what you were thinking?"

- "How did that make you feel? How do you think that made them feel?"

- "Remember that time you owned that activity? How can we work toward that?"

- "Who would be a good partner for you? How can you make progress together?"

- "Do you remember when you could not do this first part? Look how far you have come."

- "What are your feelings telling you?"