

THE BENEFITS OF OFFERING CLASSROOM PIANO LESSONS AS
PART OF THE CURRICULUM IN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine the potential benefits of offering classroom piano lessons as part of the curriculum in public elementary schools. The research reviews the educational, neurological, and cultural potential benefits a child may receive if they study the piano. Further study examines the availability for teachers to receive training in teaching group piano, the methods of setting up a piano classroom, and materials needed for such a program in the school system. Records of the history of group lessons showed that this method of teaching has had periods of success and periods of decline in the United States. The times that suffered from a downfall in the program are attributed mainly to times of war and financial decline. Advocates such as Raymond Burrows have furthered the concept, as well as Robert Pace, whose work eventually has led to the ongoing training of teachers across America through seminars and music journal articles. Qualitative research consisted of interviews with three participants who currently or previously taught piano lessons in a public or private school system. The results of this study indicated the teachers' opinions of group piano lessons varied according to their own experience. The analysis of the data indicated that teachers who have school systems that include a piano class in the curriculum have greater success. Research determined the existence of a difference of opinion as to whether group lessons or private lessons are the best methods of teaching students.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Reading music and playing a musical instrument are complex yet very enjoyable activities that improve cognitive, motor, emotional, and musical abilities. Piano lessons have a well-known impact on the cognitive ability and emotional state of a child. In the United States, most public elementary schools do not offer piano lessons to children. This study will examine the potential benefits of offering group piano lessons in public elementary schools.

Piano lessons are important because they offer positive developmental potential benefits, both personally and academically. Many families opt to invest the time and money into having their children learn the piano without even realizing all of the positive effects that will be received. On the other hand, there are thousands of children who are unable to study the piano due to a variety of reasons. A lack of finances plays a large role in numerous school-aged children missing out on the opportunity to be a pianist. Parents have to hire a private piano teacher, and this can be costly. Lack of family support is another reason that children are not able to study piano. Many families do not see this as an important skill and do not want to invest the time and money into having their child learn the piano. School leaders in America have not realized that piano lessons can benefit a child with their education, mental outlook, neurological growth, and overall well-being. General music, chorus, and band instruments are often taught in schools, but not the piano. The inclusion of classroom piano in public schools will offer many children an opportunity to learn an instrument while benefitting their overall development and well-being.

The scope of research on this project will be to emphasize the importance of adding piano lessons to the public elementary school curriculum. While discussing the many positive developmental factors, research will focus on the educational potential benefits of piano lessons during the school day and determine if it will enhance a child's educational, neurological, emotional, and mental experiences. Some potential benefits could include but are not limited to improvement in verbal memory skills, eye-hand

coordination, self-esteem, study habits, working with other children, creativity, listening skills, and better comprehension of academic subjects.¹

The piano is the ultimate instrument in terms of skill and demand. Students must develop the coordination of reading music while knowing which note to play on the eighty-eight key choices. Students will eventually develop the ability to keep rhythm, and at times, use all ten fingers simultaneously. The ears must be able to listen to what the fingers play and make sure it is correct and precise. With this much going on in the body, it is understandable that pianists have to develop a unique brain capacity, one that has been revealed by science.² A pianist must also be creative, have a good work ethic, possess the ability to concentrate, and have a desire to learn. These attributes are parallel to what is needed to have the necessary tools for a good education. Piano lessons can be a positive accompaniment to educational skill requirements.

Education

The education of a child is necessary for growth, knowledge, enlightenment, and development, and it starts at a very early age. Children do not know what they need to learn so educators need to make good curriculum decisions for each student to properly develop, grow, and learn. School systems know that reading, math, spelling, science, and other core curriculum subjects are necessary for a proper education. Piano lessons can serve as a facilitator in assisting the teaching of these academic subjects while enabling students with a lifelong ability to play the piano.

¹ Eugenia Costa-Giomi, "Effects of Three Years of Piano Instruction on Children's Academic School Performance and Self-Esteem," *Psychology of Music* 32, no.2, (2004) <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0305735604041491>.

² Jordan Taylor Sloan, "Science Shows How Piano Players' Brains Are Actually Different From Everybody Else's," *mic.com*, last modified 2014, <https://www.mic.com/articles/91329/science-shows-how-piano-players-brains-are-actually-different-from-everybody-elses>.

There was a correlation between music and math where the aptitude for both is highly integrated.³ A piano student must understand and learn about rhythms, beats, and scales, which helps with math when learning patterns, organization, grouping, and fractions. Children start piano by learning short compositions and eventually they move to longer, more advanced, and complicated pieces. In doing this, they build their short-term and long-term memory skills. These skills transfer to academic subjects when learning facts, figures, dates, and other important components of academia.

Studies have been conducted at The University of California Irvine where researchers investigated the effects of musical training and how it could impact math performance.⁴ The investigation showed that children who were taking music lessons did better in math than those who did not take music lessons.⁵ This led to the conclusion that music lessons can have a positive impact on math performance and ability.⁶ According to China`s Lang, one of the world`s leading pianists: “As long as music tuition is done properly, you will see students learn how to focus, learn how to commit and be creative. It teaches you logically. It can be very mathematical. And if you have a child struggling with a text, it can help to express that text through music, to use music as a medium of interpretation.”⁷

The connection between music studies and math studies has been one of the more prominent subjects of research. In a study by F.H. Rauscher (1993) at the University of Wisconsin, playing the piano has been shown in multiple studies to improve “spatial-temporal reasoning,” which is the ability to

³ Benjamin Roussey, “Will Piano Lessons Boost Your Child’s Academic Performance?” Merriam Music, August 7, 2017, <https://www.merriammusic.com/blog/music-school/piano-lessons-academic-performance/>.

⁴ Lori Miller Kase, “Using Music to Close the Academic Gap: New Studies on the Cognitive Advantages of Learning Instruments at an Early Age,” Health.com, October 9, 2013, <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2013/10/using-music-to-close-the-academic-gap/280362/>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Maurice, “17 Science-Backed Potential benefits of Playing Piano (from Children to Seniors),” Published by piano-keyboard-reviews.com, October 1, 2021, <https://piano-keyboard-reviews.com/tutorials/potential-benefits-of-playing-piano/>.

visualize objects in our head.⁸ Piano students need to see a note on a staff and know that its location on a certain line or space means you play on a certain piano note. Playing the piano is visual in this regard. In a different study, Dr. Rauscher found that children who took rhythm lessons had even more improved spatial-temporal skills and performed better in mathematical tests.⁹

Music is a language and children can be instructed to learn any language, sometimes more than one. According to studies, kids can most easily learn new languages when they start at a young age. Piano lessons help children develop the very same skills needed to accomplish language arts, including reading. Following the same thought process, piano lessons should start early in the life of a child so they can start the process of development for playing. In learning the piano, students learn how to follow directions, mentally scan written materials, think critically, create solutions, and translate writing into action.¹⁰ The comparison for learning piano and languages is that both require concentration. Concerning languages, the student has to learn to say new words in different accents, learn to use the words in a sentence, and know the meaning of these new words. With piano, the student must learn to play the fingers on specific notes, understand the names of the notes on the written page, and count while playing. It is easy to see that both of these activities require not only one skill, but also several skills working together to make the outcome successful.

Children cannot have the ability to pick up a book and start reading, nor can they sit down and become a pianist. Piano students have to look at each note on the staff and know the name of the note, and they have to know the name of each note on the piano. A 1993 Educational Psychology journal showed

⁸ Sylwia Holmes and Susan Hallam, "The impact of participation in music on learning mathematics," UCL IOE Press, *London Review of Education*, Volume 15, Number 3, 2017: 425-238, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1163197.pdf>.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Anita Collins, "What if every child had access to music education from birth?," TEDxCanberra on YouTube, October 27, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ueqgenARzIE&t=616s>.

that the ability to distinguish between pitches was linked to good reading skills.¹¹ Hearing pitches, keeping a beat, learning dynamics, and many other skills require a lot of brain activity. When children read, they must know letters, how to combine those letters into words, and phonics, which also requires a lot of brain activity. Pianists must also memorize music, an ability that improves a child's recall mechanism.¹² This relationship between being able to distinguish different pitches and reading creates another benefit of piano lessons. A student must be aware of all of the components needed to complete either of these activities. If students do not know their letters, they cannot read. If a student does not know the names of the notes on the piano, they cannot play a song. All components are necessary for success.

Expansion of cultural knowledge can be attained through both reading and music.¹³ Children have preferences in the type of music they enjoy and the type of books they like to read. There are potential benefits to listening to and learning to play different genres of music from different cultures. Through music, children will often learn new vocabulary, different languages, alphabet letters, numbers, and many other educational elements. Music education experts such as Orff and Kodaly used folk songs in their languages to teach different elements of music to children. By using this technique, they were able to help children understand their own culture, surroundings, and music. Some teachers will use chants for teaching academic information such as math formulas, sentence structure, and science. When children can put a tune to academic information, it helps them learn the concept in a fun yet very effective manner. Students will learn the core curriculum while learning to keep the beat and sing on pitch. These elements will transfer to playing the piano when it comes to learning counts and hearing pitches. Being open-minded to explore different cultures and music expands the knowledge of many aspects of education.¹⁴

¹¹ S.J. Lamb and A.H. Gregory, "The relationship between music and reading in beginning readers," *Educational Psychology*, 13(1), 19–27. 1993, <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1993-32882-001>.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Olivia Groves, "15 Potential benefits of Learning Piano (Backed by Science)," *Lindeblad Piano Restoration*, February 8, 2018, <https://www.lindebladpiano.com/blog/potential-benefits-of-playing-piano>.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Organization and goal-setting skills are other potential benefits of piano lessons.¹⁵ A child assigned a new piece of music should have a goal of learning the piece and moving on to another piece. The time limit for reaching the goal may be to learn the piece in a week, two weeks, or a month. The child knows this is the goal and they work to make it happen.¹⁶ The students learn that they must have the notes, rhythm, and other skill sets perfected so they can advance. Staying focused, having good study habits, and a good work ethic makes this achievable. These important skills should be developed for all students. When the child learns these skill sets in piano, they flow over to academics.¹⁷

Neurological Potential Benefits

The positive effects of playing the piano extend beyond educational potential benefits and the sheer joy of making music. Studies have shown that the brain of a pianist develops to adapt to the demands of three areas: the motor, visual, and auditory cortices. Development of these areas needed for playing the piano can be applied to other areas of life.¹⁸

A student who studies for as little as a few months will reap positive potential benefits from piano lessons. This happens because scientists have found that playing music increases activity in the corpus callosum, which is the bridge between the left and right hemispheres of the brain. Strong brain activity is created on both hemispheres, which allows messages to cross both sides of the brain through faster and

¹⁵ Anita Collins, “What if every child had access to music education from birth?” TEDxCanberra on YouTube, October 27, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ueqgenARzIE&t=616s>.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Elijah, “How Playing Piano Affects the Brain,” <https://musiprof.com/blog/how-playing-piano-affects-the-brain/>.

more diverse routes.¹⁹ It is believed that through this development of the brain, musicians are likely to solve problems more effectively and creatively in both academic and social settings.

Humans have a favored hand that they use for writing and everyday activities. Most people have a dominant right or left-handed side in the brain's central sulcus. This is the part of the brain that separates the frontal lobe from the parietal lobe. Scientists have found that the brain of a pianist demonstrates a more symmetrical central sulcus than everyone else. A pianist must have equal use of both hands to play the piano. People are born with a dominant hand, but pianists can strengthen their weaker side to more closely match their dominant side.²⁰

Picture removed to comply with copyright laws.

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Musicians and non-musicians have different brains. The brains of musicians are larger structurally in the areas of hearing and listening, controlling motor actions to produce sounds, memory, emotion,

¹⁹ Elijah, "How Playing Piano Affects the Brain," <https://musiprof.com/blog/how-playing-piano-affects-the-brain/>.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

attention, and learning. The human brain has plasticity, which is the ability to adjust and rewire itself and create new neural circuits. When a person is learning a skill such as playing the piano, the brain will develop to accommodate the control of activities such as playing both hands while reading music. Pianists are involved in many simultaneous activities at once. This information is justification for the reason piano players need to continue practicing and playing to maintain the strength and plasticity that has developed.²²

People will possibly face many neurological conditions in their life, and many of these starts in early childhood. In 2013, the National Library of Medicine published an article that found that piano practice helped treat depression and alleviated stress in elderly adults.²³ It is assumed that while this study focused on older adults, the same can be true for people of all ages who study the piano. Piano playing can be a natural treatment for depression and mood disorders. Many children suffer from these and other mental health issues.²⁴ In a separate study in 2013 at an institute in Barcelona Spain (Science Nutshell), it was found that participants who were involved in the study of piano showed greater neuro and psychological improvement over those who did sports, painting, and other activities.²⁵ These studies lead us to consider that piano lessons for children can have long-term potential benefits for their mental and emotional health, even into adulthood.

²² Elijah, "How Playing Piano Affects the Brain," <https://musiprof.com/blog/how-playing-piano-affects-the-brain/>.

²³Sofia Seinfeld 1, Heidi Figueroa, Jordi Ortiz-Gil, Maria V Sanchez-Vives, "Effects of Music Learning and Piano Practice on Cognitive Function, Mood and Quality of Life in the Older Adults," *Front Psychology*, 2013, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24198804/>.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Olivia Groves, "15 Potential benefits of Learning Piano (Backed by Science)," Lindeblad Piano Restoration, February 8, 2018, <https://www.lindebladpiano.com/blog/potential-benefits-of-playing-piano>.

Creative Potential Benefits

Piano lessons at an early age help develop and preserve the natural and creative abilities of children. This was found to be true in a study by Educator Anita Collins (2005).²⁶ Dr. Collins, an award-winning educator, researcher, and writer in the field of brain development and music learning, states “piano lessons help children perfect their natural learning processes.”²⁷ She encourages students to compose music after developing the needed skills. Children can accomplish this, sometimes at an early age, because of the innate drive and ability to discover, invent, and create. Many times it is just a matter of exposure. When children are exposed to music, piano, and composition, they will start mimicking what they hear and see. While early compositions may not seem like a big accomplishment, it is a beginning step towards being a musician, composer, or performer.

A pianist must possess the ability to navigate many parts of the mind and body to be able to play a composition. Additionally, a pianist should be creative and imaginative. When a pianist is creative, they are applying flexibility to their skill.²⁸ Dr. Ana Pinho, (Centre for Neuroscience and Cell Biology, University of Coimbra, Portugal) conducted a study where the brains of accomplished pianists were scanned while playing. Researchers were able to show how playing the piano can boost your creativity. It was discovered that the “dorsolateral prefrontal cortex”, which is the area of the brain that is responsible for suppressing stereotypical responses and increasing improvisation skills, was activated during musical improvisation.²⁹ Improvisation, the skill of being able to make up your version of an existing piece, is

²⁶ Anita Collins, “What if every child had access to music education from birth?” TEDxCanberra on YouTube, October 27, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ueqgenARzIE&t=616s>.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ K. Daniel, “The Importance of Creativity in Piano Lessons,” Musikalessons.com. October 16, 2021, <https://www.musikalessons.com/blog/2016/08/the-importance-of-creativity-in-piano-lessons/>.

²⁹ Ian Sample, “Scientists Shed Light on Creativity by Studying Pianists’ Brain Activity,” Neuroscience, November 12, 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2013/nov/12/scientists-creativity-pianists-brain-activity>.

one type of music creativity. Based on the study of Dr. Pinho, it appears that playing the piano enhances the activity of the prefrontal lobe, making players better at creative thinking and coming up with new ideas on the spur of the moment. A level of creativity such as this helps people quickly come up with creative solutions in difficult and stressful situations apart from music. Dr. Pinho concluded that more improvisation training led to more automation and higher functional connectivity between regions of the brain that are important for creative playing.³⁰

A student who cannot be creative becomes a student who merely memorizes terms, facts, figures, notes, and other aspects of learning. A student studying piano needs to know the name of the notes on the staff, but they must also know where to play them. In contrast, a student who can improvise and be creative shows that they have an understanding of the material they have been learning and they can embellish their music because of that knowledge. An example of this would be a student who learns German words but cannot carry on a conversation in German. When necessary, the pianist should know how to add in notes, chords, or rhythms. The person speaking German must be able to express surprise, sadness, and emotion. Being creative, having flexibility, and putting in your touch is fun and can have a positive impact on the life of a person.³¹

Piano lessons in public school can be an ideal setting for fostering creativity through improvisation. Students can play songs with improvised parts that go with what other students are playing. They could start with something as simple as placing the hands on the C five-finger position and making up tunes. This skill would advance as the student progresses. Exposure to different genres of music should be incorporated for improvisation to be successful. For many piano teachers, Classical music is considered the ultimate learning tool for students. While it is true that the teaching of Classical

³⁰ Ian Sample, "Scientists Shed Light on Creativity by Studying Pianists' Brain Activity," *Neuroscience*, November 12, 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2013/nov/12/scientists-creativity-pianists-brain-activity>.

³¹ K. Daniel, "The Importance of Creativity in Piano Lessons, *Musikalessons.com.*, October 16, 2021, <https://www.musikalessons.com/blog/2016/08/the-importance-of-creativity-in-piano-lessons/>.

music is important, it does not leave a lot of room for improvisational creativity. Students who include the study of commercial types of music usually develop a skill of creativity and imagination in their music.³² Students who develop the art of creativity will use this skill in other areas of life. Teachers will see this skill spill over into classroom speeches, writing assignments, art projects, dealing with problems, and numerous other assignments and circumstances.

The goal of fostering creativity in piano lessons is to get the student to express an idea with enough skill to make the music personal and fulfilling. Playing the piano is meant to be an enjoyable experience and having the ability to express it with our thoughts, feelings, and ideas makes it effective on a personal level. Teachers in public school piano classes need to understand that they are teaching children a skill that will stay with them for the rest of their lives if they remain in lessons for some time. The creativity they develop in the early years will grow as piano skills grow.

Potential Benefits of Group Piano Classes

Group classes can be utilized to teach piano in schools and would give the chance for many children to study the instrument with a qualified teacher. Learning to play the piano in a group class can play an important role in helping children be well-rounded and have skills in working with others. It is important to understand that the main benefit of taking piano lessons helps children understand music.³³ Students will learn scales and basic melodies during piano class, and they will gain an understanding of how music “works”. As they grow in knowledge and skill, it is hopeful they will develop a stronger interest and continue pursuing piano later in life.³⁴

³² Daniel K., “The Importance of Creativity in Piano Lessons,” Musikalessons.com., October 16, 2021, <https://www.musikalessons.com/blog/2016/08/the-importance-of-creativity-in-piano-lessons/>.

³³ Sage, “How Do Piano Lessons Benefit Your Child?” Sage Music, LLC, April 18, 2015, <https://www.sagemusic.co/7-ways-piano-lessons-can-benefit-child/>.

³⁴ Ibid.

Group piano classes in schools can help increase a child's IQ, according to a study in the Journal of Educational Psychology (Vol. 98, No. 2).³⁵ Children aged 6 to 11 years old were involved in the study that showed, for each month of music lessons, the children experienced a $\frac{1}{6}$ -point increase in IQ.³⁶ For an example of how this affects children long-term consider that a child who has 6 years of lessons could experience an IQ increase of 7.5 points. This number is a significant increase in IQ and should be a strong motivation to encourage parents to have their children study the piano.³⁷

Classroom piano class is a wonderful opportunity for children to learn teamwork. In the academic world, there is a lot of emphasis on working together as a team in groups such as debate clubs, classroom activities, sports, dance groups, and school clubs. A group piano class is another avenue that will offer children powerful lessons in how to work as a team as they play duets, trios, and ensemble compositions. Additionally, the students will work closely with a music teacher. This relationship will help students understand how to interact with a mentor and how to conduct themselves socially with adults or superiors.³⁸ As students advance in their playing skills, they may accompany other students while they sing or play an instrument. This level of working with others will help students learn to adjust their playing speed and volume to accommodate others, all of which will build abilities in teamwork.³⁹

Children who study piano develop coordination and motor skills. When playing the piano, the pianist must utilize the movement of the hands, the arms, and the feet. This required incredible coordination can be difficult at first. As time passes and students practice, they will become more agile in

³⁵ Sage, "How Do Piano Lessons Benefit Your Child?" Sage Music, LLC, April 18, 2015, <https://www.sagemusic.co/7-ways-piano-lessons-can-benefit-child/>.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

their movements and the coordination requirements will become second nature.⁴⁰ The ability to move the body in this manner will help strengthen the hand-eye coordination of the student. The student may find as they develop and increase in dexterity and agility, other areas of life will benefit such as sports, art, and dance.⁴¹

Classroom piano lessons will instill discipline in children. It is highly unlikely that a child will become a piano prodigy overnight. For most students, learning the piano is the accumulation of many years of continued study and practice. It can be a slow, humbling, and often challenging process. Little by little the students will learn skills and knowledge that will take them from playing 5 finger tunes to playing beautiful compositions.⁴² As they do this, they are reaching goals and continually improving. A good tool in discipline and to achieve success is for students to establish a regular practice time and stick to it on a daily and weekly schedule. This is part of the discipline that students learn through the piano. There are times when practice is difficult, and some students will sometimes want to give up.⁴³ As they persist in their practice and keep going, they will see that it pays off in the end when they are playing songs for personal enjoyment, recitals, family, church, school, or other events.

Classroom piano lessons will help children build self-esteem as they engage in an activity that will foster self-improvement. There will be times when the teacher or maybe the other students will offer advice or comments that will help the student see things with a different mindset. The teacher will undoubtedly offer constructive criticism on different aspects of playing a composition. These comments are intended to be important lessons for children to learn. As the student develops the ability to hear and process feedback from the teacher, they will then use it as a tool to make productive and positive changes.

⁴⁰ Sage, "How Do Piano Lessons Benefit Your Child?" Sage Music, LLC, April 18, 2015, <https://www.sagemusic.co/7-ways-piano-lessons-can-benefit-child/>.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

Over time, this will help the child build self-confidence.⁴⁴ The realization that they can work and do better will help children understand how important it can be to apply themselves. These concepts won't happen suddenly but may develop over some time as children grow and mature.

Cultural exposure is an important and sometimes overlooked benefit of classroom piano lessons. Music history, music from different periods and cultures, composers, and music from different countries will expand the horizons of a child's mind.⁴⁵ Students will study different cultures in academic studies such as history, social studies, and literature. Playing the music of differing styles, and from various countries and periods, will give a child hands-on experience in discovering many aspects of the world in which we live.

Students should start piano lessons at a young age. In a study by Oppenheimer (2013), it was stated that many students do not feel comfortable starting lessons in their later school years.⁴⁶ His study dealt mostly with band instruments, but the same principles hold for piano lessons. Schools need to make sure opportunities for music instrument studies start during the elementary school years. Oppenheimer states that all students are capable of reaping the wonderful potential benefits offered by music education. All schools should offer students the opportunity to explore musical instruments in a healthy and nurturing environment. An important point made by Oppenheimer is that schools should offer beginning instruction for piano in every grade. This will keep students from feeling they are behind other students.⁴⁷ In a group piano class setting, it should be understood that not all students will move at the same pace. If a student advances faster than others, moving them to a class of older students would be acceptable.

⁴⁴ Sage, "How Do Piano Lessons Benefit Your Child?" Sage Music, LLC, April 18, 2015, <https://www.sagemusic.co/7-ways-piano-lessons-can-benefit-child/>.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Berman, Paul, "Stop Forcing Your Kids to Learn a Musical Instrument," TheNewRepublic.com, September 19 2013, <https://newrepublic.com/article/114781/parents-should-force-kids-take-music-lessons>.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Another important point made by Oppenheimer is that students need parental involvement when studying an instrument in school.⁴⁸ This is the same principle associated with academic classroom parental expectations. Parental involvement and communication are essential for children to have a positive learning experience, no matter what the subject. The parents should encourage a positive mindset for their child to succeed in piano instruction. This is achieved when parents communicate in a manner that encourages the child to learn, speak positively about the instructor, get excited about the experience of piano lessons, and involve themselves in the child's progress. Sitting in on practices sessions and attending performances are two ways the parents participate. Talking to their child about lessons and keeping in touch with the teacher will help the parent know how to help their child at home. Conversations about having a good work ethic and developing self-discipline are beneficial for success in piano as well as other areas of life. A regular schedule of at-home practice will help the child stay in a routine and contribute to the child's success. Parents need to consider group piano classes equal to other academic classes and encourage their children to do their best.

While there have been many studies on the potential benefits of private piano lessons for elementary-age children, the information on offering classroom piano lessons in elementary school is lacking. A significant study that dealt with the attitudes of teachers toward music in elementary education was conducted by Phillip Hash (2010).⁴⁹ This study is important because there is a need for classroom teachers to realize the importance of piano so they will be

⁴⁸ Berman, Paul, "Stop Forcing Your Kids to Learn a Musical Instrument," TheNewRepublic.com, September 19 2013, <https://newrepublic.com/article/114781/parents-should-force-kids-take-music-lessons>.

⁴⁹ Phillip Hash, "Preservice Classroom Teachers' Attitudes Toward Music in the Elementary Curriculum," *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 19(2):6-24 (April 2010): https://www.researchgate.net/publication/240732318_Preservice_Classroom_Teachers'_Attitudes_Toward_Music_in_the_Elementary_Curriculum.

supportive of this program being offered to children during the school day. In the study of Hash, the research questions focused on the musical abilities and experience of the instructor, the roles of the classroom teacher and the music specialist, their comfort level with having music taught in conjunction with other subjects, and important outcomes. The results showed that most teachers felt music should be taught by a music specialist.⁵⁰ More importantly, is that most of the 116 elementary teachers in this study agreed that music can improve achievement in other disciplines. These findings were used to help design a music methods course at Calvin College.⁵¹ Hopefully, more universities will realize the importance of offering piano in public schools and will implement more programs for training teachers and music majors in classroom lessons.

For group piano classes to be a part of the elementary public-school curriculum, educators need to receive the training necessary for success. Certain organizations, such as the New School for Music Study in Kingston, New Jersey, educate future piano teachers by having them in an observational study.⁵² In such a program, a master teacher leads the classes while being observed by interns or apprentice teachers. While this is one method of education for teaching group classes, colleges and universities should implement hands-on programs for future music educators to be equipped in teaching group piano lessons. Most pianists have likely studied with private instructors, and many will imitate their own instructor's methods. Group

⁵⁰ Phillip Hash, "Preservice Classroom Teachers' Attitudes Toward Music in the Elementary Curriculum," *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 19(2):6-24 (April 2010): https://www.researchgate.net/publication/240732318_Preservice_Classroom_Teachers'_Attitudes_Toward_Music_in_the_Elementary_Curriculum.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² "Applied Teaching Practicum," <https://www.nmspiano.org/applied-teaching-practicum>.

piano classes will have situations that will need innovation, creativity, and ingenuity that the teacher may not have experienced in their own private instruction.

Setting up the Public-School Piano Classroom

One of the most significant potential benefits of classroom piano is the number of students who will be able to learn to play. Many may not have the opportunity without this program in schools. When setting up the public-school classroom for piano, the number of students per class will be a dominant factor. The classroom must be large enough for the size of the class. The number of students per class varies and will be determined by the number of available keyboards. Each student having their own keyboard is essential. Because classroom piano labs are valuable teaching tools for music educators, each lab should be equipped with a communication system to assist in teaching students with a variety of different skill levels. The communication system should consist of controllers and headphones to enable the instructor to monitor and interact with students individually or in groups while not interrupting other students in the classroom.⁵³

A standard piano lab should have between 8 and 16 workstations, but this will be based on the size of the designated classroom provided by the school. The instructor should know exactly how large the piano classroom is and how many keyboards can fit in the space. One keyboard workstation needs a 5' x 5' space. Students need space to sit at their pianos while still leaving walking space in between the keyboards.⁵⁴ Keyboards should not be placed in the classroom in a manner that forces students to have their backs against the piano behind them. This could cause

⁵³ "Classroom Piano & Keyboard Labs," <https://www.musicarts.com/cms/Classroom-Piano-Labs>.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

damage to the keyboards, keep students from having proper piano posture, and cause keyboards to randomly move while another student is playing. A proper amount of space will help make the learning environment comfortable for the students without causing distractions. Additionally, there should be at least 4' of walking space around the perimeter of the room. Once the teacher has the measurements of the teaching space, the following will be needed:

- Keyboards or workstations for each student
- Individual headsets
- Conferencing system for teachers that will give them access to be able to listen and communicate with the students individually. The size of the conferencing system should be based on the size of the class and the number of students.⁵⁵
- Computers and applicable interactive music software. Because of the difference in learning levels, a teacher may have some groups who require more of their time than other groups. Computer software can be used to help keep up with the students' practice and aid them in improving their knowledge. Interactive software can be used by students of different skill levels to ensure they stay on-task even if the teacher is busy with another student or group.⁵⁶

Electrical outlets will be needed in a piano classroom, and the more outlets you have, the better. If at all possible, eliminate the use of extension cords and cables that would clutter the floor and be a hazardous tripping situation. Keyboards use about 40 watts each, which is a small amount of electricity.

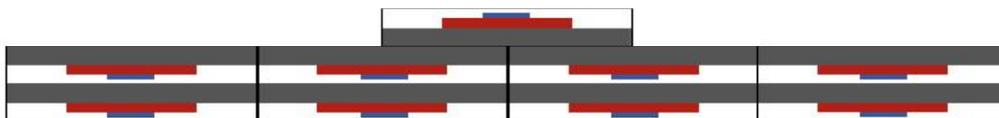
⁵⁵ "Classroom Piano & Keyboard Labs," <https://www.musicarts.com/cms/Classroom-Piano-Labs>.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

There can safely be 2 workstations for every electrical outlet. When designing the classroom, the following guidelines should be considered according to the size of the classes:

- A classroom with 8 workstations and 1 teacher needs a minimum of 4 outlets with 8 sockets.
- A classroom with 16 workstations and 1 teacher needs a minimum of 8 outlets with 16 sockets
- If the teacher is using a conference system, there should be a separate outlet.
- Computers, stereo equipment, and amplifiers will need separate outlets.⁵⁷

The number of students in a piano classroom should be determined by the amount of space in the designated space. Based on a workstation area of 5' x 5' with a minimum walk space of 4' and a teacher workspace, the following classroom sizes are recommended by the Music and Arts Music Company:⁵⁸



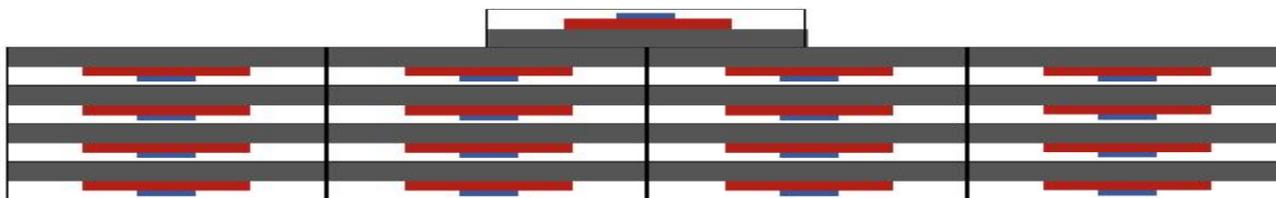
8 Students – Room Size 24' x 19'



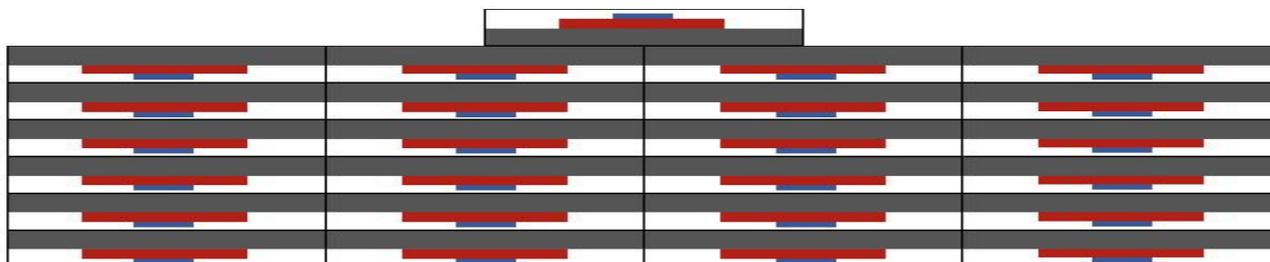
12 Students – Room Size 29'x 19x'

⁵⁷ “Classroom Piano & Keyboard Labs,” <https://www.musicarts.com/cms/Classroom-Piano-Labs>.

⁵⁸ Ibid.



16 Students – Room Size 29' x 24'



24 Students-Room Size 39' x 24'

Planning a piano classroom and the layout has many elements of consideration in addition to seating charts. There should be careful planning for storage and access to music, computers, and other teaching aids. Seating needs should include a sight line to chalkboards, whiteboards, or projectors.⁵⁹ Classrooms should have proper lighting for viewing music compositions. Adjustable benches might be necessary depending on the range of grades taught in any given school and classroom. There should also be consideration about sound seepage into adjacent rooms for those times students are not playing with headphones.⁶⁰

A piano classroom will be more effective if there are supplies that will enhance the learning experience for the students. The use of these tools will help students in other academic

⁵⁹ Thomas A. Regelski, *Teaching General Music in Grades 4 – 8*, (New York, Oxford University Press 2004), 236.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

areas because they will enhance writing, reading, coordination, and other learning skills. Some of these learning tools include the following:

- White Board with markers – This tool can be used to teach basic music concepts such as staff, clefs, notes, rhythm, and dynamics. Students will have an opportunity to write the concepts they learn, and the teacher will have an opportunity to gauge the progress of the student's understanding of basic music elements.
- Rhythm instruments – Various types of rhythm instruments such as sticks, bells, maracas, and wood blocks can be used to help students learn to keep a steady beat, avoid hesitations, and understand tempo markings.
- Flash Cards – Notes, rhythms, dynamic and tempo markings, and key signatures are some of the elements of music in which students will need reinforcement. Flash cards are a very effective method of teaching students these concepts. When the student can give answers to what they observe on the flash cards, the instructor will have a means of evaluating their understanding of the material.
- Pencil and Notebook – Every piano student should have a pencil nearby to assist in writing counts, memos on the composition, theory assignments, and assignments. Notebooks should be used for recording information taught during the lesson, practice in drawing staves, notes, accidentals, key signatures, and many other elements of music. Additionally, notebooks with staff paper can be used when students start composing their pieces.
- Clock – Because piano classes in public elementary school should be added as a part of the curriculum, there will be a time limit on the amount of time students will be in class. The teacher and the students should understand the importance of organizing their time wisely to get the maximum amount of playing and practice time accomplished.

- Music Games – Because our focus is on giving classroom piano lessons to elementary children, it will be important to teach children on their age and learning level. Music games such as music bingo, music buckets, music fish, and many more games are available on the National Association for Music Education website.⁶¹ These activities make learning fun while teaching music basics, developing skills of working with others and helping children be creative.

Students who study classroom piano will benefit from the proper set-up of classrooms and the extra tools used to teach music concepts. In education, children gain knowledge in many ways. Some learn by sight, some by hearing, and some by being hands-on. An educator may not know what will trigger the learning mechanisms to kick in when teaching children, but a good educator will make as many tools available as possible.

Research Question

What potential benefits do classroom piano lessons have for public elementary school children?

Methodology

Qualitative methods of research will be used in researching the potential benefits of classroom piano lessons for elementary public-school children. This method has been chosen because it is largely an investigative process. The research will be conducted by interviewing teachers in school programs where piano lessons are conducted.

The research will consist of finding schools throughout the United States and possibly other countries where group piano classes are offered during the school day. The following questions will be asked:

1. What are the positive results for children who study the piano?
2. What are the negative results of students who study the piano?

⁶¹ “Classroom Games and Activities for General Music,” National Association for Music Education, <https://nafme.org/classroom-games-and-activities-for-general-music/>.

3. What are the educational potential benefits of studying the piano?
4. What are the challenges for incorporating the piano class into the school schedule?
5. What is the level of support from the administration for piano classes?
6. What is the level of support from the academic teachers?
7. What is the level of support from the parents of the students?
8. Do you feel you can give quality instruction to the children in a group setting?
9. How many students do you feel should be allowed into a group class?
10. How long should group piano classes last in terms of minutes?
11. How many times each week should the children meet for piano class?
12. Do the children practice at home?
13. What is the system for student performances?
14. What percentage of students continue with a piano class from year to year?
15. What percentage of students continue with piano lessons after elementary school?
16. What percentage of students have instruments to practice at home?
17. Does the school system furnish an instrument for you to teach at school, or did you have to provide your own?

The population for this project will be piano teachers who are now teaching or have taught group piano classes in the public and private school system. There will be a sample of two teachers who have experience with offering piano lessons to students during the school day and one who teaches at a school after hours. Some teachers will teach elementary students and some will teach high school students. Teachers will have experience with teaching both private and group classes. An important factor will be the effectiveness of lessons during the school day. Sampling procedures will be simple when considering the individual success of children with systematic and multi-stage level skills.

Three teachers will be used in this study. Research on when and how often lessons are given will be approached. Teachers will be asked about the time limit of the lessons, the

environment, piano accessibility in and out of school, and student interest in the program. The training of the teacher and the years of experience will be approached. Teachers will be asked about parental support of the program and a communication system with the parents. The support of the teachers in the school is important because of the possibility they may have to allow time for the students outside of class. The support of the school administration will also be addressed.

The teachers will be asked about the particular methods of teaching, information and opinions about teaching methods, and books. It is important to find out if the students use a method such as Faber and Faber or James Bastien, or another method. Teachers will be asked if they have created their method material. There are many genres of music in the teaching methods including classical, popular, hymns, jazz, blues, and Christmas.⁶² To be successful in the music forms, students must practice. The participants will be questioned on their method of implementing practice time and the success of getting their students to play their material at home.

It is important to note the success rate of the students. This is the bottom line of teaching a piano class in school. Just as with any learning experience, there are components of learning that must be met. Those include knowing the names of the notes, being able to find the notes on the piano-based on their position on the music staff, and using the correct hand and finger. Students must know the beats of the various notes such as quarter, half, dotted half, whole, and eighth notes. Playing songs on the piano is the ultimate goal, and participants will be asked if students can accomplish this task.

⁶² Faber and Faber, "For Teachers," <https://pianoadventures.com/resources/for-teachers/>.

A lot of information has been covered about the many potential benefits of piano lessons, particularly in the area of academics. The interview process will focus on the question of whether or not students have improved in other subjects in school after starting piano lessons. It is understood that this is not usually the focus of the piano teacher because their main goal is to teach students to play the piano. Neurological, creativity, memory, coordination, and other areas of development should be areas in which the piano teacher can give an analysis. These areas, along with social, relational, and self-confidence, will also be analyzed in the interview process.

This study is being done because there is a lack of information on the potential benefits of group piano classes in public elementary schools. Ethnographic nature, finances, geographical, and gender variables will not be approached in the interview process. Variables and sub-factors will be considered as to private piano lessons, group piano lessons, age of students, and level of school grade. Analysis of class behavior, time limits and frequency of classes, and the number of performances such as recitals will be important factors.

Based on the results of the study, this information will potentially be used to implement programs in elementary schools where classroom piano lessons will be included in the school curriculum. Many public schools do not currently offer group piano classes in elementary school. This study hypothesizes that the potential benefits of public elementary school piano classes will be high, and will encourage the school system to implement this program throughout the country.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The concept of group piano instruction may seem like a new idea, but it can be traced back a few hundred years with Johann Bernhard Logier. Born in Germany, Logier (1777-1846) ran a music shop in Dublin, where he earned the reputation of the city's leading teacher.⁶³ He taught on a mechanical device that he invented called the "Chiroplast" in 1814.⁶⁴ The chiroplast was a wooden framework extending the whole length of the keyboard, above which it was screwed into place.⁶⁵ With this apparatus, by 1815, students were taught in groups of a dozen or more by Logier.⁶⁶ Students would play simultaneously on parts that were compatible with their level of piano knowledge.^{67 68}

Picture removed to comply with copyright laws.

⁶³ Bernarr Rainbow, "Johann Bernhard Logier and the Chiroplast Controversy." *The Musical Times* 131, no. 1766 (1990): 193-96. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/966259>

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ "Chiroplast," <https://fineartamerica.com/featured/chiroplast-designed-to-train-pianists-science-source.html>

Pianists from various countries studied with Logier and returned to their homeland to start the practice of group piano lessons. It is believed that the first group classes in America began in 1860 at an all-female school in the south.⁶⁹ Many notable musicians such as Frederic Kalkbrenner, Frederic Chopin, Theodor Leschetizky, and Franz Liszt all taught piano in groups.⁷⁰ Renowned musician Clara Schumann was also involved in group teaching.

Teaching methods designed for classroom piano lessons became available in the early part of the 20th century. Several musicians including Will Earhart and Charles N. Boyd (1918), Thaddeus P. Giddings and Wilma A. Gilman (1919), and Hazel G. Kinscella (1919) made this material accessible to teachers.⁷¹ The primary source of information about early group piano lessons was provided by Sally Monsour (1960).⁷² There are several group-piano teaching methods available today, including James Bastien (1998), Denes Agay (2004), and James Lyke, Geoffrey Haydon, and Catherine Rollin (2011).⁷³ These authors have a small number of books available on group teaching because the demand for such material is limited.⁷⁴ None of the material offered formal research or guidance on group piano teaching.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ Valentina Jotovic, "The History of Group Piano Classes" (By Candy Peare), Hunterdale Academy of the Arts, February 14, 2011, <https://www.hunterdonacademyofthearts.com/Music-and-Art-for-All/bid/53935/The-History-of-Group-Piano-Classes-By-Candy-Peare>.

⁷⁰ Eri Hirokawa, "Robert Pace: Music Theorist, Composer, and Educator." *The Bulletin of Historical Research in Music Education* 18, no. 3 (1997): 155-72. May 1997, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40214934>.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Eri Hirokawa, "Robert Pace: Music Theorist, Composer, and Educator." *The Bulletin of Historical Research in Music Education* 18, no. 3 (1997): 155-72. May 1997, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40214934>.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

In 1887, Calvin B. Cady wrote about class piano instruction during his time as an instructor at Michigan University.⁷⁶ A dedicated teacher for over thirty years, Cady felt that the primary goal of education was to develop concentration, continuity, and endurance. He had received his early education from the public school system and later studied music at the Conservatory of Oberlin College, where he was graduated in 1872.⁷⁷ Cady was an Instructor in Music at the University of Michigan in 1880, and from 1885-1888, he was an Acting Professor of Music. After this time, he taught music in Chicago from 1888-1901.⁷⁸ His opinion of music education was that it should unite with other school subjects to help develop the ability to think well.⁷⁹ He believed music was the combination of mind, feeling, or intelligence, and affections.⁸⁰

Calvin Cady believed, "In the study of music, the mind is at work in several distinct but cognate and inseparable phases of the subject."⁸¹ He categorized the study of music into the following areas: art, science, practical theory, and pianoforte study.⁸² Today's music education in America uses this same formula, but Cady related music study with his personal goal of students

⁷⁶ Fumiko Shiraishi, "Calvin Brainerd Cady: Thought and Feeling in the Study of Music," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 47, no. 2 (1999): 150-62. Summer, 1999, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3345720>.

⁷⁷ Burke A. Hinsdale and Isaac Newton Demmon, *History of the University of Michigan*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1906) 270, http://umhistory.dc.umich.edu/history/Faculty_History/C/Cady,_Calvin_Brainard.html.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

being able to have a concept of music and expression.⁸³ Cady's method of teaching music included a lot of creativity with melodies, dance, and music theory.

In the early years of the 20th century, several American public schools established piano classes.⁸⁴ In addition to Calvin Bernard Cady, numerous other teachers such as Helen Curtis and Gail M. Haake developed group piano class teaching systems.⁸⁵ During this time, the United States became the lead producer of pianos in the world.⁸⁶ Many homes had pianos and the instrument was very popular. They created a phenomenon where parents wanted their children to learn to play this popular new instrument.

The acceptance of piano classes in general public schools saw a slow but steady growth from 1920 to 1930. Near the end of the decade, a survey by the National Bureau for the Advancement of Education stated that 873 towns or cities across the United States were offering piano classes.⁸⁷ A manual titled *Guide for Conducting Piano Classes in Public Schools* was produced by keyboard specialists from the Music Supervisors National Conference. This manual became an important early training tutorial for piano teachers of class piano.⁸⁸ Because of the steadily increased popularity in teaching students at school, it became a necessity for teachers to

⁸³ Fumiko Shiraishi, "Calvin Brainerd Cady: Thought and Feeling in the Study of Music," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 47, no. 2 (1999): 150-62. Summer, 1999, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3345720>.

⁸⁴ "Beyond Talent Institute of Music," <https://www.btimonline.com/history-of-group-teaching.html>.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Valentina Jotovic, "The History of Group Piano Classes," (By Candy Peare), Hunterdale Academy of the Arts, February 14, 2011, <https://www.hunterdonacademyofthearts.com/Music-and-Art-for-All/bid/53935/The-History-of-Group-Piano-Classes-By-Candy-Peare>.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

receive specific teacher-training courses.⁸⁹ Colleges and universities began to offer future teachers coursework that taught the essential elements and principles of teaching piano classes for children.⁹⁰ By 1925, Columbia University Teachers College began to teach such a program. By the 1930s over 150 colleges were offering similar coursework to help train future piano teachers.⁹¹

Broadcasting in the early 1920s was a factor that helped increase the popularity of the piano. By 1929, three million radio licenses were issued each year.⁹² This created an atmosphere in which homes were able to hear music that rose above that of the amateur level. Families and individuals had more access to different genres of music and this variety of tunes became an important part of everyday life. Music had an impact on people in their daily lives as well as a leisure activity. The radio began to play an important part in music education in schools. Students began to have more interest in being a participant in the field of music. As a result, music programs were created specifically for the students in classrooms to accommodate the newfound interest from the 1930s and onward.⁹³

Schools started broadening their music curriculum by adding music appreciation and instrumental teaching. Public school piano class was thriving until circa 1930. Like many

⁸⁹ Valentina Jotovic, "The History of Group Piano Classes," (By Candy Peare), Hunterdale Academy of the Arts, February 14, 2011, <https://www.hunterdonacademyofthearts.com/Music-and-Art-for-All/bid/53935/The-History-of-Group-Piano-Classes-By-Candy-Peare>.

⁹⁰ Christopher Fisher, *Teaching Piano in Groups*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² B. Rainbow G. and Cox, "Music in Educational Thought and Practice," *New Edition Education* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press. 2006).

⁹³ Ibid.

situations and circumstances, the time came when the importance of the piano in schools ceased to exist. This occurrence happened in American at the time of the financial depression and the Second World War.⁹⁴ The training of teachers began to be deficient and students lost interest in lessons.

Ball University, located in Muncie, Indiana, developed the electronic piano laboratory in 1956. These piano labs had a profound impact on the future of teaching piano in group classes.⁹⁵ Electronic keyboards offered a less expensive instrument for a larger number of students to use during their learning experiences.⁹⁶ Other colleges and universities began to take note and group instruction began increasing at the college level.⁹⁷

Raymond Burrows

Raymond Burrows, of Teachers College, Columbia University, conducted piano classes for adults during the 1930s and 1940s. Burrows had attended several group and master piano classes with other teachers and implemented what he had learned.⁹⁸ He believed that piano had a tremendous influence on his students. He was an advocate of incorporating piano into the school education system and felt they should go hand in hand with academics. Burrows held the belief that the opportunity to learn the piano should be available to every student.⁹⁹ According to

⁹⁴ Dr. Sally Cathcart, “The Social History of Piano Teaching” – Part 4, The Curious Piano Teacher, <https://www.thecuriouspianoteachers.org/social-history-piano-teaching-part-4/>.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Edyth Elizabeth Wagner, *Raymond Burrows and his contributions to music education*, (Los Angeles, University of Southern California, 1968) 219.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

Raymond Burrows, every student who had an interest in piano should be able to learn.¹⁰⁰ He became an advocate for the inclusion of piano classes in all public schools across the United States.¹⁰¹

Dr. Burrow's career included serving as Chairman of the Piano Instruction Committee of the Music Educators National Conference. In this role, he gave numerous demonstrations on Group Piano Instruction. Additionally, Burrows conducted many piano workshops with the American Music Conference where he instructed over 2,000 teachers on teaching group piano classes using his methods.¹⁰² There were several times when Dr. Burrows appeared at the Conventions of the National Association of Music Merchants. During these events, he would take a group of children who had never been seated at a piano before. After 40 minutes of instruction from his methods, he would have the children playing two selections, and in many instances, they would accompany the audience on the piano while they were singing.¹⁰³

Shortly before he died in 1952, Burrows collaborated with the Music Educators National Conference in the production of the "Handbook for Teaching Piano Classes." It was shown for the first time at the M.E.N.C. biannual convention in Philadelphia in March of 1952.¹⁰⁴ The book was published when MTNA realized there was a vast amount of interest in piano classes

¹⁰⁰ Edyth Elizabeth Wagner, *Raymond burrows and his contributions to music education*, (Los Angeles, University of Southern California, 1968) 219.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² "Dr. Raymond M. Burrows Originator of Group Piano Instruction Dies Suddenly," *Music Trade Review*, mbsi.org, arcade-museum.com., digitized with support from namm.org.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

throughout the country. Teachers had different ideas and suggestions on the process of teaching lessons with more than one student. It was not feasible for leaders to travel and teach “in-person” seminars throughout the United States. This handbook made it possible for teachers all over the country to have a reference for guidance in this phenomenon. The “Handbook for Teaching Piano Classes” was very successful and in great demand after its release.¹⁰⁵

Dr. Burrows spent a large portion of his adult life promoting group piano classes. Years before he collaborated on “Handbook for Teaching Piano Classes,” Raymond Burrows wrote an article titled “Piano Study, A Fundamental.” He shared that in the brief thirty years of its history in America, the school piano class has survived an early period of indifference on the part of those who knew nothing and “cared less” of its existence. He felt it was of greater significance to note that the movement has survived the second stage of sudden artificial prosperity caused by a rush to get on the piano wagon with the attendant evils of improperly prepared teachers and get-rich-quick methods and devices. Burrows felt that during these two stages, the piano class had shown its strength and was now in a third and very healthy period of experiment and development. Knowing there were still areas of ignorance and indifference, Burrows also noted there were still some examples of poor teaching and false promotion. Despite these conditions, Burrows said there were enough good examples of tested and demonstrated procedure to show the alert music educator and administrator what a powerful force the right kind of piano class can be in reaching the aims of all music education.”¹⁰⁶ Burrows wrote this article in the 1940s at a time that saw piano classes flourishing in America. Still, there were those educators who did not

¹⁰⁵ “Dr. Raymond M. Burrows Originator of Group Piano Instruction Dies Suddenly,” *Music Trade Review*, mbsi.org, arcade-museum.com., digitized with support from namm.org.

¹⁰⁶ Raymond Burrows, “Piano Study—a Fundamental,” *Music Educators Journal*, 34:54, Sept. – Oct., 1947, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.2307/3387188?journalCode=mej>.

see the advantages of the piano being offered in schools in a classroom setting. The mindset was that piano lessons should be private and taught after school hours.

Raymond Burrows believed and taught that the “good piano class encourages an enriched activity program.”¹⁰⁷ The elements of a good program included singing and then extending the song approach through an application to the visual and tactile sense of the keyboard.¹⁰⁸ Dr. Burrows believed piano lessons increased understanding of rhythm, dynamics, and musical mood through the use of physical response to music. He felt that creating new musical compositions, the development of creative performance, and creative listening were all important elements of piano study.¹⁰⁹ Lessons were richer with instruction that included a broad activity program that taught the fundamental skills of reading music with melodies and harmonies.¹¹⁰

Dr. Burrows also believed there was an interrelationship between various parts of the music program and other school curricula. He felt that skills learned in piano lessons could be used to benefit other areas of learning. Songs sung in chorus or general music class should be taught in classroom piano lessons so students could provide piano accompaniment.¹¹¹ Folk dance songs taught in physical education could be learned by piano students for accompaniment purposes. Violin and clarinet pupils should have classmates who could play the same pieces they

¹⁰⁷ Raymond Burrows, “Piano Study—a Fundamental,” *Music Educators Journal*, 34:54, Sept. – Oct., 1947, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.2307/3387188?journalCode=mej>.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

were learning and accompany them at the piano.¹¹² Burrows believed the social science teacher, the English teacher, the French teacher, and the Spanish teacher could all find that piano lessons made a direct contribution to their work.¹¹³ It is clear to see that Raymond Burrows envisioned numerous methods and means for piano lessons and academia to enhance the learning experience to a broader level. He believed that piano lessons were beneficial to every part of the school experience.

Robert Pace – Dyad Teaching Method

Robert Pace, a student of Raymond Burrows, had alternative ideas in the field of classroom piano teaching. He advocated a system where beginner students had a learning partner for lessons and one larger group lesson each week.¹¹⁴ In 1956, Pace developed a comprehensive group piano method entitled *Piano for Classroom Music*.¹¹⁵ In this format, he stressed music fundamentals, a multiple-key approach where students played in all keys, harmony, sight-reading, ear training, and improvisation.¹¹⁶ Robert Pace later developed the concept of comprehensive musicianship with two subsequent books of higher concepts and principles. These books were presented in 1961 and were titled *Music for Piano* and *Skills and Drills*.

¹¹² Ibid. Raymond Burrows, "Piano Study—a Fundamental," *Music Educators Journal*, 34:54, Sept. – Oct. 1947, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.2307/3387188?journalCode=mej>.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Christopher Fisher, *Teaching Piano in Groups*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 2010).

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

Pace began his teaching career by teaching piano studies in private lessons, yet felt he was missing out on certain aspects of training students in music because of the lack of time. He was focused on perfecting pieces and felt that he was missing the opportunity to teach students knowledge on music fundamentals. Later in life, he was teaching at Julliard in New York when he heard about Raymond Burrow's class piano method, so he decided to visit Burrows and observe his teaching methods. After his encounter with Burrows, Pace said, "what I saw in those "class piano" classes made me realize that certain aspects of piano instruction could be done better in groups than with one student at a time. Specifically, analyzing repertoire, developing sight-reading and transposing skills, and dealing effectively with one's fears about playing in front of others was much more efficiently handled in-class instruction than in the private lesson."¹¹⁷

Pace was not completely sold on the idea of group classes because he felt private lessons were necessary for students to polish their repertoire. He also had a strong sense of the importance of music fundamentals for students. This led to his decision to schedule one private lesson and one group musicianship class for his students each week.¹¹⁸ Pace felt that his "students generally did well in the private lessons but there were times when they didn't like the piece they were learning, or when there seemed to be too many excuses for why there hadn't been enough time to practice that week. On occasions, he suspected a less prepared student would rather talk through a lesson period than demonstrate at the piano what he or she had accomplished since the previous lesson. In contrast, there was little "chatting" in the

¹¹⁷ Dr. Robert Pace, "Group or Private?" Lee Roberts Music Publications, Inc., <https://www.leerobertsmusic.com/ideas-tips/group-teaching.html>.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

musicianship class. Pace still clung to the private lesson each week as it seemed the only way to polish the pieces as part of the fine-tuning for performance.”¹¹⁹

Pace had observed group classes with Burrows and he realized students were enjoying the group musicianship class. Still, he was not convinced that group class for learning repertoire was a good option for students. It was only through an experience unrelated to music learning that he began to have a new perspective on group teaching. One afternoon, a mother stopped to ask Pace if her daughter could stay through the next lesson so she could ride home with the second student and her mother. He agreed and proceeded with lessons as usual. When the second lesson began, the first student was so intrigued with one of the pieces on which they were working that she got up and approached the piano several different times. Pace asked the student if she would like to join them and she was eager to be a part of the lesson. The first student paid close attention as Pace and the second student went through the pieces for the remainder of the lesson.¹²⁰

At the time, Robert Pace was not aware that this experience would be the beginning of a new way of teaching lessons for him and his students. A few weeks later, the mother made the same request that her daughter stays for the lesson of the second student so she could ride home with the mother. When the lesson for the first student ended, it was obvious for Pace to see that she was excited to observe the lesson of the second student, who appeared to be happy to have a learning companion.¹²¹ Even with the show of enthusiasm, Pace did not have the students

¹¹⁹ Dr. Robert Pace, “Group or Private?” Lee Roberts Music Publications, Inc., <https://www.leerobertsmusic.com/ideas-tips/group-teaching.html>.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

interact because he still subconsciously considered this the private lesson time of the second student. He did observe that both students seemed to be excited about helping each other, appeared to be more alert, and were putting forth the effort to try harder.¹²²

The week after this presumably coincidental combination lesson, Pace discussed the possibility of having these two students come together. As this scenario developed, he began to see group classes with a different viewpoint. Through this experience, Robert Pace began to realize that there were some important implications for all of the students in his studio.¹²³ One such implication was an improvement in attitudes. Students did not seem to have as many excuses about reasons they could not practice. They focused more during the lessons, and they tried harder. Additionally, this new system of “dyad” (two elements) for lessons helped ensure that students would have a partner for duets and support for solo pieces.¹²⁴

Pace’s discovery of the positive aspects of dyad teaching spread with his other students as they heard about the positive experiences from the two girls who helped start this concept. Some parents were supportive, and some parents were skeptical as they had never experienced a group concept for piano lessons. Pace had new issues to handle as he had to ensure that the dyad groups were compatible, on the same level, and able to work together. He believed an instructor could not randomly create a dyad without certain criteria. Students should both be in the same level of books, and both should be able to work at a compatible pace. Eventually, Pace worked with other

¹²² Dr. Robert Pace, “Group or Private?,” Lee Roberts Music Publications, Inc., <https://www.leerobertsmusic.com/ideas-tips/groupsteaching.html>.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

teachers in the community to create better dyads. This created a sense of camaraderie in the teaching community rather than competition amongst piano teachers.¹²⁵

The system of dyads combined with large group musicianship lessons had many positive attributes. Still, there were some negative issues and misconceptions about this teaching system. Some of those included but were not limited to dealing with finding a new dyad partner when one of the students moved. Teaching in a transient community such as a military town created situations where sometimes multiple students would move away, leaving students without partners. Oftentimes, this created scheduling issues when creating new dyads, because the lessons times when students are available are not always compatible. Other issues included making decisions about keeping a dyad together or switching them around to create versatility in the group setting. Even with these issues, Pace continued to be an advocate of the group teaching system but felt that dyad or triad teaching was not a magic formula to dissolve all the problems of teachers and students. He found it to be a valuable teaching tool that would enrich and advance the learning process for everyone in the learning process. He felt there was a lot to be gained and encouraged others to “give it a try.”¹²⁶

Music Educators See Piano Classes as a Viable Option

Music educators began to see group piano as a viable means of teaching piano pedagogy, especially in the 1970s. Several years earlier, in 1955, the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) began a program of including group piano workshops at the national convention.

¹²⁵ Dr. Robert Pace, “Group or Private?” Lee Roberts Music Publications, Inc.
<https://www.leerobertsmusic.com/ideas-tips/group-teaching.html>.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

Robert Pace served as director of the National Piano Foundation from 1963 to 1977. During his tenure, the organization sponsored group piano teaching workshops. His work was continued by those who followed him when he retired. Martha Hilley and Marguerite Miller continued the workshops under the name of “World of Piano” seminars.¹²⁷

With an interest in group piano classes rising in the mid-20th century, many music journals addressed this phenomenon in their publications. Noteworthy group-piano pioneers other than Robert Pace included Frances Clark, Louise Goss, Richard Chronister, and Guy Duckworth.¹²⁸ These pedagogues left extensive writings in pedagogy periodicals such as *American Music Teacher*, *Piano Quarterly*, *Keyboard Companion*, and *Clavier*. These writings included numerous articles on group piano classes from a variety of perspectives.¹²⁹ In January of 1998, the first online keyboard journal, *Piano Pedagogy Forum*, was created and each issue always included at least one article on group piano and other related topics. The 1999 MTNA national conference held an event on Pedagogy Saturday that was entirely devoted to group piano teaching. The Group Piano and Piano Pedagogy Forum was launched in 2000 with an emphasis on the practical aspects of teaching. In 2006, they entered into a partnership with MTNA to help meet the needs of group piano teachers in a practical way that meets the mission of GP3.¹³⁰ This organization still exists today with goals of the following:

¹²⁷ Pai-Yu-Chiu, “A Comparative Evaluation of Group and Private Piano Instruction on the Musical Achievements of Young Beginners,” digital.lib.washington.edu, 2017, <https://digital.lib.washington.edu/researchworks/handle/1773/38665>.

¹²⁸ Pamela D. Pike, *Dynamic Group-Piano Teaching: Transforming Group Theory into Teaching Practice*, (New York, Routledge Publishing, 2017) Chpt.5, pg. 8.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ “Group Piano and Piano Pedagogy Forum,” mtna.org, https://www.mtna.org/GP3/GP3_Home/GP3/Home.aspx?hkey=de2ebd5e-4006-4a1e-b99d-45da1d453a35.

- Sharing what they are doing in their day-to-day teaching activities
- Holding discussions on the field of group piano and piano pedagogy and the approaches being used in professional development, program initiatives, and teacher training.
- Make plans for ways to contribute to the field of group piano and piano pedagogy currently and in the future.¹³¹

Because of the involvement of major music institutions like MTNA and GP3, it would seem that group piano teaching is a thriving field for piano teachers. Even though the concept of group classes has been in existence since the 19th century, at the turn of the 21st century, the percentage of teachers offering group piano classes was relatively low. A 2004 study by Suzanne Schon shows that of 598 piano teachers in America, only 8.2% taught group lessons exclusively.¹³² A contributing factor to the low number of group piano lesson teachers is the lack of training. This is especially true for older teachers. Schon discovered that 63% of teachers younger than the age of 46 in New York reported that they had observed group piano lessons while in college. This is 20% higher than those above the age of 46.¹³³

Present Day Group Piano Instruction in Public School

Piano labs in colleges and universities continue to thrive in the present day, but the inclusion of piano lessons in public schools has been void. In current times, piano lessons have long been considered a privilege for children whose parents could afford to pay for private

¹³¹ “Group Piano and Piano Pedagogy Forum,” mtna.org, https://www.mtna.org/GP3/GP3_Home/GP3/Home.aspx?hkey=de2ebd5e-4006-4a1e-b99d-45da1d453a35.

¹³² Suzanne Schon, “Piano Teachers’ Attitudes About Piano Pedagogy Course Topics,” <https://shareok.org/bitstream/handle/11244/826/3161632.PDF?sequence=1>.

¹³³ Ibid.

instruction. Many children would like to know how to play the piano but do not have the opportunity. The financial cost of lessons and keyboards is one of the main reasons children are not studying the piano. The majority of public schools do not offer piano lessons in the school curriculum. As a result, numerous children miss out on the experience of learning to play the piano.

Offering piano lessons in the public school system would be an open door for thousands of children in America to learn to play the piano. The concept is rare, but there are a small number of learning institutions making lessons accessible to students. One location is Bronx Prep, a charter school in New York that serves low-income African American and Latino children. Classroom piano lessons are taught by Dr. Geoffrey Kiorpes, who admits that back in 2002, he felt piano lessons should be taught privately.¹³⁴ Dr. Kiorpes didn't feel that piano classes had a place in public schools. When he started teaching piano to six students on electronic keyboards in a modular trailer behind the school, his attitude toward this concept changed. Eventually, Dr. Kiorpes took over a crowded storage closet and spent several hours a day teaching the more advanced students who started coming for extra lessons during their free periods.¹³⁵

As time progressed, through fundraising projects, Dr. Kiorpes was able to see the program build to the point that there was an academic classroom of 32 keyboards and headsets.

¹³⁴ Kate Quardfordt, "Is Piano Class the Key to Public School Music? Working Individually as a Group May Be the Answer," *The Huffington Post*, December 6, 2017, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/is-piano-class-the-key-to_b_2807214.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

Lessons were given to students in grades 5-12.¹³⁶ Fifth-grade students had piano class as a required subject where they learned the basics of the piano. Dr. Kiorpes had to face the realization that not all fifth-grade students were enthralled with learning the piano. It was at this point that he realized he was a true classroom teacher and needed to provide methods of teaching for a large group of diverse interests in piano.¹³⁷

After over ten years of directing the program at Bronx Prep, Dr. Kiorpes taught class piano in a room that was used solely for piano class. He had twenty-two five-octave keyboards, ten electric 88-key pianos, and a grand piano.¹³⁸ Funding for these instruments came from private individuals, the school system, and various foundations. As of 2013, over 150 students were participating in the program each year. Many of the fifth graders who had required piano class chose to continue studying piano as an elective class in higher grades.¹³⁹

Piano classes at Bronx Prep are at various levels and therefore move at different paces and use content suitable for their purposes. The structure of the classes is more standard and used in each session. The beginning of class involves demonstration and direct instruction through the means of a short lesson.¹⁴⁰ Beginner students may learn a new rhythmic pattern, a new hand position, or other basic concepts. More advanced students may begin class with music theory or concepts of phrasing. Dr. Kiorpes has a personality that can be playful, but he must maintain a

¹³⁶ Kate Quardfordt, "Is Piano Class the Key to Public School Music? Working Individually as a Group May Be the Answer," *The Huffington Post*, December 6, 2017, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/is-piano-class-the-key-to_b_2807214.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

balance between classroom leadership and making his expectations clear to the students.¹⁴¹ One of his goals is to try and get the less interested students more engaged in piano lessons.

Because this is a group setting, the students practice new concepts together. At times, the students may turn off their keyboard to practice some new pieces, rhythms, or notes.¹⁴² When students use earphones, the teacher can watch the students individually as they play their pieces so he can check for the accuracy of rhythm and notes. Dr. Kiorpes demonstrates new patterns, interesting techniques, and concepts of piano that the student may not grasp on their own. Little by little, the young pianist begins to discover elements through exploration which fosters creativity, imagination, and growth in piano playing skills.¹⁴³

Students progress individually and move to 88 note keyboards. They perform in recitals and programs and take trips to locations such as Carnegie Hall and Steinway Hall.¹⁴⁴ These events serve as motivators and personal growth activities for the young pianist. Because of the success of his program, Dr. Kiorpes teaches seminars about his classroom piano program. He uses his students to perform and demonstrate the knowledge they have gained and the skill they have learned in playing.¹⁴⁵ The combination of a well-organized program, a caring and

¹⁴¹ Kate Quardfordt, "Is Piano Class the Key to Public School Music? Working Individually as a Group May Be the Answer," *The Huffington Post*, December 6, 2017, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/is-piano-class-the-key-to_b_2807214.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

motivational instructor, proper instruments, a teaching studio, and years of experience have made Bronx Prep piano class a model for other schools wishing to incorporate class piano.

Requirements of the Group Piano Teacher

The university system of training piano teachers consists of teaching basic keyboard proficiency, overall musicianship in the specialized area, and skill application.¹⁴⁶ Training of teachers in group piano lessons is essential for the success of adding this program to elementary schools. Future piano teachers who are in college need to understand the potential benefits of classroom piano lessons. First, classroom piano lessons are a cost-efficient way of offering quality training to a large number of students. Secondly, classroom piano offers an atmosphere of peer support and encouragement that is not found in private lessons. Finally, the group dynamics of classroom piano offers a constructivist learning system that encourages a sense of accountability among the students.¹⁴⁷ In a classroom setting, more students can learn the piano, while actually having the attention of an instructor, thus facilitating the improvement of skills at a faster rate than private instruction.¹⁴⁸

Teachers of classroom piano lessons must be trained to teach students piano skills such as sight-reading, rhythm, dynamics, musicality, transposition, and harmonization. The teacher may have had private instruction as a student and will subsequently not have a concept of the classroom piano format. These future educators will need to know how to choose methods

¹⁴⁶ Xiaoke Cheng, Leonidas F. Lagrimas, and William E. Fredrickson, "A Demographic Study of Undergraduate Students Taking Group Piano Classes," *Research Perspectives in Music Education* 18(2), 34-49, The Florida Music Education Association, December 2016, <https://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/fmea/rpme/2016/00000018/00000002/art00003>.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

books, solo and duet pieces, and an understanding of technology that should be used in a classroom piano education setting. One of the most significant elements of teaching classroom piano is the ability to work with students of different learning and skill levels. Grouping students together with different interest levels of learning, varying work ethics, and physical ability will require teachers to develop a skill set not needed in private lessons.¹⁴⁹ This may require future educators to receive training in areas other than music such as psychology.

When teaching classroom piano classes, it is imperative that the teacher be organized, knowledgeable, and intentional in their instruction plans. Colleges and universities need to see the need and implement programs that will train classroom piano teachers to achieve these goals. Teachers of classroom piano should have training in piano at an advanced level. They should also obtain training in classroom management in areas of discipline, problem behavior, group dynamics, student-teacher roles, time management, and communication skills. Teachers should have a reward system in place for students who achieve their goals, and a discipline system for poor behavior.¹⁵⁰

Piano teacher certification should be considered for classroom instructors as it will give credibility to the program. It will provide the credentials for school employers and show proof of experience and knowledge to teach piano.¹⁵¹ Certification will build respect and lend credibility

¹⁴⁹ Xiaoke Cheng, Leonidas F. Lagrimas, and William E. Fredrickson, "A Demographic Study of Undergraduate Students Taking Group Piano Classes," *Research Perspectives in Music Education* 18(2), 34-49, The Florida Music Education Association, December 2016, <https://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/fmea/rpme/2016/00000018/00000002/art00003>.

¹⁵⁰ Thomas A. Regelski, *Teaching General Music in Grades 4 – 8*, (New York, Oxford University Press) 2004, 236-249.

¹⁵¹ Jennifer Collins, "Piano Teacher Certification," Classroom.synonym.com, <https://classroom.synonym.com/piano-teacher-certification-6497124.html>.

to the program in the public elementary school system. If the instructor chooses to have the students participate in piano competitions, some are limited only to those learning under certified teachers.¹⁵²

Training for public school piano classroom teachers should include a college degree in the subject area. Piano teachers can choose to have additional certification from one of the three organizations in the United States that offer piano teacher certification: the Music Teachers National Association, the American College of Musicians or Piano Guild, and the Suzuki Association of the Americas. All of these organizations require teachers to possess competency in playing the piano and extensive knowledge of music history and theory. For a teacher to pass the certification requirements from one of these organizations, they should have numerous years of piano lessons and music classes.¹⁵³ This level of training and certification will ensure that quality, trained teachers are instructing students in classroom piano instead of having academic teachers instruct without the proper qualifications.

It is important to understand that a college degree is not the same as an organization's certification.¹⁵⁴ These programs are useful in training students for a career in teaching piano. Most music programs teach piano pedagogy courses, and many colleges and universities offer a piano pedagogy degree that will provide the skills you need to get piano teacher certification.¹⁵⁵ These programs and certifications will offer networking opportunities and provide more

¹⁵² Jennifer Collins, "Piano Teacher Certification," Classroom.synonym.com, <https://classroom.synonym.com/piano-teacher-certification-6497124.html>.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

competition events for the students.¹⁵⁶ It is unlikely that the majority of students in elementary school will be at a competitive level, but for those who excel in the program, competitions will be an avenue for growth and greater development.

Categories of Group-Piano Lessons

The terms “group” and “classroom” are used interchangeably. Technically, the term “class” refers to a classroom setting where the student count is higher than 10. “Groups” are usually used for a setting where there are 3–10 students.¹⁵⁷ The types of group-piano instruction that are maybe utilized as regular or supplemental programs are:

Occasional group classes. These classes could consist of performance classes, master classes, group music activity, music history, or ensemble classes held at various times throughout the year. Some schools may want to do a group class as a “kick-off” at the beginning of the school year. It can also serve to inform students and parents of the expectations of the class during the school year.¹⁵⁸ Occasional classes could focus on performances and serve as student recitals. Piano students from different groups can come together to listen to the work and achievements of students in other groups. This is a good method of having students learn from each other and offer support to their peers. Some instructors prefer to have performance classes once or twice a year, while others choose to make it a weekly or monthly class. These activities can be scheduled to suit the

¹⁵⁶ Jennifer Collins, “Piano Teacher Certification,” Classroom.synonym.com, <https://classroom.synonym.com/piano-teacher-certification-6497124.html>.

¹⁵⁷ Pamela D. Pike, *Dynamic Group-Piano Teaching: Transforming Group Theory into Teaching Practice*, (New York, Routledge Publishing, May 2017), Ch. 5, pg.8-9.

¹⁵⁸ Pamela D. Pike, *Dynamic Group-Piano Teaching: Transforming Group Theory into Teaching Practice*, (New York, Routledge Publishing, May 2017), Ch. 5, pg.9-11.

age group, school and teacher schedule, as well as the level of the students.¹⁵⁹ Occasional groups can be utilized as theory classes where students do worksheets on the basics of music. Elementary students can participate in a class where the teacher prepares a simple worksheet that encourages students to listen for specific details in a peer's performance notes these features on the worksheet while the performer is playing.¹⁶⁰ The possibilities are limitless in group classes for encouraging creativity, developing active listening among young children, and training students in the art of performing.¹⁶¹

Regular group classes would occur regularly throughout the school year. The focus would be to teach students keyboard skills, theory, sight-reading, functional skills, rhythm, and improvisation. Regular group classes could be from one to five-time weekly. It stands to reason that students will do better and advance at a greater level if they meet several times weekly. They will independently work in method books or other material the teacher wishes to use. As students advance, they can begin to play duets and ensembles with each other. Rehearsing and performing these ensembles provides educational opportunities rarely available to students in private lessons.¹⁶²

Dr. Pamela D. Pike, the Herndon Spillman Professor of Piano Pedagogy at Louisiana State University, where she coordinates the group-piano and piano pedagogy program, stated the following in her book "Dynamic Group-Piano Teaching":

¹⁵⁹ Pamela D. Pike, *Dynamic Group-Piano Teaching: Transforming Group Theory into Teaching Practice*, (New York, Routledge Publishing, May 2017), Ch. 5, pg.9-11.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

Unlike students who play band or orchestral instruments, piano students often work in solitude. My students who have worked with others in piano ensembles tend to listen better, play more musically, and stay motivated to practice when they know that others are depending on them. Piano duets, duos, and trios also provide ensemble experiences, but using digital pianos and different musical sound settings can encourage attentive listening to phrasing, dynamics, and articulation nuances and result in increased technique at the instrument. Generally, I conduct these ensembles and lead rehearsals (with input from the students), so they learn to speak about music and collaborate with others. If students are working at the appropriate level, the ensemble music sounds more musically complex than their individual repertoire, which most find quite satisfying. Piano ensembles are perennial recital favorites in my studio with children and adults.¹⁶³

Dr. Pike is an advocate of having events in group piano classes that encourage students to participate by playing solos and group compositions. She believes that having a variety of occasional and regular group lessons serves as a means of allowing students to connect with peers.¹⁶⁴

Why classroom piano lessons in public schools?

Classroom piano lessons are a concept that has been in existence for two centuries. There has been a history of great success and a vast amount of material is available for teachers and students. With all of this material and success, many are still of the mindset that private piano lessons are the best method of learning to play. Pioneers such as Cady, Burrows, and Pace were skeptical of teaching in groups initially. As they experienced the success of students learning in groups, they discovered many potential benefits for adults and children. Throughout the years, others have seen that students benefit greatly from classroom instruction in piano. When students

¹⁶³ Pamela D. Pike, *Dynamic Group-Piano Teaching: Transforming Group Theory into Teaching Practice*, (New York, Routledge Publishing, May 2017), Ch. 5, pg.9-11.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

start in the early years of elementary school, they will reap so many potential benefits in music and in other areas of life. These potential benefits include but are not limited to:

- Students gave support to one another, learn from their peers and their teachers.
- Students will have numerous opportunities to perform for others, which will increase self-confidence and poise
- Students will be exposed to a wide variety of repertoire to learn themselves or for personal enjoyment.
- Students will learn critical listening skills and how to communicate and comment on what they hear and feel.
- Students will develop leadership skills as they work with others in a classroom piano setting.
- Students will develop problem-solving skills as they work with their repertoire and observe the work of others and how they deal with problems.
- Classroom piano lessons will provide a motivational environment where students work together on music games, repertoire, duets, and other aspects of learning.
- Students will develop the skill of learning to interpret music.
- Students will develop a good work ethic by practicing and presenting their work to their teachers, the other students, and public performances.¹⁶⁵
- Students learn from one another, and they learn to help each other and have the opportunity to hear the questions and comments of other students.
- Students progress more quickly than they do on their own especially at the beginning stages of piano study.¹⁶⁶

There are potential benefits for teachers who choose to teach group piano. Those who take this career path are involved in sharing a fine art that requires great skill and passion. Thus,

¹⁶⁵ Christopher Fisher, *Teaching Piano in Groups*, (New York, Oxford University Press) 2010.

¹⁶⁶ Pamela D. Pike, *Dynamic Group-Piano Teaching: Transforming Group Theory into Teaching Practice*, (New York, Routledge Publishing, May 2017), Ch. 5, pg.8-9.

teachers should not underestimate the importance of the potential benefits they receive from teaching group piano classes.¹⁶⁷ Some of those include but are not limited to:

- *Efficient use of teaching time.* Preparation time for teaching each class is considerable, and each group will be unique. Classes that are on similar or completely different levels will need slightly different class activities and teaching strategies.
- *A stimulating challenge.* Piano teachers may discover that it is energizing to reach larger groups of students at one time. In a group setting, the instructor will have the opportunity to monitor students and teach technology. These activities can provide inspiration and variation from more traditional teaching routines.¹⁶⁸

The potential benefits of classroom piano lessons in public schools are undeniable. The group should ultimately be designed for the goal of teaching students to play the piano. Because of the vast elements of this process, the potential benefits spill over to many other aspects of life and academics. The group setting gives the sense of a community working to achieve the goal of playing the piano. When schools offer this as a part of the curriculum, this skill becomes something available to a large number of children, not just a few who can afford a private instructor. With all of the positive influences, rewards, and potential benefits, it is evident that schools need to offer classroom piano lessons in public elementary schools throughout America. This program is well worth the time, training, finances, and effort because it is for our children, who will then pass on this skill to future generations.

¹⁶⁷ Pamela D. Pike, *Dynamic Group-Piano Teaching: Transforming Group Theory into Teaching Practice*, (New York, Routledge Publishing, May 2017), Ch. 5, pg.8-9.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

Chapter Three

Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the research methodology for this qualitative study for the potential benefits of classroom piano lessons in public elementary schools. This approach is being used to research the history of classroom piano lessons, the potential benefits of such a program, and the feasibility of seeing these programs implemented in modern-day school systems. The applicability and an in-depth constructivist approach for this study are discussed in this chapter. The research plan, including the methodology, investigates historical advocates, method books, teacher training, classroom layout, and potential benefits that are also primary components of this chapter.

Research Question

This study is aimed at asking the question should group piano classes should be added to the elementary public-school curriculum. Schools in America offer many types of music lessons for students including band, orchestra, and chorus. The piano is an instrument that is basic to learning music theory and it offers many academic social, neurological, and mental potential benefits for students. Even with all of this information, piano lessons are not offered in public schools.

The research question is as follows: What potential benefits do classroom piano lessons have for public elementary school children?

Selected Methodology

A qualitative study was chosen for this project because the goal of the research is to explain a phenomenon that is based on past and current experiences of those with experience in this area. To get the needed answers to these questions, a list of questions has been drafted for presentation to participants who have experience with teaching piano in a private or public school system. The questions are as follows:

1. What are the positive results for children who study the piano?
2. What are the negative results for students who study the piano?
3. What are the educational potential benefits of studying the piano?
4. What are the challenges for incorporating the piano class into the school schedule?
5. What is the level of support from the administration for piano classes?
6. What is the level of support from the academic teachers?
7. What is the level of support from the parents of the students?
8. Do you feel you can give quality instruction to the children in a group setting?
9. How many students do you feel should be allowed into a group class?
10. How long should group piano classes last in terms of minutes?
11. How many times each week should the children meet for piano class?
12. Do the children practice at home?
13. What is the system for student performances?
14. What percentage of students continue with the piano class from year to year?
15. What percentage of students continue with piano lessons after elementary school?
16. What percentage of students have instruments to practice at home?
17. Does the school system furnish an instrument for you to teach at school, or did you have to provide your own?

After speaking to the individuals who have either taught or are currently teaching classroom piano, the results will be recorded in Chapter 4. It is the hope that the opinions of

professionals will support the hypothesis that piano lessons in public elementary schools would be beneficial.

Investigation Methods

Participants for this research must have experience in teaching piano classes in a school system, either public or private. Elementary piano instruction is preferred, but because there is a lack of teachers in this field, teachers of upper-grade levels will be interviewed. Location, age, race, and religion are not factors for this study. Teachers who have not taught piano in schools are not eligible for this study.

The screening process for participants consisted of online research of schools that are currently or have previously offered piano lessons as a part of a school subject. The research consists of phoning schools to ask about the existence of such programs and to verify they have a legitimate piano teaching curriculum in place. Upon verification, an email will be sent to the participants to explain the nature of the study. The email will request permission to do a personal interview through a telephone conversation. Potential participants who respond favorably will be contacted to set up a time and date for the interview.

Participants

There will be three teachers who will be interviewed for this project. All participants are experienced teachers who have or are currently teaching piano in a school system. Each teacher has a degree in music. The research did reveal any teachers who are currently or have in the past taught the piano class as part of the curriculum in elementary public school. Teachers from high school and private schools were used for this study. The first teacher is currently teaching piano classes during the day in high school. The second teacher is currently teaching piano at a private

school and teaches after school hours. The third participant is a retired piano teacher who previously taught piano classes at a private school during the school day. Participants will not be required to be completely supportive of group piano classes. Likewise, they are not required to be completely against a program of this nature. All those involved in this study will be asked to sign a consent form for the use of their information. If at any time one of the participants decides to withdraw from the study, the information they share will be deleted. Participants will be interviewed for a total of 30 to 45 minutes each.

Collection of Opinions

Opinions will be collected from the answers to the questions asked of the participants by two systems. First, conversations will be on the phone and will be recorded on a digital device with the consent of the participant. The information will not be shared with anyone other than the researcher. Answers to questions will be locked in a computer with a password and will be destroyed at such time as the information is no longer needed. The identity of the participants will be kept confidential. Secondly, the answers to the questions will be recorded on paper. An analysis and comparison of the answers will be made by the researcher to determine the results of the study. The results information will be presented in this thesis in Chapter Four.

Procedures Followed

Approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was sought from Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. Once approval has been given, the researcher will email the individuals, using the Email to Potential Participants that was approved by the IRB. Participants will be interviewed over the telephone while both the researcher and the participant are in a private room with no other people. Participants will be asked for their permission for the conversation to be

recorded. The interview will be recorded using an Apple iPad voice memos app. The participants will be asked to answer the list of seventeen questions presented. The interviewer will write down the answers and will have the answers on the recording. The answers will be recorded on paper and then analyzed for results.

Opinions of Professional Teachers

This study used an interviewing method, found in Appendix A, Appendix B, and Appendix C. The interviews began by explaining that the questions being asked were concerning teaching in the school system. Participants were asked for permission to record the conversation. Research questions followed, to gather information on the participants' experience with teaching piano lessons in a school setting. The interview ended with the last question and an invitation to include any additional information that may be pertinent to the study. Interviews were conducted over the telephone and no in-person interviews were held. There were three participants in the research process and each one currently or previously taught lessons in a public or private school setting.

As the questions were asked, the interviewer recorded answers in a notebook and made notes for analysis of the opinions of professionals. Each interview consisted of a single session. Each interview was transcribed by the researcher and recorded in Appendix A, Appendix B, and Appendix C. Once the interviews were completed, the researcher made a list of the seventeen questions and recorded the answers of each participant. Participants were not identified but were classified by a number system based on which one did the first, second, and third interviews. A comparison of the answers was made, and the results were recorded in a few sentences or a short paragraph, depending on the length of the analysis

Ethical Considerations

The researcher ensured that proper ethics in this study were a top priority. The identity of the participants' names was not shared with anyone. There was no risk to children and no students were involved or identified in the interview process. Proper paperwork was submitted to the Institutional Review Board of Liberty University and certified. No interviews were held until the IRB approval was received. All participants are over the age of 18 years of age and none are known to have any type of mental or emotional impairment. Each participant was involved in the interview process of their own free will without being coerced or receiving payment.

Summary

The goal of this chapter was to explain the methodology of the research involved in the study of the potential benefits of classroom piano lessons in public elementary schools. Details include the procedure, study participants, opinions of professional's collection and analysis, ethical concerns, and interview questions used in this study. Each area of methodology has been explained in detail. All research participants contributed to this theory by sharing their experiences in the field of offering lessons in either the public or private school sector. Chapter IV will demonstrate the result of the methodology used in this chapter using only the information obtained in the manner described.

Chapter Four

Results

This chapter contains the results of the methodology study conducted to answer the research question: What potential benefits do classroom piano lessons have for public elementary school children? The process consisted of researching schools throughout the United States that offer or have offered piano lessons at school, preferably during the day. Public and private schools were considered. While elementary schools were a preference for this study, there were no public elementary schools found who are currently or have in the past offered piano lessons during the school day as part of the curriculum.

A public high school that teaches grades 9 -12 was found during the research process. A teacher is currently teaching a piano program that is included in the school curriculum. He is referred to in this study as P1 and his full interview can be found in Appendix A. The second school approached by the researcher is a private school. A call was placed to inquire about piano lessons at school. This process revealed that there is a teacher who is currently giving lessons as a part of the school program, but the lessons are private and are given when the school day is over. The teacher is paid as an independent contractor. He is referred to in the study as P2 and his full interview can be found in Appendix B. The same conversation with the private school revealed another teacher who has now retired but previously taught piano lessons at the school during the school day. He was approached and agreed to discuss his program at the school. He is referred to as P3, and his full interview can be found in Appendix C.

The interviews consisted of getting permission to record the conversation and to use the material in this study. There were 17 questions used as a guide for gaining information about the

potential benefits of piano lessons and each teacher's personal experience with teaching a program as part of a school system. Not all questions were verbally asked because some of the teachers answered the questions while giving answers to other questions.

Opinions of Piano Professionals

The interview results are recorded by the answers to the questions given. They are as follows:

Question 1. What are the positive results for children who study the piano?

P1 believes that one of the most positive aspects of piano lessons is that students get to play the piano better. He notes that piano lessons are expensive and that offering them as an elective means students who can't study privately get the chance to learn general knowledge about the piano. P2 noted that anything you are trying to master helps you learn discipline and how to organize your schedule. He believes that these aspects can be applied to other academic subjects and can help students create good habits. P3 stated that the consistency of lessons is important. He mentioned that students who take lessons during the school day do not have interferences with after-school activities.

The result according to this study is that piano lessons have many positive aspects for children. These include but are not limited to a) an opportunity to learn no matter what the income level b) help in developing discipline, c) development of good habits that apply to other subjects d) students who study piano during school do not have after school interferences. These findings are consistent with the research in the introduction and literature review of this study. An addition to the material was the consistency of lessons taken during school.

Question 2. What are the negative results for students who study the piano?

According to P1, it is hard to give constant supervision to those students who may need that level of help. He currently teaches 10 students but in the past, he has taught up to 20 students in a class. P1 doesn't feel that he needs to dictate and students need to learn to make decisions on their own. P1 gives a packet of music every quarter and he introduces a new piece each day. He believes the biggest negative is that class piano lessons are not designed for kids that need a lot of structure. P2 notes that some children cannot handle the pressure. As a teacher, he strives to not put a lot of pressure on his students' but likes to encourage them to practice and master their skills and not just do it halfway. He does not want students to suffer from anxiety, but rather to enjoy the experience while understanding it is hard work. He noted that some students are willing to work hard. He feels that, as a teacher, he has to watch for anxiety and help students deal with these issues. P3 noted that his lessons were ½ an hour when he taught them during the day at school. During that time, he would have to get students from class, do the lessons and then walk the student back to class. These aspects took up lesson time. P3 felt that he did not get to know the parents of the students because of the lessons being held during the school day.

Negative aspects of piano lessons include not being able to devote a lot of time to a student in a classroom situation, especially if they need more attention. Teachers are not able to interact with parents weekly. If teachers have to supervise students coming and going from class, lesson time is taken from the time that is allotted for instruction. Teachers do not want students to suffer from negative aspects such as anxiety and pressure, as stated by P2. These issues were not mentioned in the introduction and literature review and should be considered when implementing a class piano program.

Question 3. What are the educational potential benefits of studying the piano?

P1 addressed the fact that he is teaching information other than piano in his class. He believes one of the biggest lessons students should learn is time management. Another learning area is test-taking. He used a scenario where he compared a math test and a music test. In a math test, everyone takes the test at the same time. This differs from his music test because he tells his students to call him over when they feel they are ready for him to listen. He feels there are many lessons learned in piano that cannot be measured. P2 felt that he did not know the educational potential benefits of piano concerning academics. He stated that he could talk to the teachers more to determine if there is a relationship. He felt that students who do well in piano usually do well in other subjects. He felt this should be accredited to developing discipline. He noted that it could work the other way where students who have developed discipline in their academic subjects can then apply it to their piano studies. P3 noted that parents have told him that within starting piano lessons, their children have shown improvement in their academic work, especially Math. He felt that students learning trades and characteristics, problem-solving, and analysis of situations are all potential benefits. He related this to times when students make mistakes while playing the piano and they need to know the technique for making corrections. P3 felt that other potential benefits included learning persistence and how to deal with frustration, as well as being goal-oriented.

Teachers feel that students who study piano reap potential benefits that also affect academics. These include but are not limited to time management, learning to deal with frustration, being goal-oriented, problem solving, and analyzing problems. It was noted that the opposite could be true and those who do well in academics may transfer that to their education in piano. Some of the findings in this research section were consistent with earlier findings in the

Introduction and Literature Review. One subject not approached in earlier research was a vice versa effect where students do well in academics, and it helps them do better in piano.

Question 4. What are the challenges for incorporating the piano class into the school schedule?

P3 stated that piano lessons are put in the regular school day, which alleviates having any problems with incorporating the piano class into the school schedule. At his school, it is an elective and the students can take the piano class as many years as they like. When students take multiple years, he, as a teacher, has to change his curriculum so students are not getting repetitious lessons. Some students eventually help teach the classes if they have taken multiple years and know the material. P2 felt that there were disadvantages at his school because it is a smaller school setting and sometimes it's hard to work in class piano lessons. He is an independent contractor and not a member of the school staff. He teaches lessons at the school after classes have ended. He has taught class piano in the past and believes it is up to the child to determine how much they are going to learn. He believes that as a teacher, there is a limited amount he can accomplish. His previous group classes were once a week for 25 minutes. P2 stated that one on one lessons allow him to concentrate on one child at a time and he can help them progress as a musician. P3 stated that students had to make up their academic work because piano lessons were not a part of the curriculum. Students would have to come during lunch or recess.

The answers provided here show mixed opinions about the challenges of incorporating piano classes into the school schedule. P1 showed that classes included in the daily schedule do not pose problems. P2 believes it is up to the student to determine how much they will learn. He feels that he has limitations in how much he can teach. P3 did not state that scheduling around academic classes was a challenge, but rather stated it as a fact of his experience of teaching in

school. P1 was the only teacher who addressed the challenges of incorporating class piano into the school day. For him, it is not a problem because it is worked into the school day.

Question 5. What is the level of support from the administration for piano classes?

P1 feels that he is 100% supported by his administration. He also has a Fine Arts Director and feels he is in the best situation possible. P2 mentioned that support from the administration does not come into play in his situation, but he feels that they support him. P3 felt that overall he had excellent support of the administration.

The result of this study is that those teaching in a school where piano lessons are offered feel that the administration is supportive of this program.

Question 6. What is the level of support from the academic teachers?

The participants felt that the teachers are supportive of the piano program at school. P1 feels that he has the support of the teachers. His program is not a “pull out” program, so his class does not have a direct impact on any of the other classes. He said that he is like any other teacher. P2 noted that he is an alumnus of the school where he teaches and there are some teachers he had as a student who are still at the school. He feels that he has a good relationship with the teachers. P3 indicated that overall he had a good relationship with the teachers. He felt that they are the ones who made a lot of sacrifices in catching up with the students with assignments they missed while doing piano lessons. His program was a “pull out” program for the most part. He felt the teachers were very sacrificial and he feels great appreciation for all they did for him and the program while he was at the school.

Teachers at the schools where piano programs affected their class and where they did not affect their class are both very supportive of the piano program in their school. This is evidenced by the willingness of teachers to allow students to make up work when they miss academic lessons. The ideal situation is that of P1 where the piano class is scheduled into the school day and the teachers are involved in scheduling conflicts.

Question 7. What is the level of support from the parents of the students?

P1 voiced that he makes it a point to call the parents at home to get a feel for them. He uses this opportunity whether he has negative or positive comments to make to the parents about their child. The majority of parents are happy with the lessons and P1 feels they are aware and appreciative that they are being spared the burden of paying for lessons. P2 has a situation where he is teaching at a private school. Parents pay for tuition and piano is not included in their fee, so they have to pay an additional cost for lessons. As a result, P2 stated that most parents do a good job of making sure students practice and show up for their lessons. He feels the parents are very supportive. P3 felt that he did not get to know the parents very well because the lessons were at school during the day. He feels that having a good rapport with the parents helps increase rapport with students. He prefers the scenario where the parents are sitting outside of the lesson within earshot of what is being said to the student. When he comes out of the lesson, he can reiterate what he has taught them by saying to the parent “you heard what I was saying.” He especially likes parents to sit in on lessons and learn along with the child in what he termed a “2 for,” meaning two people learning for the price of one. P3 believes parents should be involved in the practice process at home, but not in a dictatorial way. He believes the parent should monitor their child to make sure they are practicing the right thing, and they should make comments to their child when necessary.

Teachers feel that parents should be involved in their child's piano lessons. Parents of children who take lessons at school do not get to speak to the teacher after every lesson. Staying in touch with parents has to be through phone calls by teachers, as is evidenced by P1. Parents who are paying for lessons support the piano program by making them practice. Parents who are not paying out of pocket for lessons are happy with the program, according to the teachers.

Question 8. Do you feel you can give quality instruction to the children in a group setting?

P1 feels that he can give a higher quality piano education to his students in a group setting than what he could give in private lessons. He said that seeing his students daily is huge. In a private situation, he feels he is trying to keep the kids invested in lessons, so he might go lighter on theory and a little heavier on fun songs to play until he has the student hooked. In the group piano setting, he said he can cast his net wider and not spend an entire lesson as if he is not going to see them for another week. He has developed a system where Thursday is for scales, and on Mondays students have a chord bank. He introduces a new chord every Monday. P2 does not feel that the quality of instruction is good in a group setting. He believes the private lesson setting is a more beneficial scenario. P3 did not do group piano lessons, but he has done group guitar class during his time at the school. He felt that it was financially lucrative for him but no one "got their money's worth".

The teacher (P1) in this study who teaches group lessons in school every day feels group lessons are better than private lessons because the students have more time at the piano with him. P2 believes the quality of instruction in group classes is not adequate. P3 does not have experience with teaching group class piano. This result reveals that the two teachers with experience have a difference of opinion on the quality of instruction in a class piano setting. One is positive, and the other is negative.

Question 9. How many students do you feel should be allowed into a group class?

P1 has been teaching group piano class for ten years and currently has 10 students in his class. His highest number has been 20 students and he has instruments to accommodate 20 students. He also has access for 20 students to have Mac Computers. His opinion is that 15, or maybe 16 students are a good number. He chose this number because he likes to be able to pair the students up with each other. He feels there is a wide range of skill levels when there is a low number of students. He also noted that the kids feel like there is a lot of pressure for them to answer questions if the number is low. If there are too many students, some of the students may slip through the cracks. P2 felt that 10 or 15 students are a good number for a piano class to be effective. More students could make things chaotic. When he was getting his degree, he observed a class with 30 students and he stated that it was chaos. He feels that 10 students would be ideal, but 15 would be okay. He mentioned that it only takes one little class clown to ruin the setting. He suggested keeping it number of students low if you want to have an effective class where you feel like everyone is progressing, not just a couple of students. P3 taught a class with a maximum of 4 or 5 students. He felt that at the beginning if everybody had a keyboard, you could teach certain things to give them a start. He noted that even though they all start at the same spot, there will come a point where everybody is at a different place where, for him, was nothing short of a private lesson.

Teachers had opinions about how many students they thought a piano class could accommodate. P1 likes to be able to pair students together and feels 15 or 16 students is a good size for a class. Even though P2 stated that he doesn't feel the quality of instruction is good in group piano, he felt that 10 to 15 students would be a good size for a class. This is a smaller size than the classes of Dr. Kiorpes at Bronx Prep mentioned in an earlier chapter. P3 feels that there

should not be more than 4 or 5 students in a class. He feels students will not stay on the same level and eventually, the teacher will be doing private lessons for the students, even though they are in a group setting. Each of these suggestions on class size differs from the class size of Robert Pace's dyad system of two students in a piano group.

Question 10. How long should group piano classes last in terms of minutes?

P1 stated that he previously taught an 80-minute class every other day and that was too much. He currently teaches a 40-minute class every day. He feels this is enough time for him to have 10 – 15 minutes of instruction time. The remainder of the time is used for students to practice while he walks through the room talking with them and listening to their pieces. P2 feels that a full class period of 45 – 60 minutes is a suitable time for class piano. He stated that the time should depend on the variable of teaching either elementary or high school. He felt that a full class period is the best. P3 noted that he met with his students once a week for half an hour. As a private teacher, he feels ½ hour is sufficient. He feels that students who are outstanding in their piano studies may justify having an hour lesson. He currently teaches a student for an hour because that is the amount of time the mother prefers. He does not see it as being beneficial for that particular student. He does feel that some students should have 45-minute lessons because of their ability.

Participants in this study gave a variety of how many minutes they feel children should spend in group piano classes. P1 has experienced longer and shorter times of 80 and 40 minutes but feels 40 minutes is the best amount of time to be spent in class. P2 believes the grade level is a determining factor in how long to have group piano classes. He stated that a full class period is best and used a range of 45 minutes to an hour. P3 did not address the question of how many minutes a group class should be but addressed his private lesson class time.

Question 11. How many times each week should the children meet for piano class?

P1 feels that anything other than once a week is good for piano class. He stated that private piano lessons are great but the teacher can only fit in just so much. Because his students have class every day, they have more time at the piano. P2 feels that 3 times a week would be best. He noted that every day would be ideal, but he felt that was not likely to happen. Teaching the students on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday would be effective. P3 is not an advocate for piano class and feels that he would like to lengthen the time he has for private lessons. He noted that he would like to eliminate a few students to have more time with other students.

Participants feel that lessons should be given more than once a week and P1 is currently in a setting that offers lessons every day of the school week. P2 noted that 3 times a week would be good, but feels doubtful that it would happen. P3 did not address the question for piano class because he would like to diminish his teaching schedule and use the time to teach other students for a longer amount of time.

Question 12. Do the children practice at home?

P1 stated that during the pandemic, his school provided keyboards for each student to have at home. When asked if they still had the keyboards at home and he answered that it depends on the person. He had a community member donate a keyboard and he asked the class who needed a keyboard at home. He gave it to a senior who raised his hand. Some of his students have keyboards and some don't. Because his students meet every day of the school week, they are practicing at school and a piano at home is not a necessity. P2 noted that students do practice but they have too many distractions like soccer, dance, karate, and other activities. He feels with all of these other events taking place in the life of a student, there are weeks when it appears

there isn't enough time. He said that some students practice well. He encourages students to practice 5 times a week and take off the weekend. He believes that students should try to practice 15 – 20 minutes a day and not cram in an hour the day before the lesson. Students who are more advanced need to practice more. If a student does not practice for a couple of weeks, he will have a conversation with the parents and ask them to remind their child about practice time. He feels his parents are supportive in this endeavor. P3 does not want his students to be clock watchers but prefers they be goal setters. He encourages students to practice two measures 5 – 10 times and then two more measures 5–10 times. They should then play all four measures 5 times together. He believes students should learn to compartmentalize their work and pay attention to details. He stresses to his students that everything on the page matters. He wants his students to have observational skills.

The result is that teachers believe students need to practice regularly. P2 believes smaller, more frequent practice sessions are more valuable than cramming in one practice time each week. P1 sees his students five days a week and feels the students are getting ample time at the piano. P3 believes students need to practice but doesn't want them to practice a certain amount of time on the clock. He prefers a system where students play their songs a certain number of times and learn observational skills. Robert Pace believed that the group setting encouraged students to practice more because they were in a class with another student.

Question 13. What is the system for student performances?

P1 noted that before the pandemic, his students had quarterly performance sessions where they would bring in food and play for each other. He feels that since the COVID pandemic of 2020, kids have shut down. Participation has not been good, but he is striving to have a Christmas recital this year. When he started teaching 10 years ago, he had an evening

performance and the parents attended the event. He mentioned that some of the students were turned off by the performances and that system has fallen by the wayside. He said that students who want to perform find opportunities. P2 tries to do one or two recitals each year. Because the students are learning Christmas songs, he likes to try to do one recital at Christmas. In the spring, he has an end of the year recital. He holds his recitals at a local music store so his students can play on a Steinway Piano. He likes to use that location so he can enable the students to play on a piano that a professional would use. P3 holds one recital per year in the spring. He is not involved with the guild. He stated that he previously attempted to do a Christmas recital but could not get enough participation. He has his students perform music that is representative of where they are and what they enjoy. He tries to make recitals low-key and unintimidating.

The result is that teachers do feel it is important to have a system in place for recitals or performances. P3 does not want these events to be intimidating to students but likes to offer them performance opportunities. He has issues with getting participation in some of the recital events, especially during the Christmas season. The springtime recital appears to be the standard recital time for these participants. P1 is dealing with student shutdowns after the 2020 pandemic and the closing of schools. He believes those who want to perform will find a way. P2 finds it important to have the students perform on a Steinway piano for the two recitals he holds each year, when possible. Raymond Burrows used children to perform in seminars by teaching them on stage and having them perform what they learned.

Question 14. What percentage of students continue with the piano class from year to year?

P1 stated that the number of students who continue from year to year is not very high. He accredited this to the fact that the school has a large number of other subjects that are of interest to the students, such as business and technology classes. Considering all of these circumstances,

he said the rate of students who continue year to year is 5 – 10%. P1 stated that 1% of his students become music majors in college after leaving his program. P2 said that his continuation rate of students from year to year is 70 – 75%. If students do not continue lessons, he makes it up with new students. P3 stated that by his design, he has diminished his schedule for the last few years. He did not state the percentage of students who continue from year to year.

The result shows a vast difference in the number of students who continue year to year. The classroom piano set in a public school has a low number of students who continue, and the private teaching system in place at a private school has a high number of students who continue from year to year. This is in contrast to the program at Bronx Prep where a sizeable amount of students continue the piano program.

Question 15. What percentage of students continue with piano lessons after elementary school?

P1 stated that he currently has one student who is a senior and she started piano in elementary school. She had practice time built into her school day. He did not give a percentage number but said it varies from year to year. P2 said that 50% of his students continue with piano after elementary school. He mentioned that there is a lot of turnovers but he is at a place in his teaching where he has had the same students for a while. Even though kids take the summer off, they come back in the fall and continue their studies. P2 feels that the number is higher now, possibly because he is becoming more experienced and is learning how to keep his students motivated. He mentioned that some students simply lose interest and you cannot force them to continue. P3 said there is a high rate of students who quit after elementary school. He said that the rate is low- probably 10 – 15%.

The result is that in the classroom setting in a public school, we did not receive a percentage rate as it varies from year to year in this study. The private school sector participants varied in their answers with one participant stating 50% of the students continue lessons and elementary school and the other teacher stating a much lower number of 10–15%. Because there is a lack of information on class piano lessons in elementary schools in America, this information was not found in the literature review.

Question 16. What percentage of students have instruments to practice at home?

P1 stated that the number of students who have pianos at home varies. Students who do not have a keyboard at home have the option to borrow one from the school. P1 noted that most of the students do not take advantage of this offer. During the COVID pandemic in 2020, the students had to have a piano at home because all of the lessons were taught virtually on Zoom. P2 noted that he makes sure all of his students have a piano or keyboard at home so they can practice. P3 did not mention the percentage of students with instruments.

The result is that students who have piano every day in a school setting are practicing at school. A piano at home is not necessary but can be provided if needed. The majority of students choose to not have a keyboard from the school. The private students taught at school do not have practice time during the academic time. The teacher makes sure students have pianos at home. This amount of students with pianos in the home was not noted in earlier chapters. Homes began to get pianos in the early 19th century and this caused families to pursue lessons for their children.

Question 17. Does the school system furnish an instrument for you to teach at school, or did you have to provide your own?

P1 stated early in the interview that the school provides 20 Aria and Yamaha keyboards for the class. Each student also has a 25 inch Mac computer with software. The school built a new auditorium 8 years ago and at this time they build a new piano lab. P2 said the school is set up with a nice Yamaha piano in the practice room that he uses for lessons. P3 said he was given a room with a piano in the music room. It was originally an office with a piano that was used by students who wanted to practice. The chorus used it to work on certain choral parts while an accompanist worked with other students. He liked the room because it was near the restrooms and water fountain. The negative aspect of his setup was that it was at the opposite end of the campus from where his students were located.

The result is that public and private schools offer teachers the instrument needed to work with their students. This is very helpful because teachers can walk in and teach and not have to transport an instrument every time they go to teach lessons.

Summary

The participants in this study were very helpful in offering information about both private and classroom piano lessons offered in a school setting. Each one offered information that was not asked but helped get an overall picture of their thoughts, ideas, and programs. All of the participants believe there are many positive potential benefits of students taking piano lessons. Only one participant felt group piano class was more beneficial than private lessons. Two of the participants felt classroom piano was not beneficial and students should study privately. All agree that the study of piano teaches many components that can be transferred to academic subjects. It was pointed out that the opposite is also true and academic study habits can be transferred to piano studies.

Classroom piano lessons offered during school hours give the students many opportunities to practice if the classes are offered more than once a week. Lessons taught in ½ hour increments are not enough time and the students do not get a quality piano education, according to the participants in this study. Administrators of schools that offer piano lessons at school are supportive but not all have a proper concept of the way to handle this type of program. They show support by providing the space and instruments needed for the program that is being offered. The parents of students who study piano at school are not in weekly contact with the teacher, but it should be noted that a system of keeping the parents informed is used by some of the participants through phone calls.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to examine the potential benefits of offering classroom piano lessons in public elementary schools. In the United States of America, there are very few public schools offering piano lessons to children in grades K–5. Even though history has shown that group piano lessons can be very successful, schools are not using this tool as part of the curriculum. Education systems teach general music, band, orchestra, and chorus. The piano, arguably the one instrument that teaches the largest amount of music knowledge, is not offered in school systems. Students have to study piano outside of school and parents have to pay the cost of private lessons.

Summary of Findings

The potential benefits of piano lessons are vast, according to research and interviews with the participants of this study. It should be understood that this study is not stating that piano lessons are the only source of learning that helps students in other areas of academics. For this study, the study of the piano is the focus of how students can benefit in other areas of learning. Historical studies have shown that piano lessons have educational potential benefits such as helping improve math skills, helping students with reading and language arts, and developing a good work ethic. These findings, which were listed in the introduction of this study, were confirmed by the participants involved in the research methodology. One participant stated that parents have revealed to him that their student improved in Math six months after starting piano lessons. This is in keeping with the study by The University of California Irvine where researchers investigated the effects of musical training and how it could help with math

performance. The investigation confirmed that children who were taking music lessons did better in math than those who did not take music lessons.¹⁶⁹

Opinions of professionals revealed that teachers believe piano lessons help children learn to manage time, develop a good work ethic, and learn observational skills. These are skills that help with piano and can also transfer to academic subjects. One participant stated that these skills can be developed in academic subjects and transferred to benefit piano studies. Students should learn to be goal-oriented and have the ability to keep going until they reach those goals. When a student is taking piano lessons, the original goal is to play songs on the piano. Students are not aware of the other potential benefits they will receive when they start studying the keyboard.

The neurological potential benefits listed in the introduction of this study revealed that there are actual changes that take place in the brain when a person studies the piano. In the areas of hearing and listening, controlling motor actions to produce sounds, memory, emotion, attention, and learning, the brain of musicians is larger structurally.¹⁷⁰ The neurological potential benefits also included information that the human brain has plasticity. This term may not be familiar to many pianists, but plasticity is the ability to adjust and rewire itself, which causes the brain to create new neural circuits.¹⁷¹ It is important to reiterate this point because the brain of a person learning to play the piano will develop to accommodate the control of activities such as

¹⁶⁹ Lori Miller Kase, "Using Music to Close the Academic Gap: New Studies on the Cognitive Advantages of Learning Instruments at an Early Age," Health.com, October 9, 2013, <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2013/10/using-music-to-close-the-academic-gap/280362/>.

¹⁷⁰ Elijah, "How Playing Piano Affects the Brain," <https://musiprof.com/blog/how-playing-piano-affects-the-brain/>.

¹⁷¹ Sofia Seinfeld 1, Heidi Figueroa, Jordi Ortiz-Gil, Maria V Sanchez-Vives, "Effects of Music Learning and Piano Practice on Cognitive Function, Mood and Quality of Life in the Older Adults," Front Psychology, 2013, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24198804/>.

playing both hands while reading music. It should be noted that practice will help the continuity of this plasticity. The participants in this study felt that practice was essential for the success of students studying the piano. It is not known if they were aware of the neurological potential benefits such as plasticity and the creation of new neural circuits.

Raymond Burrows and Robert Pace were advocates of group piano lessons. One participant in this research feels that class piano lessons are better than private lessons. Two of the participants voiced that they are not advocates of group piano classes. They felt that students need one on one instruction for lessons to be beneficial. It should be noted that those who oppose class piano lessons had experiences where group classes were once a week for less than an hour. The students they have taught had to be taken out of academic classes or have lessons during lunchtime or after school. The participant who advocates for class piano lessons teaches his students every day and piano is a part of the school curriculum. He felt that piano included in the curriculum was very beneficial because students were not being taken out of academic class time. He also stated that the students are at the piano every day and are getting in a large amount of practice time per week. Based on this information, this research reveals that the structure of the lesson schedule should include piano classes more than once a week. Having piano class as part of the curriculum is preferred over taking students out of other academic classes.

The literature review of this study revealed the importance of training for teachers who will have a career in group piano lessons. Raymond Burrows voiced concern for the lack of training for class piano teachers in an article in the 1940s. According to this study, the participants who spoke of their training had minimal training in this area of teaching group piano. Participant 3 said that he had only private lessons in his training. Participant 2 had some training in observing classroom piano. He felt it was chaotic and not a good choice for training

future pianists. As mentioned previously, both of these participants are not advocates of piano taught in groups. The third participant did not mention his training. Based on this information, the literature review research that emphasizes training teachers in the field of group piano classes is essential. Teachers will have difficulty teaching a method that is unfamiliar, unlearned, and misunderstood.

Robert Pace began teaching the dyad method unintentionally when a student stayed for the lesson of her friend so she could go home with them afterward. Through this experience, he found that the students had an interest in each other and the music they were playing. When he mentioned it to other parents, they were skeptical but came to appreciate the concept. Parental support is vital. When students study the piano at school, the parents are not present at the end of the lesson for parent-teacher conversations. All participants stated that having interaction with the parents of students takes initiation on their part. Parental involvement with students is positive reinforcement for piano lessons. Teachers must find ways to keep parents aware of the progress of their children and help them find ways to participate in the process.

Administrators and teachers in schools need to be supportive of a piano class program to make the training process go smoothly. This is especially important for schools that have to implement a program where children must be taken out of class for lessons. Classroom space and instruments must be provided. One of the purposes of piano classes at school is to offer the opportunity for children to learn to play regardless of their financial situation. Participant 1 has a school system that provides pianos at school and will provide an instrument at home if needed. The Bronx Prep School Program in New York offers piano lessons and provides instruments for the students. Both of these schools have successful programs and it should be noted that the material and necessary class time is provided for the teachers and students.

Limitations

All research has limitations and this study is no exception. One factor of this study that should be noted is that the participants do not offer piano classes in public elementary schools. The research for participants who are currently offering piano classes was very limited. Two of the participants teach or have taught in a private school. They teach children in the lower grades but not in a group setting. The third participant teaches high school and has not had experience teaching classroom piano in an elementary school. The Bronx Prep mentioned in the Literature Review teaches students from grades 5 – 12. Children in lower grades are not included in piano lessons.

The major limitation of this study is that students were not interviewed. The research did not reveal public elementary schools that are offering class piano lessons at this time. Lack of information of the opinions of children makes it impossible to fully understand the full scope of potential benefits gained by taking piano lessons. An analysis of potential benefits cannot be conducted because the evidence of the personal effect on the students is not available. It should be pointed out that the history of group piano lessons provided in the literature review has shown that group piano lessons had a very positive outcome for students who studied in this manner. The information on present-day potential benefits is not available in this study.

The experience and thought process of piano teachers is a significant limitation in this study. People tend to teach the way they were taught. If a piano teacher was exposed to private lessons, they have difficulty grasping the group piano class concept. Another limitation is that the piano is a solo instrument. Occasionally people hear a piano duet, but only rarely do you hear more than two pianists playing at the same time. This tradition makes it difficult for teachers, parents, school administration, and students to understand the concept of group piano lessons.

Music subjects that are taught in schools are taught in groups such as band, chorus, orchestra, and general music. The piano is not thought of as being an instrument where a lot of students can be involved at the same time. Subsequently, it gets overlooked as an instrument that should be taught in groups at school.

The chosen research design was to talk with teachers who teach piano lessons in a school system. While this is a viable method of research, some factors should be considered. The teachers have a bias as to the best method of teaching piano. P1 is an advocate of classroom piano lessons and is currently involved in a successful program. P2 and P3 are not involved in teaching group piano lessons. It should be noted that while they were not completely supportive of this program, they offered advice on class times and amounts of students that should be in such a program.

Parents of children were not interviewed in this study, which may have given a different perspective to the concept of group piano. Observations of the piano class were not a part of this study. The location of known piano classes was not feasible to travel and attend for purposes of observation. An on-site study would have possibly revealed other factors not offered in this research.

Teachers and instructors of this study were in different regions of the United States. It is not known if the location of music programs provides different thought processes. This idea should be considered as a factor in the results of this study. If a region of the country is doing a popular method that is working, another region of the country may not follow suit. We see this in many other areas of society and should see this as a limitation of a study of this nature.

Recommendations

A study of the potential benefits of classroom piano lessons in public elementary schools is the start of more extensive research that is needed in this area. Research on this subject should involve more interviews of teachers, parents, students, and administrators. It has been noted in this study that the support of parents is important for the success of piano students. A qualitative research study of the impact of parents on children who study class piano would offer information of great magnitude.

Research should be performed on school systems and the feasibility of adding piano classes to the curriculum would be important. Many aspects should be considered including finances. The cost will include instruments, teacher salaries, computers, software, speaker systems, method books, classroom set up, and basic school supplies. A school system that has the finances available to provide these and other aspects of the piano class will need to determine if this is an important addition to the curriculum.

The bottom line of offering the piano class in elementary school is that children should have the opportunity to learn to play the piano. The teacher should have the ability to train the children and offer a quality learning experience. If colleges and universities are not offering the training these teachers need, it is difficult to offer quality training to the children. A valuable qualitative study would include factors that contribute to the lack of study courses that train teachers to teach group piano. These studies should include methods of getting higher learning institutions to implement these programs in music departments. Potential teachers may not realize that teaching classroom piano is an option. The promotion of these programs in higher education schools may create growth and success throughout the college system.

Conclusion

There is a lot of history and data that shows great success in group piano classes. When these programs were implemented in the early part of the 20th century, many were skeptical and for many, that skepticism still exists today. Early advocates found that group piano classes were quite effective for students to learn.

The pure joy of knowing how to play the piano is something that cannot be measured by research and studies. The majority of students may take lessons for this reason alone. The vast list of the potential benefits of piano lessons is convincing and influential reasons for providing this opportunity for as many children as possible. There is not a set age for starting piano lessons, but starting a child early will give them a start on playing and reaping the many potential benefits afforded by learning piano. It is a skill, a gift, and a reward that for many will last a lifetime. Playing the piano is worth the study, research, effort, and finances for the children in America. Every child is worthy of piano lessons.

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Appendix A

Interview –Participant One:

R- Researcher

P1 – Participant 1

R- Hi. Thank you so much for agreeing to talk with me. I have some questions I would like to ask.

P1 – Sure. No problem. I am glad to help.

R- First, do you mind if I record this conversation?

P1 – Not at all.

R- Thank you

P1 – No problem.

R – My first question is “What are the positive results for children who study piano in schools?”

P1 – What are the positive results?

R – Yes.

P1 – Well, obviously they get to play piano better but they get – piano lessons are expensive so offering
It as an elective um, those kids who may not have the financial means to study privately can
get a chance to get some general knowledge on the piano.

R. - Right. That’s what I have preaching all the way through my paper. Um, my paper is on offering piano
lessons like you are doing but starting in elementary school, which we have none of down here that I
know of.

P1 – Oh, Okay

R-So that’s my point. And there any negative results that you can think of?

P1- If a student needs constant supervision, it’s kind of hard. I only have 10 kids in my class this year, but
I’ve had up to 20 kids. If a kid needs someone to keep him on task, it can be difficult. Because there
are a lot of stretches where they have to make decisions for themselves about what they are going to
work on. I’m not going to dictate. I give them a huge packet of music every quarter and I introduce a
piece a day and then it’s like a lab where I float around and work with the kids individually. So a
negative might that uh that it’s not designed for kids that need a lot of structure.

R- Mm, Okay. What about just on the sideline, do you do a method book?

P1- Yes, so I use Alfred’s Adult All in One Book and I do introduce a few pages every few days and lead
instruction that way. Like, your right pinky should be on this and your left pinky should be on
this. That particular book takes you through a I chord, a IV chord in second inversion, and a V7 chord
in first inversion, so it teaches you that a lot. And so I’ll lead that, and there’s also a packet I kind of

developed over the years.

R- Oh Good

P1 – Like Quarter 1, quarter 2, quarter 3, quarter 4, so it’s kind of like my textbook.

R- Oh Good. Do you have electronic pianos?

P1 – Yes we do. They are Arias and Yamahas. It’s a YDP-141, you can probably find it on Amazon. It has legs and it has a finish on it and it has pedals. It’s like a regular keyboard and is probably about a thousand dollars each.

R – Every kid has their own? Like do you have 20?

P1 – Yes, and we have 25 inch Mac computers associated with software as well.

R – How long have you been doing this?

P1 – That lab is probably 8 years old now. We had piano class before, but we had a new lab when we built our new auditorium.

R – That’s great. Would you say there are any, or what are the education potential benefits of doing this? Does it

enhance their school academics that you know of?

P1 – Yea, I mean, I think that, well, I teach things other than how to play piano in class. How to get a student to manage your time is huge. Not everyone takes test at the same time, so that’s a developing skill, too. Like do you have the guts to call me over and play for me? That’s a skill different from a math test where everyone takes the test at the same time. I’m like, okay call me over when you’re ready. It takes time to know, and there are a lot of things that you can’t measure with piano class.

R – Oh, I like that. Okay. What about are there any challenges in putting piano in the school schedule? Don’t you guys put it in the regular school schedule?

P1 – Yes, we do put it in the regular school day. There are not any problems. It’s just an elective that the kids can take. Our kids can take piano class as many years as they want and I just change the rigor and the content. I take them through practical music theory, like we do lines and spaces, key signatures, scale degrees, chords, and then I get into some dominant chords, um, some seventh chords as far as practical theory. I’m not getting into any Neapolitan chords and secondary dominants and stuff, but enough to get your way through a piece of music and then if kids take it for a second, third, fourth time, they help me teach it, or I give them a separate assignment or things like that so I’m definitely differentiating my instruction almost daily.

R- And they help you teach it as they go through?

P1 – Yep, because I feel like if you really know something, then you can teach it to someone else.

R- And I feel like they learn a lot when they teach.

P1 – Yep.

R – Do you have a lot of support from your administration?

P1 – Yes. I feel 100% supported. I mean my principal is a friend of mine and we hang out after school.

I have a Fine Arts director and he and I went to college together and um, you know I couldn't ask for a better situation. I know not everyone has this situation, um, so I do feel definitely supported.

R – That's very good. That's so important, too. What about the academic teachers?

P1 – Oh, yea, I mean it's not a pull out thing. As far as that, I'm pretty much like any other teacher.

R – Okay, where as in my situation in an elementary school, they would have to leave class. What about the parent support?

P1 – Well, I make it a point to call every parent at home to get a feel for them even if I have something positive or negative to say just to touch base. I try to tell things in class faster without calling home. So, yea, usually they are happy. They know they would have to pay if they did it the other way. So they are happier not to have to.

R- That is a really cool thing. I'm sure you've taught private lessons before. Do you feel like the quality of instruction is the same in a group as it is in private?

P1 – I think it's higher. Because I see them daily, it's huge. In a private situation, I'm trying to keep the kids invested in it, so I might go a little lighter on theory and a little heavier on fun songs to play until I've got them really hooked. But here I can cast a wider net and be able to not spend an entire lesson as if I am not going to see them for another week. You know, like dabble in music theory and then something else. I developed like Thursdays are scale days, Monday we have a chord bank and I'll introduce a new chord every Monday. So having them every day is good.

R- It's so awesome to be able to do that. How many students do you feel like is a good number to be in Group class?

P1- Between – if I had to pick a number, I'd have to say 15. 15 is a good number because then, well 15 or 16 because then I can pair them up. There's a wide range when there are too few kids. The kids feel like there's a lot of pressure for them to answer questions and if there's too many kids, kids slip through the cracks.

R – I love your insight. How long do your classes last and what do you think is a good amount time for the classes?

P1 – It used to be 80 minutes every other day and that was too much. This is now a 40 minute class and it's just enough for me to have 10 – 15 minutes of instruction and then the rest of the time they are playing and I'm wandering around talking to them.

R – Did you say that you meet with them every day?

P1 – I do.

R – And you think the every other day thing didn't work well?

P1 – It's just that 80 minutes is a long time to sit at a piano.

R- Do you think a 2 time a week or 3 time a week schedule would work well?

P1 – Sure. Anything more than a one day. Private lessons are great but you can only fit so much in to a half hour and they don't practice. At least my students have more time at the piano.

R- You know what? That is the truth. Do they practice at home?

P1- During the pandemic, the school made a point to get them keyboards at home.

R – Really?

P1 – Yea, our school is – I'm really proud to work where I work.

R – You are in an awesome place.

P1 – Yea, yea.

R- Do they kids still have them at home now?

P1 – It depends on the person. Like, I had a community member reach out to me and have a keyboard and I asked the class, "Who needs a keyboard at home". A senior raised his hand and I got him a keyboard, so some do, some don't.

R-Okay. But I guess if they are meeting every day, they are still practicing.

P1 – Yea, Yea.

R- What about performing? Do they perform recitals or anything like that?

P1 – Well, yea. Initially, before the pandemic, quarterly they played for each other, we used to bring in food, and it was kind of a fun thing. Since the pandemic, kids in high school have just shut down. Like last year was horrible for participation. But we are going to try to have a Christmas recital in class but when I started teaching this class 10 years ago we had an evening time performance where they performed for their parents. That was a big deal, but it turned a lot of kids off and I feel like we're too soft. I wish we still did it, but it's kind of gone by the wayside because kids were getting too freaked out about performing. But kids that want to perform find opportunities.

R- Yea, Talent Shows and festivals and things like that, I guess.

P1 – Yep.

R- What percentage of your kids continue from year to year?

P1 – It's not very high because there's so many things – there's business classes, there's technology classes, there's so much offered. I am an ID school and that requires higher performing kids to take more classes, so I'd say 5 – 10%.

R – Okay. And do any of those continue on to be music majors?

P1 – 1%. I've have one or two kids a year.

R- Okay. That's better than none, right?

P1 – That's right.

R- Any of the kids start in elementary school and then continue on after that?

P1- That's a year to year thing. I do have a student right now who is a senior who's taken lessons for 10 years. She just happened to have the practice built into her school day.

R- Last question. Well, you've already told me this, but you said the school furnishes the instrument for at home practice.

P1 – There's an option for kids to borrow one from the school. This year not many kids have taken me up on it, but in the years past, especially because of COVID, they were zooming at home and they had to have keyboards to play on.

R- Did you like teaching by Zoom?

P1- No. It was horrible.

R – You have answered my questions so very well. The insight is really amazing. To talk with somebody who is actually doing this is amazing.

P1 – Thank you.

R- I am so grateful to you.

P1 – I enjoy talking about teaching.

R- If I can every help you, please let me know. Thank you so much

P1 – You're welcome. Goodbye

R. – Goodbye.

Appendix B

Interview – Participant 2

R- Researcher

P2 – Participant 2

R-Hi. I have received my IRB approval and would like to talk with you about my project. Is this a good time?

P2 – Yes.

R – Great. First, can you tell me if you do any lessons during school or are your lessons after school?

P2 – I do them throughout the day because there's a large community of homeschoolers, so then sometimes I have someone who is older or is a retired person or just wants to take piano in their retirement. Most of my stuff is in the afternoon, but I do have some things I do in the morning or early afternoon.

R- In regards to what you do at the school, because my paper is on the potential benefits of offering lessons in

schools, what is your schedule there?

P2 – All of that is after school.

R-Okay. Will they not allow a during school program?

P2 – Well, uh, a lot of public schools will have class piano, but they don't offer that. This is one on one training. In the past they did, but it messed up peoples schedules too much. Like a lot of times they would let them do it during a specials period. They wanted to get away from that, so everything is after school now.

R- Okay. Can you just tell me what you think some of the positive results are for the children who are taking piano? This is in regards to the students who are taking at school.

P2 – Yea, um, I think the first thing is that it teaches like anything you are trying to master, you have to learn discipline, um, organizing your schedule so you have time to practice. A lot of times that helps the kids, but also the parents, too. So, I think that's one thing. It teaches them a discipline that can be applied to all subjects. It can help them create good habits for learning other subjects.

R- And don't you wish more people knew that. I personally wish more people understood that. What about negative results? Are there any negative effects of studying the piano?

P2 – Some kids can't handle the pressure. I try to not put much pressure on them, but also I've got to put a little bit of pressure like encouraging them to practice, encouraging them to master, not just halfway do it. But some kids can't handle that pressure and as a teacher I have to look for that because I don't want them to get anxiety about or affect them overall. I want them to enjoy it but there's also hard work in it. Sometimes kids are willing to do that. My thing is that sometimes

kids can't handle the pressure and it can bring nervousness or even a hint of anxiety, so that's just something you have to watch as a teacher and deal with that.

R-What about educational potential benefits as far as piano relating to academics.

P2-Um, it's really hard to say because I don't know how all those kids are necessarily doing in school because I'm not around. I guess I could talk with their teachers about that more. But it does seem like uh, kids who are doing a good job with piano seem to do a good job with the other subjects. To me, that has to do with like will there be a discipline in this arena, and are they applying it to other subjects? Or it could be vice versa sometimes where they are doing good in Math so they can apply how they learn Math to how they learn music. I think it can go both ways, to be honest.

R- You know, that's a very good point and that is something I have not thought about in all of my research.

P2- Usually when kids are good on one thing, they want to good at the other things, from my experience

R- You've already mentioned that there was difficulty incorporating the schedule into the school day because of their academic time. Were teachers not willing to work on that?

P2 – For me it's like – are you talking about during the school day?

R- Yes, like if you were to teach during the school day.

P2- Yea, you know, they have limited resources. They don't have many teachers or places to do things.

And, it's a smaller school and a smaller setting and sometimes it's hard to work in a class piano or Class guitar. So, I'm like an independent contract thing where I do this not as a member of the staff But independently for their kids and it's all after school. I have a lot of friends who are like band or Chorus teachers in public schools and they will offer a class piano or class guitar or even both. But There are potential benefits for that, but I think there are more potential benefits when it's one on one with these type

Instruments. I've done class piano before and it's really up to the kid as to how much they are going To learn. As a teacher, there is only so much I can do in that setting. But when its one on one, I can Really concentrate on what needs to happen with this kid and if he will progress as a musician.

R- When you did class piano, was it once a week, once every other week, or once a day?

P2- It was once a week. That's the other thing. Class piano once a week is not going to be very effective, except for those kids who are self-motivated, you know. Like you give them the tools and they run with it. The ones that need a little more encouraging, more instruction, there's only so much you can get in a 25 minute period once a week.

R- What about at your school – do you have good support from the administrative and the teachers, or

does that even come into play?

P2- Um, it doesn't so much but their all very supportive of it. I'm an alumni from there so you know, some teachers were there when I was there, and that was a while back. So I would say overall there's a good relationship between the teachers and principals.

R- What about the parents? What kind of support do you get from them?

P2- Most of them are very supportive. First of all, they have to pay out of pocket for this because it is not a part of their tuition, so willingness to pay out of pocket for this is support. Most of them do a good job of making sure the kids practice, that they show up to their lessons. I rarely run into any issues with that. I would say overall very supportive.

R- You've already said that you didn't feel like the quality of instruction was good in a group setting. If you were to do a group class, what do you feel would be a good number of students for the class?

P2- I would say for it to be really effective, 10 or maybe 15. If you start talking about 20 or 30 kids, I feel like that's just going to be chaos. When I was doing my observations for my degree, I observed a of those classes and there was like 30 kids, and it was just chaos. So I think 10 would be ideal. I think you could push for 15 and it still be okay, depending on kids overall. It only takes one little class clown to ruin the setting, but I would keep it pretty low if you really want to have an effective class where you feel like everyone is progressing, not just a couple.

R- How long do you think those classes should last?

P2- I think one full period is good. It usually depends on how they have it set up. Probably like 45 Minutes to maybe an hour. It depends on elementary versus middle or high school is going to be a Little different. I would say one full period if you can make that happen.

R- How many times a week would you say because you already mentioned that you think one time a Week is not good.

P2 -I really think 3 times would be best. Really every day would be good, but I know that's probably not going to happen. But if you could get Monday, Wednesday and Friday, I think you would be pretty effective with that.

R- Do most of the kids that you teach practice at home?

P2- Yea, um, there's always like - I feel like kids do so much these days like soccer, and then dance, and then karate or whatever. So, sometimes there's a week where it doesn't appear that there is enough time, but I would say for the most part, most of my kids practice - some practice really well. I always tell them to practice 5 times a week and take the weekend off or something. I always

try to tell them it doesn't have to be an hour. If you do it every day, it can be like 15 or 20 minutes, and it could be a lot more productive than doing an hour once a week. I try to teach them that. I think the better and older need to practice more – 30 minutes to an hour because they're learning Mozart or something. So I would say for the most part, my kids practice. If they go for a couple of weeks without it, then I'll have a conversation with the parents so they can help them remember to do the practicing they need to do. Most of the parents will step in and make sure they practice and help me out.

R- Does the school provide the instruments at school or do you have to bring them in on your own?

P2 – At the school, there is a set up with a nice Yamaha piano in this practice room that they let me use. As far as guitar and ukulele, those are my instruments and they are easy to move around. But like the kids, they have to purchase their own. I know in a lot of the public schools when they have class piano or class guitar, they'll provide like keyboards or guitars for those kids. But usually they can't take those home to practice. That's the thing.

R- Do most of your kids have keyboards at home?

P2- Yes, I make sure they have a piano or at least a piano so they can have a way to practice at home.

R- Do you have a performance system like recitals?

P2- Yea, I try to do one to two recitals every year. Like, during the holidays, a lot of them are learning Christmas or holiday music so I might try to do like a Christmas/Holiday recital. And in the spring we do an end of the school year/spring recital.

R-Do you do those at the school or at a local church?

P2- I do them at a local music store because it gives them the chance to play on a Steinway and I put Steinway as the best possible piano you can play on. For them to experience playing on what a professional would play on, I like to do that and the local music stores provides that and I like to Do it there.

R- What percentage of your kids start piano in elementary school and then they continue?

P2-I'd have to really think about that. There's a lot of turn over but I the last few years I've had The same kids for a while. One kid has gone from elementary and he's a senior this year. I would Say maybe it 50%. A lot of kid take the summer off but most of them come back in the fall. But, I feel like it's a higher number now. I don't know if it's because I'm getting more experience and Figuring out how to keep kids motivated. Some kids just lose their interest and you can't force them.

R- Last question, if you had to give a number on the percentage of kids that continue from year to year

After they take piano lessons at school, what would you say that number would be?

P2- I'd say the last couple of years it has been close to 70 – 75%.

R- That's good.

P2-I would say 70% and usually whatever I lose, I get back with new kids.

R- I am so grateful to you for answering these questions. I called your school to see who was doing your Program and they told me about you. I am so appreciative. How many years have you been doing this?

P2 – I'd say 4 years.

R- Do you like it?

P2 – Yes. I wish I could do it during the day because I usually have more kids who want to do it than I Have time. If I could do some during the last period of the day, that would be good.

R- Do you do 30 minute lessons?

P2 – Yes, I think that's really effective when its one on one.

R-Thank you so much. I'm not going to take up anymore of your time.

P2-Is it okay with you that this was recorded and are you okay with me sharing this information in the Results section of my paper.

P2- Oh, yea.

R- Super. If I can ever do anything to help you out, don't hesitate to call me.

P2- Okay. You have a good one.

R- Thank you so much. You, too.

P2 – Goodbye

R- Goodbye

Appendix C

Participant 3-P3

R- Researcher

P3 – Participant 3

R- Hi. Thank you so much for talking to me today

P3 – No problem

R- Is it okay if I record this conversation?

P3 – Sure.

R- Thank you. These questions will be in reference to the time you taught at the school.

My first question is what are the positive aspects of piano lessons?

P3 – Consistency of lessons is important. With teaching at school, there are no interferences with after school activities. The marginal students could not miss academics. Some couldn't miss class time.

R- So is that a negative aspect and what are other negativities of piano lessons?

P3 – Yes. The lessons were only ½ an hour. I would have to go get the student from class, get started, and then walk them back to class. It took up lesson time. I also did not get to know the parents as well.

R- Do you think there are any educational potential benefits of piano lessons?

P3 – In general, absolutely. I've had parents who told me – I could name names of parents right now who within 6 months of starting piano lessons, I mean piano students more than guitar, because I do both, that they swore that their students' academic work, especially in Math, had improved.

R- Ooo, that's great.

P3- There's a lot that I can't, what's the word that I want to say – I can't document, uh, this statement, but I believe with all my heart that the – I'm looking for my words here – I guess I want to say trades and characteristics, problem solving, analyzing a situation or problem, knowing how to correct it, just deal with it, like when you are doing a lesson, getting the student to know how to recognize when they make a mistake in the lesson without having to be told, knowing how to- what needs to be done, having some idea of the technique for correcting it and learning it. I think that skill, just basic, um, persistence of learning to deal with sometimes the frustration, too. To keep working on something, learn to be more goal oriented.

R- Right

P3 – People, parents would ask me how long should a student practice and my recommendation is that I want to get them to the point that they are not being clock watchers, but they become more goal oriented. To say, okay, I need to practice these two measures, I going to play those 5 or 10 times, I'm going to look at the next two measures, and I'm going to play them 5 times, and then I'm going to play both of them together 5 times. Learn to compartmentalize your work so you are working on

relatively small parts. I like to say I'd eat an elephant, one bite at the time. The idea of working on smaller parts, and putting smaller parts together. If your car is broken down, you don't take the car totally apart to see what's wrong. You look at the symptoms and find out what needs to be fixed so you don't have to take the car totally apart. If you've got a dead battery, you don't need to take the motor apart to find that out. So learning how to notice and figure out what the problems are, I say notice everything. Pay attention to everything on the page. And I think that idea, too, is that students need to learn to pay attention to details, learning to become more aware of everything that's going on. Learn observational skills, which I think is a super valuable thing, because in music, everything on the page matters

R- Right

P3 – And so you want to learn to notice everything because if it doesn't seem like it's that big of an issue, but you learn to pay attention to everything so that's a skill – patience, persistence, um, observational skills, problem solving skills, I think all that – and then with physical skills you develop playing the piano – right and left hand coordination, finger, digital skills using the fingers and such – how you become more – uh – it develops everything about fine motor skills. I grew up- I have four brothers and we had a large back porch with a ping pong table back there. And we felt Like- when I was in college- I was the oldest – I still am but the rest of them are right behind me in a 12 year period. We felt like we as a family could whip anybody in the city in Ping Pong. In retrospect, I was always pretty coordinated, very good reflexes, and I attribute a lot of that to the fact that I play the piano. I started when I was 7 and I'm a believer that the mechanical skills, the uh reflex skills, just the fine motor skills of playing the piano are huge.

R- I agree. I totally agree.

P3 – But I think that's another benefit. Personally speaking, I like when I'm working with a student, I students I can develop a rapport with. I kind of like to have a relationship with them where I can talk to them and tell them to make corrections without feeling like I'm being kind of dictatorial. I think that as a teacher you have to kind of develop the skills where they can come in and say I didn't have time to practice this week, but not feel guilty about it. Sick members of the family or something, or they had to go out of town or they had a big project for school. You have to consider those kinds of things and help students understand to do the best you can. We are not on a time schedule, like you don't have to finish this book this year like you have to finish your Math book this year. We are not on the same time schedule. We work on an individual basis. I just you

to become the best you can be and I'm going to help you do that – however long it takes. Because certain skills are easy for certain students and those same skills are not easy for other students. I've had students who were smart, brilliant, I tell you they were sharp as a tack, but I tell you, I believe God didn't connect their fingers to their brains.

R- Laughs

P3 – I've got a kid like that right now. He's spastic as he can be. He wants to play, he practices, but it just Isn't happening. But he's trying and he's enjoying trying. So as long as he's mine, I'll try with him.

R- There you go.

P3-But with those students, you learn that they are learning skills, and I kind of relate that to the skills they are doing in school for example when I'm explaining things to them and because if I know what's going on kind of in their lives, then I know more about how I can relate what they are doing in the music to something elsewhere in their life. Especially when you are start getting into practice skills, making it a priority and making it a regular thing that you do. Uh, and developing that habit, and, uh, I think like, well like, I was talking to a Dad last night – she only practices every other day- Well, okay, she's doing real well, but she could do better. I tell students to only practice on the days you eat. And they say but I eat every day. Okay. Then practice every day. And then to take it a little further – how many times a day to you eat – Three – No you don't, how many times do you snack? oh, 4 or 5 times. Well the thing is work at it a little while and you get a little tired or you get a little Frustrated, walk off and come back and do it again. I'd rather you practice a few small times rather than one large time. Here's what I do – if they practice 10 minutes a day for 6 days, they are going to get more than if they practice 60 minutes the day before the lesson. That's the way we work. If we do things in bits and pieces and smaller ways, I think that's a pretty good approach. Just some of my thought about approach things. I don't know if that's what you want to hear.

R- Yes, That's wonderful. Let me ask you this. When you were at the school, what kind of support did you have from the administration and the teachers?

P3- For the most part I had excellent support because they were the ones who had to make sacrifices in catching up the students with stuff they might have missed in class because they were in their lesson. For the most part, they were coming out of class. I only had room for about one or two who Could maybe eat their lunch real fast and then a short recess period. So that was – for the most Part, the teachers were very sacrificial. I mean they – I just couldn't appreciate what they did more.

R- Good

P3 – I think they were of the belief that music lessons were just so beneficial for the kids in so many ways. And uh, they actually bent over backwards to accommodate me. So I went out of my way to not keep them out any more than I had to and to avoid being a problem for them. But they were- I don't know if I had one – I some that were not as enthusiastic as others but I had some that were really enthusiastic about the kids taking lessons.

R- Well, good.

P3 – More of them than note.

R- And were the parents supportive as well? You mentioned that you didn't get to know parents, but were they supportive overall?

P3- Yes, but to varying degrees. I think developing a rapport with the parent also helps to increase your rapport with your students and you also have freedom for opportunity. When you come out of the room and Mom and Dad have been sitting and listening to what's been going on, they know more what's happening than when you only have the child by themselves. And I'm talking about children, too, because in school, you are basically talking about younger children. And then I always have the opportunity to say they need to – you heard what I said, so you can tell by listening what they need to do. And sometimes they come into the room. The more the parents can be involved with the practice time – that's a huge help. Especially with the younger children. I've got one family and they have two kids and one of the parents is working with one of the children almost the whole time while they are doing their practice. Not necessarily lording over them, but just kind of monitoring or at least listening to what they are doing and being aware of what they are doing. And they can make comments if they need to. Once in a while, they can even play a little duet that goes along with the songs. But I just think getting the parent involved, even if the parent doesn't have any musical skills, I tell them – hey, this is what's going on. If you want to, you can sit in on the lesson, pull up a chair right beside here, and get a 2 for.

R- Yep – (Laughs)

P3- Learn what your kid is learning and that way at least you can help them through what they are doing.

So, I strongly encourage that sort of thing. That is one thing that I did miss in the school setting, was a little bit more, well I just missed that aspect which I think is really special.

R- Did you ever do any group classes where you would teach more than one student at the time?

P3- I did that with guitar for just a short while and it was financially lucrative, but nobody got their money's worth except me. I just really didn't like it. You know how private lessons are - by

Definition, they're very individualistic, and so everybody's an individual. Everybody learns Different, sees things different. When you get in a class, you've got all those different things. Even when I had a class, I had, I think, only a maximum of 4 or 5 students, and its just – at the Very beginning, if everybody had a keyboard and you are doing a piano kind of thing, you could Teach certain things and give them kind of a start. But where they all start at the same spot, their Going to quickly get at a spot where everybody is at a different point and it doesn't take long to get Where, for me personally, there's nothing short of a private lesson.

R- Did you meet them once a week for half an hour? Is that what you said?

P3 – Yes. Right now, I've got one student meeting for an hour. I think in the past I've had a couple of Students that were outstanding and really could justify an hour. The one I've got right now doesn't Really justify it, but that's what his Mom wants, so, okay. We get to be real thorough.

R- Right.

P3- We get to spend time practicing how to practice – how to practice something. So, it's not that We are not making good use of the time but it's not time that we have to have. But, uh, I've got Some students that I really wish that I had 45 minutes with because they are able to do more than we Are able to do in 30 minutes. So, my schedules not set up to where I can do that although – I've kind Of been fazing down for the last four or five years. And, if I could eliminate a few more then I could Lengthen the time I have for a couple of students. I've got a couple of them that are right at the end of A group of lessons, so I don't have to keep them right at 30 minutes. I almost always go longer.

R- Right. I've got just a couple more questions. What would you say is the percentage of kids that Continue from elementary school on as they get older.

P3- Um – there's a high morbidity rate. Uh, let's see – students that start in elementary- how many of Them make it all the way through high school? I'd say it's very low. 10 or 15 percent.

R- Alright

P3 – Has to do with schedules, has to do with workloads – even students who are not busy with sports Their studies take an incredible amount of time. Even students who are really good academically, They tend to take more courses like AP, and they have more time that they have to involve With those, and so, unless they've got a real serious, serious interest and they plan on going into Music – I've got a couple of students in college right now going with that – they just struggle for Them to have the opportunity to be able to continue lessons. I would say that if someone can make It all the way through, and also, you got to have the interest. I would be surprised if 10 or 15 % -

It's real low.

R- Last question – What type of performance type system do you have in place?

P3 – Recitals, and we only do one. I'm not involved in the guild or anything. Um for recitals we do a Spring recital. I used to try to do a Christmas recital, but we had so much trouble getting enough Students to participate. And then when we first started doing it back in the early 2000's, my wife and I were so busy – she did concerts and Christmas gigs, and I used to play for her, and so, the first couple of years – a local church started having a music school in 2003 – the first couple of years there, we were so busy, we didn't even come to our own recital.

R- Oh Wow.

P3 – There was about 5 teachers when we first started it, but it fizzled down to where it was just – at that time- My wife wasn't teaching because she was still teaching school. But I was teaching and I couldn't make it to my own recitals. So, I get asked about that, but if I put on one, I'd probably be good to have 5 or 6 people involved. Everybody is just so busy. So we just do a spring recital. Unless it's some of my more advanced students who might work on a piece for six months or something, we just do a piece that's representative of where they are and something they enjoy doing and want to show people what they can do. And we might be working on it a long time with regular material a couple of months, so we don't make huge things out of it. I try to make it as user friendly and unthreatening as we can, too.

R- Okay. And I know I said that was the last question, but real quick – when you taught at the school, did they provide the keyboard, or did you have to provide your own?

P3- They gave me a room with a piano in the music room. It was originally an office and they had a piano in there and occasionally they used it when someone needed to go in there to practice. The chorus teacher could go in there and work with her altos while her accompanist worked with the other kids in the main chorus room. I was fortunate to be right there at the room opposite the bathrooms.

R- Laughs

P3- It was perfect – it has restrooms and water fountain right outside my door, and it was my room and I had total access to it. Once in a while, a band student would come in there just to have a room to be able to practice in for just a few minutes. Except for the fact that it was at the other end of the campus- that was a big negative –but otherwise it was a total positive.

R- Thank you so much. I am so grateful. If I can ever do anything to return this favor, don't hesitate to ask.

P3 – I'm sure when we hang up, I'll think of other things I wish I'd said. So if you need more material

And you want to ask me those same questions again, you'll probably get different answers.

R- Okay – (laughs) – I will remember that. Thank you so much.

P3 – I'm glad to help you.

R- Goodbye

P3 – Goodbye.

November 12, 2021

Denise Mundy
Curtis Smith

Re: IRB Approval - IRB-FY21-22-350 The Benefits of Offering Classroom Piano Lessons as Part of the Curriculum in Public Elementary School

Dear Denise Mundy, Curtis Smith:

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This approval is extended to you for one year from the following date: November 12, 2021. If you need to make changes to the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit a modification to the IRB. Modifications can be completed through your Cayuse IRB account.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met: The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office