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## **Mandatory to Memorable: Ideas to Engage and Excite a Group Piano Class**

by Margarita Denenburg, Heidelberg University

Teaching piano in a group setting has been an evolving trend since the 1950s. The emergence of electronic piano laboratories allowed for the option of teaching in an in-group setting involving the “simultaneous use” of several pianos.<sup>1</sup> That is when the shift from individual lessons to group lessons began—specifically for adult students. With the emerging trend of the group piano setting, “methods written with such situations in mind concentrated on presenting the piano as a functional tool on which students could acquire keyboard skills needed in the course of pursuing and practicing a musical profession.”<sup>2</sup>

For adult students, there are many advantages to group learning. According to Barbara Fast, “the group setting naturally provides motivation,”<sup>3</sup> while Martha Hilley states that “group piano provides the perfect environment for ‘active learning’—the process of learning through doing.”<sup>4</sup> Ted Cooper states: “Classes provide an efficient and upbeat way to teach fundamental skills like rhythm, ear training, and technique.”<sup>5</sup> Because of these advantages, the idea of group piano learning was recognized by higher education and has been intertwined into the academic curriculum.

While the trend toward group piano classes continues to grow, most music students would not speak highly of it. It is often thought of as a boring class, a hard class, or, even worse, a useless class. My class piano teaching experience began when I was given a teaching assistantship. Ten years and two universities later, I still teach class piano. My goal has always been to make it a positive experience for my students, regardless of their level or interest. Together with my students, I want to divorce the “boring,” “dry,” often “unmusical” ways of teaching this class and instead marry into creativity, passion, and motivation. While the reputation for class piano might be boring, this is one area where we as teachers don’t have to live up to the expectations.

I have grouped how I attempt to make class piano engaging, educational, and beneficial into four sections: peer integration, high-tech and fun exams, gamification, and creative repertoire.

### **Peer Integration**

There are different ways that students can motivate, inspire, and help each other. The diverse levels of students in class piano and the ability to accommodate each one of them is one of the biggest challenges. A typical class piano environment might include students who have had several years of piano along with students who have none. As challenging as the described situation is, often we tend to tailor our class materials toward the less-experienced students, leaving other students bored and uninspired; this is the scenario that I constantly try to combat. The experienced students in a class piano setting should never feel unchallenged, bored, or unattended; we have to ensure their musical development and further their keyboard skills in the frame of the class piano setting. This is where peer integration has worked miracles in my classroom.

One effective way to incorporate peer integration is with piano duets. Duets can accommodate different levels of students and create a support system for less-experienced students while providing meaning and motivation for experienced students. When students practice piano duets

together, a relationship is built; that relationship can lead to an “invisible” tutor scenario from the experienced student to a less-experienced student. It works every time: the advanced student takes pride and ownership in playing the teacher’s part, taking the role of a leader and providing a helping hand when needed, while the novice student has the opportunity to play a seemingly more difficult duet, learn from the other student, and build a relationship that can foster their future progress in the class piano setting. This concept can also work with ensemble work or trios. This should consist of one advanced student and two or more novices.

Another way to use peer integration in the class piano setting is by combining different-level classes, implementing a peer mentoring idea. This integration is usually done once a semester and is a combination of two classes at different levels: music majors in their first and third semesters of class piano. This technique has proven to be highly effective. For those students who are in their first semester of class piano, usually freshman, getting acquainted with an older student can serve as a source of security not only in class piano but also in other areas in college. Often, freshmen do not feel comfortable approaching their professor; however, asking their classmate or the older student usually does not produce the same anxiety. By an early introduction of two classes, freshmen students seem to do better in my class piano courses. The students who are in their third semester of class piano are mostly music education majors, and this experience broadens their horizon as future teachers. This mentoring program is one extra gained experience of being mentor and teacher in a different area. You can also introduce a new piece to both level classes. After an initial preview of the new work in both classes, a teacher places students in pairs or trios, assigning the piece as a group project to be done outside of class time. The advanced students’ responsibility is to listen to and help the students from the lower-level class, writing a short report on what was done during this session. The novice students’ responsibility is to learn the assigned piece and perform it in front of their class. Performing or speaking in front of their classmates can add a lot of peer pressure to do better work.

Asking students to teach certain skills in front of their peers leads to a better understanding of the material. Creating an assignment that consists of a ten-minute teaching presentation can be a great motivator. Asking students to explain fingering for all major scales, for example, can provide a sense of accomplishment and result in better internalization of information.

### **High-Tech and Fun Exams**

Exams can have a fun feel even if the students might dread some of the material. I like to use apps like Decide Now! (\$0.99), which is a spinner wheel that allows you to program the slots to your liking. Are your students having a quiz on all major scales? Put the names of the scales into the wheel and let them spin! Are you working on a difficult piece? Divide the score into small sections and let the students spin the wheel, thus starting each time from a different spot! Once you start implementing the wheel, you will realize that there are endless possibilities to incorporate this successfully and relieve some of the stressful emotions surrounding the exam.

While using a spinner app might lessen some of the stress from an exam, some students will still be too stressed to take an exam in person, so why not let them *not* take it in person. How many times have you heard your students say, “It was so much better in a practice room,” or better yet, “I just played it perfectly; you make me nervous”? I will not debate the idea that teachers or any audience, really, can make students nervous and result in a less effective performance. However,

where is the proof that indeed their playing was much better in the practice room? And how many students use that as an excuse to cover their lack of practice? Today, the use of a recording device can easily solve this problem. Let's ask our students to video record their exams instead. Students will need a piano, their smartphone, and a music stand on which to set their device. Set it up, hit "record," play, and share the exam with the instructor through Google Drive. Giving students an option to record their exam instead of taking it live increases their progress and shifts the responsibility of their grades to them. Recording a piece until perfect naturally results in a better product.

Recording an exam is a win-win situation: grades go up, the exams become less intimidating, students practice longer to get the desired results, and, most importantly, the quality of their playing improves. While it might seem like additional work for the instructor, in reality it does not take much more time than live examinations. Due to the improved quality of students' playing, less time is wasted on stumbling, excuses, and start-overs; the tempos become faster and the students play cleaner and smoother.

After their exam submission, writing a short assessment on how to further improve students' skills provides individualistic attention that is beneficial and motivating. Sharing this report along with their grade, explaining the reasons for their excellent, or not-so-excellent, performance, makes all the difference. There is a much better understanding of what to do next time to gain a better grade or to retain the much deserved "A."

Allowing students to record their exam on their own time schedule eases the anxiety and develops a sense of responsibility and ownership in students. They may try to record the exam a few days ahead of time and realize that much more work is needed to prepare the piece, or they may record it the night before and learn from that experience that next time they should allow more time for perfecting the piece. In either case, giving students the opportunity to find their balance and adopt the idea that the results of their exam are not due to circumstance fosters their sense of responsibility as well as their performance abilities.

### **Gamification**

Research shows that when learning new concepts through play, it makes a stronger impact on our ability to understand, remember, and execute the new concept. Karl M. Kapp, in his book *The Gamification of Learning and Instruction*, articulates that "game-based techniques or gamification, when employed properly, have the power to engage, inform, and educate."<sup>6</sup> I have personally found this to be true and that gamification is a powerful tool that never fails. No matter how difficult the target skill is, if it is turned into a playful game, students have no problem learning it.

My two-year-old understands *play* very well, and I can learn a lot from her. Never underestimate the power of sticky notes, musical dice, little figurines, and other "kid"-friendly tools. They can work for any age group. Let us, for example, take a B major scale, which has only two white keys, B and E, both of which have correlating thumbs on these notes. First, try to come up with a memorable name for the scale (e.g., "BE") to help students remember which white keys they must play. Second, take the sticky notes and place them on the two white keys. This simple trick allows any adult beginner to play his or her first scale in multiple octaves immediately without restraint or frustration. Little figurines can help with a sense of geography on the keyboard at a basic class

piano level. Learning note placement and their correlation with the staff can be done with ease if some basic landmarks are placed directly on the keys for few minutes at the beginning of several class sessions. Musical dice can transform “dry” repetition into playful activity. Choose a scale, chord, or regular dice and drill new concepts with the help of these fun little cubes.

On the high-tech end of the gamification spectrum, I use apps such as Flashnote Derby (\$2.99), which is a note recognition game. We play a “Pass it On” activity, passing the iPad from one person to the next, or we use it as a group activity, asking all the students to say the note names out loud. Either way, it helps students to learn and remember the notes. There are many more programs that can help the students with this task. While Flashnote Derby costs \$2.99, other applications are free, and students can download them right onto their iPhones (e.g., Music Tutor, Music Note Reading Trainer).

When was the last time you played musical chairs? I play my own version of “musical benches” every semester. Musical benches is one of the most beloved activities in my class piano courses and all it really needs is some space and ability to move around the pianos. Difficult chords, scales, cadences, and passages no longer exist after this activity. In the sleepy afternoon class, it provides a great wave of renewed energy and rejuvenation. Here is how it works: Let’s say that there are three chords that your class is struggling with. First, name the chords—for example, chords 1, 2, and 3, or B-flat, E-flat, and F. Next, go through the chords while at the piano. Ask students to play the chords that you say out loud. First do so in their written order and then mix them up. Finally, the instructor plays the piano while students move around the room. Once the music stops, you say one of the chord names out loud and the students have to quickly play it on the closest piano. The result of this activity causes not only fun, explosive giggles to shake the piano lab up, but it also really helps with the target concept.

The final way I use gamification in my classroom is through a little friendly competition. Competition can be a great motivator in any learning environment. If done well, it pushes the students to practice longer and harder. Assign a somewhat technical etude for the entire class, schedule a competition date and offer a prize—a gift certificate to a coffee shop, a basket with candies, a candy bar, anything that the college students might like. The objective is to play the etude as quickly as possible, maintaining correct rhythm, notes, and dynamics.

### **Creative Repertoire**

The possibilities for creative repertoire pieces are endless. To keep it interesting for both my students and myself, I like to periodically assign different books as a supplement to the main text. Some examples include popular tunes and Christmas hits (e.g., *Alfred’s Basic Adult Piano Course Greatest Hits* and *Christmas Hits*, both by E. L. Lancaster), Jazz repertoire (*Jazz SophistiCat*, solo and duet, by D. Alexander and D. Thurmond), and one of the most beautiful collections for right or left hand alone (*Left Alone—Right On!* by Joyce Grill). I constantly search for new piano duets. Duets, trios, quartets—anything to spark interest for piano and motivate students to practice. At times, these fun pieces can be turned into unexpected projects that involve not only playing but also other creative artistic aspects, such as creating a music video. One such project, for example, was a Ghostbusters—Halloween Special. That, perhaps, was one of the highlights of my class piano teaching. Seeing students rise to the occasion and perform a piece of music that was challenging, and even impossible for some—and yet they did it!—was very rewarding for me and

my students. The project was filmed and posted on YouTube and can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A19vDikDqh8>.

On a different note, you may want to engage your students by asking them to play piano pieces and assignments on their primary instruments. Invite your students to bring their own primary instruments to class. Concepts such as transposition, harmonization, and accompaniment can all be learned with the assistance of another instrument. What can be better than asking a saxophone player to showcase and explain a transposition assignment for E-flat saxophone? Or asking a violinist to play the melody for a harmonization exercise while the rest of the class plays the accompaniment (blocked chords, improvised pattern, or two-handed accompaniment). Allow your students to gain experience in a safe learning environment. It is important to let them obtain confidence, not fear.

One of the most important aspects of class piano are the dreaded scales. We all have been through scale drilling, hours of playing all twenty-four keys in different variations, angles, and exercises. In class piano, this skill targets not only the technical aspect but also the theoretical one. It helps students understand how the theory works through scales, arpeggios, cadences, and more. Scales are important and necessary. While scales are necessary, they are generally treated as a separate segment during the class. We all know that students prefer to play repertoire instead of the scales, so why not turn these scales into the repertoire? Setting a slow tempo to accommodate everyone in the class can lead to heavy eyelids, nodding heads, and even sneaking Facebook activities. This can be avoided by playing an accompaniment while students play the scale, using a rhythmic accompaniment on the keyboard, asking the students to change their instrument on the keyboard, having advanced students start from the top and go down while others do the opposite, playing the scale in a style of canon, doubling the speed of the scale for some students and extending the scale, or assigning composition homework that includes creating an original accompaniment for the scales.

## Conclusion

A class piano course can be an excellent window into many facets of musical learning. To maximize our students' learning progress in a classroom, we have to search for ways to conduct our class in a manner that is interesting, memorable, and motivational. Creating a learning environment where students feel inspired and willing to do not just the bare minimum, but the absolute maximum, is crucial. The four elements that I highlighted in this article can help any piano teacher to turn their classroom into a prosperous learning environment. With peer integration, high-tech and fun exams, gamification, and creative repertoire, our students can not only gain piano skills but also, more importantly, become better musicians.

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<sup>1</sup> Marianne Utzer, Stewart Gordon, and Scott McBride-Smith, *The Well-Tempered Keyboard Teacher*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Schirmer, 2000), 352.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Christopher Fisher, "Thoughts by Some of America's Leaders in Group Piano Teaching," (online only) appendix to *Teaching Piano in Groups* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010), W2, <http://global.oup.com/us/companion.websites/9780195337044/appendices/pdf/Thoughts.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., W3.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., W4.

<sup>6</sup> Karl M. Kapp, *The Gamification of Learning and Instruction: Game-Based Methods and Strategies for Training and Education* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2012), 10.

*Dr. Margarita Denenburg, NCTM, is Assistant Professor of Keyboard Studies at Heidelberg University, where she teaches applied piano and pedagogy, among other courses. Dr. Denenburg was recognized for her teaching effectiveness through several campus and statewide awards, including the Merit Faculty Award (Fall 2015), the Innovative Teaching Award (Spring 2016), and the Excellence in Education Award for the state of Ohio (Fall 2016). As a researcher, Dr. Denenburg has written multiple articles for American Music Teacher, Clavier Companion, and Piano Pedagogy Forum, as well as a review of More Classics to Moderns, Books 1–6, Second Series for American Music Teacher. In the 2017–2018 season, Dr. Denenburg presented at the National College Music Society conference, the National Group Piano/Piano Pedagogy Forum, and the Ohio Music Teacher Association, as well as several College Music Society regional conferences. In 2017, she was the keynote presenter for the Oregon Music Teacher Association conference. She has also presented internationally at the University of Savoy and Chambéry Conservatory, France, as well as performed several concerts with her duet partner Dr. Gerald Evans. Dr. Denenburg is on the College Music Society Great Lakes board, is the Vice President for the Ohio MTA Student Activities, and serves as a chair for the Ohio Federation Music Club MA and DMA Scholarship Award. She received her bachelor of music and master of music degrees in piano performance from Arizona State University, and a doctorate of musical arts in piano performance from the University of Southern California in 2012. In addition, she participated in several summer festivals, including Sergei Babayan’s International Piano Academy at the Cleveland Institute of Music and the International Keyboard Institute and Festival at Mannes School of Music. For more information, please visit [www.MargaritaDenenburg.com](http://www.MargaritaDenenburg.com).*

## Flipped Classroom Concepts: Methods for Engaging Piano Students in the Private Lesson

by Rachel D. Hahn, University of Missouri

Many music teachers recognize that engaging and maintaining the attention of students can pose challenges. Over-stimulation from electronic devices and constant social media coverage have produced a desire for individuals within our society to frequently change the subject and invent new and more exciting methods of communication. Active learning in response to rapidly changing technology tools such as video apps, mobile devices, and high speed internet is increasingly important so that today's students can experience variety and change in their classes.<sup>1</sup> Over the past few decades, the concept of the flipped (or inverted) classroom has become increasingly popular to meet this need for active engagement.<sup>2</sup> Although research involving flipped classrooms is most often conducted in higher education,<sup>3</sup> when utilized properly, the underlying pedagogy can help teachers in any subject area or grade level engage meaningfully with the modern student. This article will summarize basic philosophies and ideas regarding the flipped classroom and will provide practical advice for independent teachers to apply these concepts in private lessons. Through the application of these strategies, piano students may discover new levels of engagement, confidence, and motivation, and teachers may observe the results of their students' increased practice efficiency.

The flipped classroom design is not a new teaching methodology, but it has become increasingly popular because of its recently acquired (and very catchy) name.<sup>4</sup> A flipped classroom is any method that shifts the focus of learning from the teacher to the student.<sup>5</sup> Most often, this is accomplished through the use of short instructional videos that familiarize students with new content so that they come better prepared to discuss and apply that content in their next lesson. Instead of introducing content in class, answering student questions, and then assigning homework, which requires students to engage with the new topic on their own, flipped courses allow teachers to maximize efficiency by using classroom time for problem solving, application, or review, while out-of-class time is used for content delivery.<sup>6</sup> Proponents of flipped learning believe that this system promotes increased engagement, more personalized student guidance, focused class discussion, and collaborative teaching.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Marc Prensky, *Teaching Digital Natives: Partnering for Real Learning* (Newbury Park, CA: Corwin, 2010), 98.

<sup>2</sup> Celia Henry Arnaud, "Flipping Chemistry Classrooms: Professors Shift Lectures Online to Free Up Class Time for More Effective Learning Activities," *Chemical & Engineering News* 91 (2013): 41-43; Li-Ling Chen, "Impacts of Flipped Classroom in High School Health Education," *Journal of Educational Technology Systems* 44 (2016): 411.

<sup>3</sup> Evan Gough, David DeJong, Trent Grundemeyer, and Mark Baron, "K-12 Teacher Perceptions Regarding the Flipped Classroom Model for Teaching and Learning," *Journal of Educational Technology Systems* 45 (2017): 393.

<sup>4</sup> Ashley A. Hall and Debbie D. DuFrene, "Best Practices for Launching a Flipped Classroom," *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly* 79 (2016): 234.

<sup>5</sup> Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams. *Flip Your Classroom: How to Reach Every Student in Every Class Every Day* (Washington D.C.: International Society for Technology in Education, 2012), 13-18.

<sup>6</sup> Bergmann and Sams, *Flip Your Classroom*, 13-18.

<sup>7</sup> Hall and DuFrene, "Best Practices," 236.



Because of its newfound popularity, research involving flipped classroom strategies is still in its earliest stages.<sup>8</sup> There is little empirical evidence to prove that flipped classrooms increase student success when compared to traditional classrooms; however, there is a variety of literature that indicates flipped policies promote student engagement. In higher education, measures of indirect success such as increased student satisfaction were associated with flipped coursework.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, flipped assignments may help students self-evaluate and keep track of their own progress.<sup>10</sup> In K–12 education, survey results indicated that teachers perceived increased student-to-teacher interaction and more time for varied instructional techniques in the flipped classroom as compared with traditional classrooms.<sup>11</sup> Together, these studies suggest that, for any teacher struggling to engage with distracted students, flipped strategies may offer a solution. The flexibility of this approach ensures that teachers can apply it in a variety of ways to meet the individual needs of their private students.

In addition to implementation research regarding flipped strategies in the classroom, authors have also investigated best practices in the flipped classroom. Recommended strategies suggested by practicing teachers have included limiting content videos to ten minutes or less, considering ways to motivate students to complete assignments, and facilitating opportunities for student feedback to shape the flipped process.<sup>12</sup> The remainder of this article will include details pertaining to these three recommended strategies and their applications within the private piano lesson setting.

The goal of any private lesson is to encourage collaboration and feedback between teacher and student. Individualized instruction lets the teacher cater to the specific needs of each student and allows pupils to explore music with a personal guide. Research findings indicate that student retention is positively correlated to teacher approval, the achievement of goals, and high exam marks during the first year of elementary piano study.<sup>13</sup> Student enjoyment and practice are also linked to private lesson satisfaction.<sup>14</sup> However, despite the individualized attention inherent in private lessons, teachers sometimes struggle to communicate practice expectations effectively. Because private lessons usually occur only once per week, it can be difficult for teachers to monitor home practice for the other six days. Flipped private lessons would allow music educators to provide personalized content videos for students to view during the week, which may result in increased preparation for lessons. This, in turn, could improve student satisfaction, achievement, and retention.

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<sup>8</sup> Njal Foldnes, “The Flipped Classroom and Cooperative Learning: Evidence from a Randomized Experiment,” *Active Learning in Higher Education* 17 (2016): 40.

<sup>9</sup> M. B. Gilboy, S. Heinerichs, and G. Pazzaglia, “Enhancing Student Engagement Using the Flipped Classroom,” *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior* 47 (2015): 113.

<sup>10</sup> M. K. Kim, S. M. Kim, O. Kheara, and J. Getman, “The Experience of Three Flipped Classrooms in an Urban University: An Exploration of Design Principles,” *Internet and Higher Education* 22 (2014): 42.

<sup>11</sup> Gough, et al., “K–12 Teacher,” 390.

<sup>12</sup> Hall and DuFrene, “Best Practices,” 238–39.

<sup>13</sup> Eugenia Costa-Giomi, Patricia J. Flowers, and Wakaha Sasaki, “Piano Lessons of Beginning Students Who Persist or Drop Out: Teaching Behavior, Student Behavior, and Lesson Progress,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 53 (2005): 234.

<sup>14</sup> N. A. Rife, Z. M. Shnek, J. L. Lauby, and L. B. Lapidus, “Children’s Satisfaction with Private Music Lessons,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 49 (2001): 21.

The most challenging element in the flipped classroom is the content video. As noted, these videos should be limited to ten minutes in length to maintain student attention.<sup>15</sup> Piano teachers have a great deal of flexibility in how they can structure and produce these videos. However, there are a few beneficial hints for getting started. First, the video content should consist of anything helpful to the home practice of the individual student. This may include modeling a newly assigned piece or warm-up exercise, talking through score analysis and asking questions relevant to the music, or demonstrating rehearsal strategies. The teacher's goal is to create a video that engages the student and guides preparation for their next lesson. It may be beneficial to include directions such as "now pause this video and practice the strategy I just demonstrated for five minutes." Research findings indicate that students display positive responses to flipped content videos because they are able to review material repeatedly throughout the week if they do not understand something the first time.<sup>16</sup> Teachers can prioritize the practice strategies that students typically forget over the course of their week, such as the need to isolate small passages, block or "chunk" difficult sections, and test out a variety of tempi. Such concepts should be emphasized in the dialogue, demonstrations, games, and practice strategies employed in the content video.

Expensive recording technology and equipment are unnecessary for the purposes of creating flipped classroom content. Any smartphone or tablet is capable of capturing reasonably high-quality audio and video. Setting up a YouTube channel, downloading the YouTube app on a recording device, and uploading student content videos (in the "private" setting) straight from the device to the YouTube channel is a recommended streamlined process. This eliminates long download/upload times, ensures a private video link that can only be viewed by parents and students, and allows teachers to save space on their mobile device by deleting videos as soon as they are uploaded.

The next important task to ensure flipped lesson success is considering how to motivate students to watch and engage with the video content during the week. Flipped teaching strategies will only work if students practice with the carefully crafted material at home. Introducing the video content in a way that encourages students to "buy in" from the first use sets the foundation for all future interactions.<sup>17</sup> Teachers may try this out by using the first video during a lesson and observing student responses. Also, flipping instruction may increase parental involvement in student learning.<sup>18</sup> Parents may serve as learning partners who watch video content with their children at home and monitor the effectiveness of each video during practice sessions. In addition, teachers can easily monitor the number of times students watch a video because YouTube automatically records number of views.

A key to motivating the student to engage is ensuring that all video content is easily accessible. The flipped approach is not recommended for families who lack easy access to web-surfing devices and reliable internet.<sup>19</sup> Independent teachers are responsible for obtaining parental permissions in

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<sup>15</sup> Hall and DuFrene, "Best Practices," 238–39.

<sup>16</sup> Chen, "Impacts of Flipped Classroom," 417.

<sup>17</sup> Gilboy, et al., "Enhancing Student Engagement," 112.

<sup>18</sup> Bergmann and Sams, *Flip Your Classroom*, 101–102.

<sup>19</sup> Alison S. Burke and Brian Fedorek, "Does 'Flipping' Promote Engagement?: A Comparison of a Traditional, Online, and Flipped Class," *Active Learning in Higher Education* 18 (2017): 14.

order to create a system for students to easily and safely view videos at home (on the device their parent approves for piano practice). Regardless of the specific methods of motivation and monitoring, students should be intrigued and excited by content videos. If not, teachers should reconsider their video strategies and discuss what kind of content the student would enjoy in the future. This feedback process is the third and final recommendation for using flipped content in the private lesson. Eliciting and responding to student suggestions are vital steps in adapting the approach to each individual's instructional needs.

Although the production, assignment, and monitoring of at-home video content are the eye-catching features of flipped classroom strategies, the use of traditional lesson/classroom time after a student has viewed the content video is also important. When students come prepared to their lessons, teachers feel free to explore more challenging topics.<sup>20</sup> The advanced preparation of the student ensures that practice strategies only have to be reviewed and will no longer take up the majority of the lesson. Instead, teachers can introduce new elements of expressivity and spend more time on problem solving, analysis, and creative endeavors. Another possibility in flipped instruction is that, in addition to teacher content videos, students may want to submit videos throughout the week demonstrating what they have practiced. This is a convenient way for teachers to observe what students do on a daily basis and provide additional feedback.

Of course, flipped classroom strategies do have potential drawbacks for the independent teacher. The most obvious is the extra work and time-consuming nature of video production and monitoring.<sup>21</sup> However, the flexibility of using flipped concepts in the private lesson allows teachers to maintain control over exactly how much video production is worth their effort and weigh time consumption against the benefits of increased student engagement. The video is not the end but the means by which lesson time can be used more effectively.<sup>22</sup> Another drawback is the frustration that may occur if the technology doesn't work.<sup>23</sup> To limit this possibility, parents and teachers must work together to develop a safe routine for student video viewing. It is important to remember that the flipped piano lesson is not meant to replace the traditional lesson. Teachers should be empowered to pick and choose the strategies that work specifically for their studio. Flipped strategies merely facilitate lesson efficiency by augmenting the weekly lesson so that content reappears in the homes of practicing students all week long.

A final application of flipped classroom policies that may be of use to the independent piano instructor involves scheduling and the dreaded make-up lesson. All teachers should have policies regarding make-up lessons, but any practicing music educator knows that occasionally an unexpected event can disrupt the typical schedule.<sup>24</sup> Instead of searching to find time to meet with a student outside of their normal lesson slot, flipped lesson strategies can provide easily accessible video content to make up for the missed lesson. Students and teachers can send content and practice videos to each other at their own convenience, thereby saving valuable practice days from being

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<sup>20</sup> Foldnes, "The Flipped Classroom," 39.

<sup>21</sup> Chen, "Impacts of Flipped Classroom," 418; Hall and DuFrene, "Best Practices," 236.

<sup>22</sup> Bergmann and Sams, *Flip Your Classroom*, 35–50.

<sup>23</sup> Hall and DuFrene, "Best Practices," 236.

<sup>24</sup> Jeanine M. Jacobson, *Professional Piano Teaching, Volume 1: A Comprehensive Piano Pedagogy Textbook for Teaching Elementary Level Students*, (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Company, 2006), 364–368.

lost because the student simply ran out of things to do since their last interactions with the teacher. Of course, swapping videos by no means makes up for the missed lesson entirely, but if necessary, this suggestion can save time for both the teacher and student.

As previously mentioned, research pertaining to the flipped classroom is still in its earliest stages. Multiple authors suggest that best practices in the field cannot be fully understood until more studies have been conducted.<sup>25</sup> However, the current lack of extensive research should not be an excuse to avoid the flipped concept altogether.<sup>26</sup> In addition to the applications previously outlined, flipped technology strategies may have relevance in teaching students with disabilities,<sup>27</sup> educating piano pedagogy student teachers,<sup>28</sup> and relieving teacher apprehension about technological integration.<sup>29</sup>

Advanced teaching requires a willingness to experiment and explore. Many of the concepts described in this article are simply reminders of good teaching. Flipped strategies have the potential to promote increased engagement, confidence, practice efficiency, and motivation, and investigating how this philosophy has been used in other educational fields can serve as a needed spark to inspire piano teachers to engage with their students in new and relevant ways. At its core, the flipped mentality is a useful catalyst to incorporate meaningful technology implementation in the private lesson while engaging twenty-first-century piano students.

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<sup>25</sup> Hall and DuFrene, "Best Practices," 240; Foldnes, "The Flipped Classroom," 48; Burke and Fedorek, "Does Flipping Promote Engagement," 21.

<sup>26</sup> Burke and Fedorek, "Does Flipping Promote Engagement," 14.

<sup>27</sup> Deborah Nelson, "Professional Notes: Reaching All Students via Technology," *Music Educators Journal* 100 (2013): 26–29; Toby W. Rush, "Incorporating Assistive Technology for Students with Visual Impairments into the Music Classroom," *Music Educators Journal* 102 (2015): 78–83

<sup>28</sup> Patricia Riley, "Teaching, Learning, and Living with iPads," *Music Educators Journal* 100 (2013): 81–86.

<sup>29</sup> Jay Dorfman, "Music Teachers' Experiences in One-to-One Computing Environments," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 64 (2016): 159.

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*Rachel D. Hahn, NCTM, is a doctoral student and Coordinator of Group Piano at the University of Missouri. She received her master of music degree in piano performance and pedagogy from Southern Methodist University in 2016 and graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor of music in piano performance and a concentration in pedagogy from Vanderbilt University in 2014. At the University of Missouri, she teaches and develops curriculum for collegiate group piano and keyboard skills courses, undergraduate and graduate pedagogy, applied collegiate lessons, and community music programs for children and adults. She also supervises graduate teaching assistants.*

*An active performer, teacher, and researcher, Hahn's interests include piano curriculum development, non-profit music, classroom technology, and higher education. Her career combines piano performance and pedagogy with research applicable to all music fields. Her writing has been published in Clavier Companion, American Music Teacher, and the Missouri Journal of Research in Music Education. Recent conference presentations include a session at the Group Piano and Piano Pedagogy Forum (GP3) in August 2018, and the National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy (NCKP) in July 2017. In addition to her undergraduate and graduate teaching appointments, Rachel has taught at the Missouri Fine Arts Academy (Springfield, MO), Pianos for People (St. Louis, MO), and W. O. Smith Community Music School (Nashville, TN). She also founded a piano outreach program taught by SMU graduate students in Dallas public schools and is a frequent adjudicator at local festivals and competitions.*