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THE USE OF AGE APPROPRIATE MENTAL SKILLS ACTIVITIES FOR
PERFORMANCE ENHANCEMENT IN SIX- TO TWELVE-YEAR-OLD
PIANISTS

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A DOCUMENT APPROVED FOR THE
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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ABSTRACT

THE USE OF AGE APPROPRIATE MENTAL SKILLS ACTIVITIES FOR PERFORMANCE ENHANCEMENT IN SIX- TO TWELVE-YEAR-OLD PIANISTS

By: Jyoti M. Hench

Major Professors: Dr. Jane Magrath and Dr. Bill Moore

Music performance psychology research to date has largely focused upon advanced performers such as professional musicians and collegiate music majors. Relatively little performance psychology research has focused upon children, although children – including piano students – are usually expected to perform as a part of music study. The current study focuses on youth performance psychology by addressing the use of mental skills training in pre-adolescent pianists.

The author surveyed literature relating to youth performance psychology, including the topics of motivation in youth sport and music study, general anxiety and performance anxiety in children, and mental skills training for children in sport and in the classroom. The author then applied findings from this literature to create a set of mental skills activities designed to enhance performance in six- to 12-year-old pianists.

Thirty-one mental skills activities, developed by the author, address the four important skills of positive attitude, relaxation, imagery, and concentration. These activities are presented in a student workbook format in Chapter Three, and in a

teacher manual format in Chapter Four. The activities are designed for use during lessons, practice sessions, and performances over a period of one year or longer as a student's playing level and cognitive ability progress. Of the 31 activities, four address positive attitude, five address relaxation, 15 address imagery, and seven address concentration. Some activities involve repertoire, while others do not. Repertoire-specific activities feature elementary through intermediate level works by educational composer Jon George (1944-1982), since George's music has continued to be used and respected by teachers for more than three decades.

The activities include numerous age-appropriate applications of mental skills: creating and using affirmations; engaging in positive post-performance reflection; completing a visualization script or performance script; using imagery to relax various parts of the body; mindful breathing; using pictures to enhance learning, performance, and memorization; musical storytelling; mental rehearsal, including multi-sensory imagery; using cue words; practicing focusing, refocusing, and shifting focus as distinct skills; creating and implementing a multi-part performance strategy.

The current study provides practical activities to help piano teachers regularly incorporate mental skills training into their young students' lessons, practice sessions, and performances. In addition, these activities may serve as a foundation for future research involving mental skills training in pre-adolescent musicians.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

In the last quarter of the twentieth century, performance psychology – the study of individuals’ experiences as performers – evolved into a significant area of research in the performing arts, including music. Music performance psychology draws heavily from sport performance psychology, since many of the psychological strategies that athletes use to enhance their performance – including goal setting, practice and preparation routines, arousal regulation, imagery, and concentration – can also be used to enhance performance in musicians.¹

The majority of music performance psychology research to date has focused upon professional musicians and collegiate music majors. In contrast, relatively little research has focused upon children who perform music, including piano students. However, the vast majority of children who take piano lessons are expected to perform, often in formal settings.² The current study explores how four mental skills from sport psychology – positive attitude, relaxation, imagery, and

¹ Dominique Bellon, “Application of Sport Psychology to Music Performance: A Study Based on a Review of Sport Psychology Literature and Selected Interviews with Professional Musicians” (DMA diss., Arizona State University, 2006, in ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <http://proquest.umi.com>.diss., Arizona State University, 2006, in ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <http://ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/pqdweb?index=0&did=1179956551&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=6&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1287507648&clientId=41954>, accessed February 7, 2010), 3; Bill Moore, *Trust-It Music: Getting Out What Is In You* (Workbook used in graduate performance psychology course, University of Oklahoma, Fall 2008), 18-22.

² Robert A. Duke, Patricia J. Flowers, and David E. Wolfe, “Children Who Study Piano with Excellent Teachers in the United States,” *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* 132 (Spring 1997): 66.

concentration – might be used to enhance the performing experiences of young pianists.

Specifically, the current study presents 31 mental skills activities designed for six- to 12-year-old piano students and their teachers. The concepts addressed in these activities – including various applications of positive attitude, relaxation, imagery, and concentration – have been shown to enhance performance in children in this age group.³ The activities in this study are designed to be introduced by teachers during piano lessons, and subsequently reinforced by students during regular home practice. The activities may be taught singly or in combination, and should ideally be used regularly as a continuous part of the student’s curriculum (i.e., one activity per week, two activities per month, one activity per month, etc.). Most of the activities require no more than 10 minutes of introductory lesson time, and virtually all of the activities include concepts that can be continued in piano study over a period of weeks, months, or even years.

Only a small number of studies have investigated performance psychology with regard to young musicians. Of these, an even smaller number have investigated the effects of mental skills training on the performance of young musicians. Hartke developed a performing arts psychology program for high school students that incorporated the use of mental skills, including relaxation and

³ Craig A. Wrisberg and Mark H. Anshel, “The Effect of Cognitive Strategies on the Free Throw Shooting Performance of Young Athletes,” *The Sport Psychologist* 3, no. 2 (June 1989): 100; Li-Wei Zhang et al., “The Effect of Mental-Imagery Training on Performance Enhancement with 7-10-Year-Old Children,” *The Sport Psychologist* 6, no. 3 (September 1992): 236-237.

focusing.⁴ Although the program is too recent to have been proven effective, “formative evaluation indicated that students learned a range of performance psychology concepts and found the program to be valuable in their performing arts tasks.”⁵ Lorenz studied the effects of Alexander Technique exercises, which included elements of relaxation,⁶ upon high school choral students. While his results were somewhat inconclusive, he found that the exercises appeared “to positively impact some subjects’ singing posture, state of relaxation, stage presence, breath control, and vocal technique.”⁷ Virtually all performance psychology studies involving musicians younger than high school age are concerned primarily with the measurement of anxiety, and not with the use of mental skills to enhance performance.

Performance psychology for young pianists is an important area of research, since young pianists form a large population in which negative performing experiences are common. Over 118,000 young piano students participate each year in the National Guild of Piano Teachers auditions,⁸ and it is impossible to know how many more perform outside of this single organization. While little research has assessed piano students’ attitudes toward performing, most teachers are aware

⁴ Graham Jeffrey Hartke, “Psychology for High School Performing Artists: The Design, Implementation, and Formative Evaluation of a Scholastic Performance Psychology Program” (PsyD diss., Rutgers University, 2008, in ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <http://proquest.umi.com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/pqdweb?index=0&did=1574125451&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=6&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1287508971&clientId=41954>, accessed February 7, 2010), 172.

⁵ Hartke, “Psychology for High School Performing Artists,” iii-iv.

⁶ Steven Robert Lorenz, “Performance Anxiety within the Secondary Choral Classroom: Effects of the Alexander Technique on Tension in Performance” (M.Mus. thesis, Michigan State University, 2002, in ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <http://proquest.umi.com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/pqdweb?index=0&did=766199051&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=6&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1286287449&clientId=41954>, accessed February 8, 2010), 42.

⁷ Lorenz, “Performance Anxiety within the Secondary Choral Classroom,” ii.

⁸ American College of Musicians, “Home Page,” The American College of Musicians/ National Guild of Piano Teachers, <http://pianoguild.com> (accessed October 21, 2010).

that students often feel uncomfortable performing in recitals or auditions. One small study found that less than half of a sample of average-age piano students reported liking a recital, with more than half stating that they felt nervous.⁹ However, as a population, young pianists are generally not coached in using psychological skills to improve their performing experiences. Since the topic of performance psychology for young pianists is largely absent in piano pedagogy texts, teaching materials, and continuing education curricula, most teachers have not been educated in implementing psychological skills training with their young students.

Research that has been conducted in the field of performance psychology for young musicians, while helpful, has two primary limitations. First, it draws primarily from performance psychology research involving elite musicians; this research, in turn, draws from performance psychology research involving elite athletes. While it may seem logical to compare young musicians to professional musicians because both perform music, professional performance psychology models are not necessarily appropriate for children because the two populations have fundamentally different purposes. Professional musicians seek to build a career upon elite performance, while young musicians seek to have fun and learn. In addition, there are obvious developmental differences between the two groups.

Scholars who have studied performance psychology in young athletes agree that “young athletes are not miniature adults. They are children, and they have the

⁹ Charlene Anne Ryan, “A Study of the Differential Responses of Male and Female Children to Musical Performance Anxiety” (PhD diss., McGill University, 2000, in ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <http://proquest.umi.com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/pqdwebindex=0&did=764678281&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=6&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1285717720&clientId=41954>, accessed February 8, 2010), 72.

right to play as children.”¹⁰ Performance psychology research that involves young musicians should draw from research that involves other young performers. The most logical, largely as-yet untapped source of this research is the field of youth sport psychology.

The second limitation of current research in performance psychology for young musicians is that it focuses largely on the negative: performance anxiety. Researchers should not be faulted for this, since performance anxiety is perhaps the most sensible starting point in performance psychology research. This empirical research has shown that children do experience performance anxiety – a valuable finding for teachers as well as future researchers.

The current study attempts to follow one of the most central tenets of performance psychology: to focus on the positive. This will be achieved by exploring the positive use of mental skills – as exemplified in Terry Orlick’s positive living skills program for children –¹¹ to encourage positive performing experiences in young pianists. Specifically, this study focuses on four mental skills – positive attitude, relaxation, imagery, and concentration – that have been shown to

¹⁰ Ronald E. Smith and Frank L. Smoll, “Psychosocial Interventions in Youth Sport,” in *Exploring Sport and Exercise Psychology*, ed. Judy L. van Raalte and Britton W. Brewer (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 1996), 302.

¹¹ Terry Orlick, *Feeling Great: Teaching Children to Excel at Living* (Carp, Canada: Creative Bound, 1996).

reduce anxiety,¹² enhance performance,¹³ and improve daily life¹⁴ in young athletes and other children. The study will suggest that these mental skills may also help young pianists to enhance their performing experiences. In turn, positive performing experiences have the power to make students enjoy performing more, and also to generally feel better about themselves in life.¹⁵

Background

The current document focus is designed with average-age, or elementary-age, piano students in mind. According to some pedagogues, average-age students typically begin lessons between the ages of seven and nine.¹⁶ Duke and his colleagues, in a large study of pre-college piano students, found that the mean age for starting lessons was 6.6 years.¹⁷ Average-age students, then, typically begin piano lessons sometime in the lower-grade years of elementary school. Average-

¹² Linda B. and Leonard D. Zaichkowsky, "The Effects of a School-Based Relaxation Training Program on Fourth Grade Children," *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology* 13, no. 1 (Spring 1984): 84; Marnie St. Denis and Terry Orlick, "Positive Perspectives: Intervention with Fourth-Grade Children," *Elementary School Guidance and Counseling* 31, no. 1 (1996): 52-63; Jenelle N. Gilbert and Terry Orlick, "Evaluation of a Life Skills Program with Grade Two Children," *Elementary School Guidance and Counseling* 31, no. 2 (1996), <http://libraries.ou.edu/access.aspx?url=http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=tfh&AN=9703066779&site=ehost-live> (accessed June 3, 2010).

¹³ Wrisberg and Anshel, "The Effect of Cognitive Strategies on the Free Throw Shooting Performance of Young Athletes," 100; Zhang et al., "The Effect of Mental-Imagery Training on Performance Enhancement with 7-10-Year-Old Children," 236-237.

¹⁴ Orlick, *Feeling Great*, 18.

¹⁵ Susan Harter, "Effectance Motivation Reconsidered: Toward a Developmental Model," *Human Development* 21, no. 1 (1978): 38.

¹⁶ Marianne Uszler, Stewart Gordon, and Scott McBride Smith, *The Well-Tempered Keyboard Teacher*, 2nd ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2000), 3; Jeanine Jacobson, *Professional Piano Teaching* (Van Nuys: Alfred, 2006), 91.

¹⁷ Duke, Flowers, and Wolfe, "Children Who Study Piano with Excellent Teachers in the United States," 57.

age students most typically have one private 30-minute lesson each week, although some students may have 45- or 60-minute lessons instead.¹⁸

Specifically, the study targets six- to 12-year-old students who are performing solo literature from beginning reading level through approximately level six in Jane Magrath's leveling system, as outlined in *The Pianist's Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature*.¹⁹ Broad, progressive terms such as "early elementary," "elementary," "late elementary," "early intermediate," and "intermediate" are sometimes used to describe this range of levels.

Repertoire examples in the study draw exclusively from the output of educational composer Jon George (1944-1982). While the music of more recent composers is also appropriate for the study, it is too soon to know whether this music will maintain its appeal with the next generation of teachers and young pianists, and whether the quality of this music will guarantee it a permanent place in the piano teaching literature. George's music has been selected because of its established position in the piano teaching literature; it has remained in print for more than three decades, a long period of time in this field.

George composed numerous pieces in Frances Clark's *Music Tree* method; he also authored several supplementary solo and duet collections in the 1970s, the majority of which are still in print. In addition, George authored a piano method, *Artistry at the Piano*, with his wife Mary Gae George. Today, teachers have access

¹⁸ Ibid., 62; Teresa Lynn Sumpter, "Professional Status and the Independent Piano Teaching Occupation" (PhD diss., University of Oklahoma, 2008, in ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <http://proquest.umi.com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/pqdweb?index=0&did=1609286371&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=6&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1285714989&clientId=41954>, accessed July 21, 2010), 105.

¹⁹ Jane Magrath, *The Pianist's Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature* (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred, 1995), xi.

to nearly 40 volumes composed by George.²⁰ George's music is known for developing artistry in young pianists, not only through technique but also through imagination and creativity. George is widely regarded as one of the most eminent educational composers of the second half of the twentieth century, and his compositions have stood the test of time.

Purpose of the Study

The current study has two primary goals. First, it aims to provide piano teachers with an understanding of the benefits of mental skills training for young performers, through a survey and discussion of background literature. Second, it offers specific, practical examples – in the form of 31 mental skills activities for average-age piano students – to assist teachers in implementing these skills to enhance their students' performing experiences. Activities are grouped into four categories, according to the four mental skills that they reinforce: positive attitude, relaxation, imagery, and concentration.

Some activities, such as learning to relax the muscles of the body or developing personal affirmations, do not involve repertoire. Other activities, such as focusing games, require repertoire, but are universal in that a variety of selections may be used. Finally, some activities, such as imagining a picture of an object from the title of a piece, involve specific repertoire pieces. All repertoire-specific activities in the document utilize the music of Jon George; seventeen George

²⁰ Prima Music, search results for "Jon George," <http://www.primamusic.com/DynamicSearch.asp?WebID=&NavImage=&New=0&Sale=0&Clearance=0&InstrID=0&InstrumentationID=0&VoiceID=0&CatID=0&GroupID=0&SubGroupID=0&StyleID=0&SeasonID=0&NotationID=0&LevelID=0&PubID=0&Size=10&Page=1&Inv=0&SearchType=3&Search=jongorge&ResultsSearchType=1&ResultsSearch=> (accessed October 30, 2010).

compositions are included in total. These compositions represent the early elementary, elementary, late elementary, early intermediate, and intermediate levels. Works featured in the study are those that typical piano students in the United States, beginning at the average age of study – ages six to nine – could play if they continued progressive study in elementary school and middle school.

Works are excerpted from several of George’s strongest collections:

Kaleidoscope Solos, A Day in the Jungle, Jon George’s Festival of Favorites, Artistry at the Piano, and the *Students’ Choice* books from the *Music Tree* series.

Excerpts from the scores of these works are printed in the study, alongside activities that guide students in utilizing specific mental skills to enhance their performance of this repertoire. For teachers who may choose not to use the music of Jon George, the repertoire-specific activities can serve as models of activities that teachers can create with other literature.

Need for the Study

Performance is one of the most fundamental events associated with music, but psychological performance skills are not routinely addressed in music study. Piano teachers may not be fully aware of the potential benefits of psychological performance skills. In addition, they may not feel capable of coaching students to use these skills. For teachers who want to learn more about performance psychology for young pianists, resources are scant. A handful of books address

performance psychology issues for young music students; however, the discussion is usually limited to a few pages or a single chapter.²¹

Many teachers may feel that they already have successful routines in place to prepare their young students for performance. These routines may include setting memorization deadlines, helping students polish technical details, and addressing artistry and musicality. However, performance psychology issues, if included at all, are often handled in a more cursory way.

Some teachers may address performance psychology only with regard to stage presence. These teachers may advocate strategies such as counting to three when bowing, placing the hands in the lap before playing, pausing in between pieces, and smiling after a performance. Other teachers may address performance psychology issues more thoroughly, but only in the few weeks surrounding a performance. In reality, mental skills training should take place on a regular basis, even when there is not a recital on the calendar. This way, successfully using mental skills feels normal, natural, and comfortable to students:

The ongoing integration of mental and physical skills with children is the key to mental skill refinement and personal excellence. When a particular mental skill or perspective is important to a child, we devise a way to ensure that it is integrated into his/her normal practice time in a natural way.²²

When a young student is nervous for a performance, she may or may not feel comfortable expressing her nervousness to the teacher. If the student does express her nervousness, the teacher may not have the tools to provide helpful feedback and

²¹ Wilma Machover and Marianne Uszler, *Sound Choices: Guiding Your Child's Musical Experiences* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 87-88; Jessica Baron Turner, *Your Musical Child: Inspiring Kids to Play and Sing for Keeps* (New York: String Letter Publishing, 2004), 32, 38, 175-176; Philip Johnston, *The Practice Revolution: Getting Great Results from the Six Days Between Music Lessons* (Pearce, Australia: PracticeSpot Press, 2007), 237-258.

²² Terry Orlick and Nadeane McCaffrey, "Mental Training with Children for Sport and Life," *The Sport Psychologist* 5, no. 4 (December 1991): 327.

guidance. Teachers may give suggestions such as “Don’t be nervous – you’ll be fine,” “Pretend everyone in the audience is wearing only their underwear,” or “No one will know if you make a mistake.” These suggestions, though well-intentioned, are actually unproductive and possibly even detrimental. “Don’t be nervous” completely dismisses the student’s valid feelings; in fact, being aware of one’s feelings is a central principle of performance psychology. “Pretend everyone is wearing underwear” attempts to distract the student from the task at hand; in fact, being mindful of the task at hand may elicit a more focused, and heartfelt, performance. “No one will know if you make a mistake” focuses the student’s attention on two elements that often create fear, anxiety, and disappointment among young performers: highlighting singular mistakes in an otherwise overwhelmingly successful performance, and anticipating and monitoring the audience’s reaction to those mistakes.

In reality, children almost always will feel nervous for performances, and this is entirely natural. According to Philip Johnston, “Feeling nervous to some extent is inevitable for anyone who cares about the outcome of a particular situation, and no amount of flowery rhetoric from the teacher is going to change that.”²³ However, the positive use of mental skills can help children to acknowledge this nervousness as a part of performing, and also to feel better about themselves as performers. Two beliefs are central to the current study: (1) that children who choose to study piano deserve the opportunity to increase their enjoyment of performing, no matter how minimal, and

²³ Johnston, *The Practice Revolution*, 150.

(2) that the use of mental skills – specifically positive attitude, relaxation, imagery, and concentration – can help children on this path to enjoyment.

Teachers should not be faulted for their shortcomings in addressing performance psychology issues with their young students because they have not been provided with sufficient resources in this area. By becoming aware of age-appropriate performance psychology strategies, teachers can learn how to coach their students in becoming comfortable performers who enjoy playing for others.

Limitations of the Study

The current study has several limitations. First, it does not involve actual human subjects. Rather, it provides examples of mental skills activities for typical six- to 12-year-old piano students. Repertoire-based activities feature piano literature that typical elementary and intermediate level students could likely perform.

The study does not review literature involving elite sport performance or elite musical performance. The author suggests that readers interested in elite performance psychology consult some of the many available resources in this area, including books, articles, and dissertations. Specifically, the relatively recent dissertations of Jordan-Miller, Bellon, and Sisterhen deal with performance

psychology for advanced-level musicians.²⁴

The study only targets average-age piano students between the ages of six and 12. The study does not target preschool students, high school students, or adult students. Further, the study only targets elementary and intermediate level piano students, and not advanced level students. Specifically, the study targets students whose maximum playing level is approximately equivalent to level six in Jane Magrath's literature leveling system.²⁵

Because of a lack of available music research involving six- to 12-year-old students, the study includes music research involving adolescent musicians. Research involving high school students may not directly apply to six- to 12-year-olds. However, since it applies more directly than research involving professional and collegiate musicians, the author feels that this research should still be included. In addition, many developmental psychologists believe that children today may approach adolescence more quickly than in previous generations.²⁶ Considering this

²⁴ Rebekah Jordan-Miller, "Mental Skills Training for A Lower-Advanced to Advanced Pianist" (DMA diss., University of Oklahoma, 2010, in ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <http://proquest.umi.com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/pqdweb?index=0&did=2058614671&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=6&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1287773600&clientId=41954>, accessed July 6, 2010);

Dominique Bellon, "Application of Sport Psychology to Music Performance: A Study Based on a Review of Sport Psychology Literature and Selected Interviews with Professional Musicians" (DMA diss., Arizona State University, 2006, in ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <http://proquest.umi.com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/pqdweb?index=0&did=1179956551&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=6&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1287507648&clientId=41954>, accessed February 7, 2010);

Lesley Ann Sisterhen, "The Use of Imagery, Mental Practice, and Relaxation Techniques for Musical Performance Enhancement" (DMA diss., University of Oklahoma, 2005, in ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <http://proquest.umi.com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/pqdweb?index=0&did=921044431&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=6&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1287173132&clientId=41954>, accessed February 7, 2010).

²⁵ Magrath, *The Pianist's Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature*, xi.

²⁶ Clay P. Sherman and Artur Poczwardowski, "Integrating Mind and Body: Presenting Mental Skills to Young Teams," in *Sport Psychology in Practice*, ed. Mark B. Andersen (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 2005), 20.

situation, research involving adolescents may be increasingly applicable to 11- and 12-year-olds today.

The study includes only musical examples by the educational composer Jon George since George's music has maintained a prominent place in the teaching literature for more than three decades. Including the music of a single composer also helps to maintain continuity in the study. Only solo repertoire is featured, and not duets or ensembles.

Another limitation is that the study does not review literature involving team-building interventions in youth sport. While the author feels that "team" experiences can indeed benefit piano students, she has chosen to omit this literature since the majority of piano students experience private lessons only.²⁷ In addition, the study does not review literature involving the use of mental skills for injury prevention or rehabilitation. This area of study, while common in sport psychology research, is considered to be outside the scope of the current study.

Finally, the study does not aim to comprehensively address the issue of how to prepare students for performance. As teachers are aware, this topic is too exhaustive for a single document. The study does not address technical preparation or how to learn pieces securely. The study only addresses the use of four specific mental skills – positive attitude, relaxation, imagery, and concentration – to improve the performing experiences of six- to 12-year-old piano students.

²⁷ Sumpter, "Professional Status and the Independent Piano Teaching Occupation," 105.

Definition of Terms

Achievement Goal Theory. A motivation theory, developed by John G. Nicholls and Joan L. Duda, which states that there are two distinct ways, or orientations, in which individuals are motivated to achieve: task orientation and ego orientation.²⁸

Affirmation. A positive statement, said to oneself, that either visualizes a desired outcome as if it has already been achieved²⁹ or bolsters one's self-esteem.³⁰

Anxiety. "An emotional response, consisting of cognitive concerns and physiological arousal to perceived threat...Symptoms associated with anxiety include worry, apprehension, muscular tension, sweating, increased heart rate, and gastrointestinal dysfunction."³¹

Arousal. "Excitement, or levels of elevated energy" that affect an individual physically, emotionally, and cognitively.³² Arousal is often associated with performance.

Athletic Triangle. The relationship between child athletes, coaches, and

²⁸ John G. Nicholls, "Conceptions of Ability and Achievement Motivation," in *Student Motivation*, vol. 1 of *Research on Motivation in Education*, ed. Russell E. Ames and Carole Ames (Orlando, FL: Academic Press, 1984), 39-73; Joan L. Duda, "Motivation in Sport Settings: A Goal Perspective Approach," in *Motivation in Sport and Exercise*, ed. Glyn C. Roberts (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1992), 57-92.

²⁹ Jack Canfield and Frank Siccone, *The Power to Succeed in School and Beyond*, vol. 2 of *101 Ways to Develop Student Self-Esteem and Responsibility* (Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 1992), 87.

³⁰ William and Constance Starr, *To Learn with Love: A Companion for Suzuki Parents* (Miami: Summy Birchard, 1983), 85.

³¹ Maureen R. Weiss, *Developmental Sport and Exercise Psychology: A Lifespan Perspective* (Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology, Inc., 2004), 203.

³² Leonard D. Zaichkowsky and Amy Baltzell, "Arousal and Performance," in *Handbook of Sport Psychology*, 2nd ed., ed. Robert N. Singer, Heather A. Hausenblas, and Christopher M. Janelle (New York: Wiley, 2001), 320.

parents.³³

Cognitive Imagery. According to Paivio, one of two broad categories of imagery. Cognitive imagery involves the mental rehearsal of technical skills.³⁴

Competence Motivation Theory. A motivation theory, developed by Susan Harter, which states that individuals are motivated by feelings of competence that result from successful mastery attempts.³⁵

Concentration. The ability to focus one's attention on the task at hand.

Concrete Operational Stage. In Piagetian theory, a developmental stage that occurs between the approximate ages of seven and 11 or 12. During the concrete operational stage, "children begin to use logical rules to solve problems. They can deal with more than one salient feature of a problem at a time and are no longer dominated by appearance. However, they are not yet able to deal with abstract problems."³⁶

Coping. The use of behavioral, cognitive, emotional, and physical strategies to deal with stressful situations.

Ego Orientation. One of two orientations in achievement goal theory, in which individuals "adhere to an other-referenced, or ego-oriented, perspective on competence in which normative perceptions dominate an individual's appraisal of

³³ Ronald E. Smith, Frank L. Smoll, and Nathan J. Smith, *Parents' Complete Guide to Youth Sports* (Costa Mesa, CA: HDL Publishing, 1989), 16; Smith and Smoll, "Psychosocial Interventions in Youth Sport," 290.

³⁴ A. Paivio, "Cognitive and Motivational Functions of Imagery in Human Performance," *Canadian Journal of Applied Sport Sciences* 10, no. 4 (1985): 23S.

³⁵ Harter, "Effectance Motivation Reconsidered," 37.

³⁶ Margaret Harris and George Butterworth, *Developmental Psychology: A Student's Handbook* (Hove, UK: Psychology Press Ltd., 2002), 349.

success or failure outcomes. From this perspective, competence is demonstrated when an individual outperforms others and is thus a social comparison process.”³⁷

Expectancy-Value Theory. A motivation theory, developed by Jacquelynne S. Eccles, which states that a child chooses to participate in a certain activity because social and personal factors – including gender, “perceptions of the cost of success,” and previous experience – have led her to value that activity.³⁸

External Perspective Imagery. A type of imagery in which athletes “imagine themselves performing as if they were looking at themselves on a video.”³⁹

Extrinsic Motivation. The desire to participate in an activity in order to receive external benefits, such as rewards. “Extrinsic motivation incorporates a range of regulations that are characterized by an individual’s goals being directed by some separable consequence (i.e. reward, threat, and punishment).”⁴⁰

Focus. See *Concentration*.

Highlights. A component of Terry Orlick’s positive living skills program. Highlights can be defined as “any simple pleasure, joy, or any other positive experience that improves the quality of one’s day.”⁴¹ Children participating in Orlick’s positive living skills program are encouraged to look for highlights each

³⁷ Robert J. Brustad, Megan L. Babkes, and Alan L. Smith, “Youth in Sport: Psychological Considerations,” in *Handbook of Sport Psychology*, 2nd ed., ed. Robert N. Singer, Heather A. Hausenblas, and Christopher M. Janelle (New York: Wiley, 2001), 606.

³⁸ Jacquelynne S. Eccles (Parsons) et al., “Expectancies, Values, and Academic Behaviors,” in *Achievement and Achievement Motives: Psychological and Sociological Approaches*, ed. Janet T. Spence (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman, 1983), 90-91.

³⁹ Craig R. Hall, “Imagery in Sport and Exercise,” in *Handbook of Sport Psychology*, 2nd ed., ed. Robert N. Singer, Heather A. Hausenblas, and Christopher M. Janelle (New York: Wiley, 2001), 536.

⁴⁰ Weiss, *Developmental Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 367.

⁴¹ Gilbert and Orlick, “Evaluation of a Life Skills Program with Grade Two Children.”

day to foster a positive attitude; looking for highlights has also been shown to improve children's self-esteem.⁴²

Imagery. A mental experience “that mimics real experience.”⁴³ Imagery allows individuals to “experience attitudes and actions mentally in ways that have not yet been encountered in real performance. When an athlete is capable of enacting imagined characteristics, those characteristics can serve as templates to guide new expressions in performance.”⁴⁴

Internal Perspective Imagery. A type of imagery in which athletes “imagine themselves performing as if they were looking at themselves through their own eyes (i.e., they imagine what they would see if they were physically executing the skill).”⁴⁵

Intrinsic Motivation. The desire to participate in an activity due to one's appreciation of innate qualities of the activity. With intrinsic motivation, “behaviors and actions are self-directed and are performed for the fun, pleasure, challenge, and satisfaction that are embedded within activities.”⁴⁶

Motivational Imagery. According to Paivio, one of two broad categories of imagery. Motivational imagery involves controlling or manipulating one's emotional states (for example, increasing or decreasing arousal before a performance).⁴⁷

⁴² Orlick, *Feeling Great*, 18.

⁴³ Alison White and Lew Hardy, “An In-Depth Analysis of the Uses of Imagery by High-Level Slalom Canoeists and Artistic Gymnasts,” *The Sport Psychologist* 12, no. 4 (December 1998): 389.

⁴⁴ Jeff Simons, “Doing Imagery in the Field,” in *Doing Sport Psychology*, ed. Mark B. Andersen (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 2000), 92.

⁴⁵ Hall, “Imagery in Sport and Exercise,” 536.

⁴⁶ Weiss, *Developmental Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 367.

⁴⁷ Paivio, “Cognitive and Motivational Functions of Imagery in Human Performance,” 23S.

Mental Practice. “Mental rehearsal of a given task or performance without any associated overt actions.”⁴⁸ Mental practice is often used during relatively early stages of learning.⁴⁹

Mental Skills. Sometimes called psychological skills, mental skills are used by athletes, musicians, and other performers to enhance performance. Examples of mental skills include preparation routines, imagery, concentration or focus, self-esteem and confidence, goal-setting, stress management, and self-regulation.⁵⁰ Mental skills highlighted in the current study are positive attitude, relaxation, imagery, and concentration.

Mindfulness. A way of life advocated by Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh. When a person is mindful, she actively participates in the present moment as opposed to thinking of other things.⁵¹ Mindfulness involves being aware of, and committed to, what one is doing in the present moment.

Negative Imagery. Imagining a performance with negative, or less than ideal, characteristics or outcomes.

Perceived Competence. A child’s perception of her own competence, which may differ from her actual competence. Children judge their competence across

⁴⁸ Daniel Gould and Nicole Damarjian, “Imagery Training for Peak Performance,” in *Exploring Sport and Exercise Psychology*, ed. Judy L. Van Raalte and Britton W. Brewer (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 1996), 28.

⁴⁹ Sisterhen, “The Use of Imagery, Mental Practice, and Relaxation Techniques for Musical Performance Enhancement,” xii.

⁵⁰ Robert N. Singer, Heather A. Hausenblas, and Christopher M. Janelle, prologue to *Handbook of Sport Psychology*, 2nd ed. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 2001), xvii.

⁵¹ Thich Nhat Hanh, *Under the Rose Apple Tree* (Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press, 2002), 10.

three different domains: cognitive, or academic, competence; social competence, or having friends; physical, or athletic, competence.⁵²

Performance Psychology. “A positive approach to studying human performance, both in group and individual performance settings.”⁵³ Common areas of interest in performance psychology include qualities of peak performance, the use of mental skills to improve performance, and understanding performance anxiety.

Positive Attitude. A state of mind in which one views situations in a predominantly positive, rather than negative, way.

Positive Imagery. “The visualization of an ideal performance.”⁵⁴

Positive Living Skills. A program, designed by Terry Orlick, which advocates the use of positive attitude and other mental skills to improve children’s lives. The primary components of Orlick’s positive living skills program are positive thinking, stress reduction and control, relaxation, imagination, and focusing.⁵⁵

Preoperational Stage. In Piagetian theory, a developmental stage that occurs between the approximate ages of two and a half and six or seven. During the preoperational stage, “the child is able to focus only on one salient feature of a problem at a time and is dominated by the immediate appearance of things.”⁵⁶

⁵² Susan Harter, “The Perceived Competence Scale for Children,” *Child Development* 53, no. 1 (February 1982): 88.

⁵³ Moore, *Trust-It Music*, 9.

⁵⁴ Sisterhen, “The Use of Imagery, Mental Practice, and Relaxation Techniques for Musical Performance Enhancement,” 69.

⁵⁵ Orlick, *Feeling Great*, 9-10.

⁵⁶ Harris and Butterworth, *Developmental Psychology*, 351.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation. An exercise, developed by Edmund Jacobson, in which individuals learn to recognize, then release, muscular tension in one muscle group at a time.⁵⁷

Psychological Skills. See *Mental Skills*.

Refocusing. The ability to regain focus after distraction.

Relaxation. “An absence of unnecessary activity and tension; it is a period of stillness, in which the need for activity or any sense of deficiency is subjugated or at least interrupted for a period.”⁵⁸

Self-Regulation. The ability to take responsibility for one’s own learning or performance; self-regulation often involves self-oriented feedback and motivation.⁵⁹

Sport Commitment Model. A motivation theory, developed by Tara K. Scanlan and her colleagues, which states that there are five factors that influence athletes to continue participating in a sport: sport enjoyment, involvement alternatives, personal investments, social constraints, and involvement opportunities.⁶⁰

Sport Psychology. A multidisciplinary field of psychology in which sport participation is studied. Sport psychology encompasses several subcategories associated with sport participation: learning, performance, and skill acquisition;

⁵⁷ Edmund Jacobson, *Progressive Relaxation* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1929), 42-43.

⁵⁸ Aaron Williamon, *Musical Excellence: Strategies and Techniques to Enhance Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 222.

⁵⁹ Linda M. Petchlikoff, “Self-Regulation Skills for Children and Adolescents,” in *Developmental Sport and Exercise Psychology: A Lifespan Perspective*, ed. Maureen R. Weiss (Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology, Inc., 2004), 270.

⁶⁰ Tara K. Scanlan et al., “An Introduction to the Sport Commitment Model,” *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology* 15 (1993): 5.

youth sport; mental and psychological skills and programs; counseling; group dynamics; evaluation; well-being.⁶¹

Self-Esteem. One's appraisal of one's own self-worth.⁶² Self-esteem is sometimes associated with self-assurance.⁶³

Self-Perception. "Individuals' beliefs, perceptions, attitudes, thoughts, and feelings about themselves in general or about their abilities, skills, competencies, characteristics, and behaviors."⁶⁴

Task Orientation. One of the two orientations in achievement goal theory, in which individuals "possess a self-referenced, or mastery-oriented, view on achievement in which the demonstration of competence is evidenced by personal improvement."⁶⁵

Visualization. A form of imagery that utilizes visual images, as opposed to images associated with other senses.

Vividness. An aspect of imagery that involves "the clarity and reality in an athlete's image."⁶⁶

Organization of the Study

Chapter Two, "Related Literature," discusses research in youth sport and music performance psychology, including the topics of motivation, performance anxiety, and mental skills training. The chapter begins with an outline of the four

⁶¹ Singer, Hausenblas, and Janelle, prologue to *Handbook of Sport Psychology*, xvii.

⁶² Stanley Coopersmith, "Studies in Self-Esteem," *Scientific American* 218, no. 2 (February 1968): 96.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁶⁴ Weiss, *Developmental Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 102.

⁶⁵ Brustad, Babkes, and Smith, "Youth in Sport," 606.

⁶⁶ Gould and Damarjian, "Imagery Training for Peak Performance," 30.

primary motivation theories in youth sport; then, specific motivating factors for young athletes and musicians are discussed. Next, literature involving performance anxiety in children is surveyed. This survey begins with an overview of children's anxiety scales, and continues with an outline of the causes and symptoms of anxiety in children. The relationship between anxiety and performance in children, as well as children's strategies for coping with anxiety, are also discussed. Finally, the subject of mental skills training for children is addressed through a review of pertinent research. This section begins with a description of Orlick's positive living skills program,⁶⁷ and then discusses research involving the specific mental skills of relaxation, imagery, and concentration. Chapter Two concludes with a brief discussion on the importance of involving parents in youth performance psychology interventions.

Chapter Three, "Student Workbook for Mental Skills Activities," essentially serves as an activity workbook for six- to 12-year-old piano students. Thirty-one activities, 14 of which feature the music of educational composer Jon George, reinforce four mental skills – positive attitude, relaxation, imagery, and concentration – and are grouped accordingly. Imagery is favored slightly in terms of the number of exercises, since the youth performance psychology literature provides more numerous examples of distinct types of imagery exercises.

In Chapter Three, activities are written using language that is believed to be appropriate for most six- to 12-year-olds. Each activity entry in Chapter Three includes several features: a brief introduction to the concept(s) addressed in the activity, usually through references to non-musical activities such as reading, acting,

⁶⁷ Orlick, *Feeling Great*.

playing, or imagining; a brief description of the activity, including descriptions of any figures included in the workbook; a list of step-by-step instructions for completing the activity, which can be read by students themselves or read aloud by teachers or parents, depending on the maturity of the student; a set of follow-up questions intended to encourage self-reflection and awareness in the student. Any figures for the activity – which may include lists, worksheets, and/or musical excerpts – are printed at the end of the student workbook entry.

Chapter Four, “Teacher Manual for Mental Skills Activities,” serves as a guidebook for teachers utilizing the activities from Chapter Three. Each activity from Chapter Three is described in further detail for teachers in Chapter Four. In Chapter Four, activities are written using language that is believed to be appropriate for teachers who are pursuing, or have completed, an undergraduate music degree. Each activity entry in Chapter Four includes several features: a table of vital information including the amount of introductory lesson time needed, required repertoire and other teaching materials, prerequisite activities, related activities, and a suggested age range for students; an introduction that defines the applicable mental skill(s) and briefly summarizes noteworthy findings from related literature; a description that explains the specific activity in detail; a list of objectives for the activity; suggested steps for introduction during a lesson; supplemental teacher notes that address practical issues in teaching the activity. In addition, Chapter Four includes a suggested order of study and three organizational tables that are intended to further assist teachers: an index of activities by suggested student age, repertoire

level, and level of preparation; an alphabetical list of the activities; an alphabetical list of included Jon George compositions.

Chapter Five, “Summary, Conclusions, and Suggestions for Further Research,” concludes the study. In Chapter Five, the author begins by summarizing the study, with an emphasis on the activities. Next, conclusions drawn from a review of youth performance psychology literature are stated. Finally, suggestions for further research relating to the topic of the current study are presented.

CHAPTER TWO

RELATED LITERATURE

The study of performance psychology for musicians and other performing artists is largely indebted to the field of sport psychology. The adaptation of Timothy Gallwey's book *The Inner Game of Tennis* to the field of music performance in *The Inner Game of Music* exemplifies the trend of applying sport-based performance psychology concepts to elite musical performance in the last quarter of the twentieth century.⁶⁸ Since then, a multitude of studies – including books, articles, and dissertations – have followed this trend. The vast majority of these studies are geared toward adult performers at the collegiate and professional levels. Because the present study centers upon children, references to the sport psychology literature will come from the area of sport study that affects children most closely, youth sport.

Motivation in Youth Sport and Music Study

Motivation has been a primary area of study in youth sport psychology in the past several decades. Specifically, scholars have researched children's motivation to participate and succeed in organized sport. Motivation research in the youth sport literature draws from the fields of social psychology, educational psychology, and developmental psychology. Brustad, Babkes, and Smith distill this research into four primary motivation theories: competence motivation theory, achievement goal

⁶⁸ Timothy Gallwey, *The Inner Game of Tennis*, rev. ed. (New York: Random House, 1997); Barry Green and Timothy Gallwey, *The Inner Game of Music* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1986).

orientation theory, expectancy-value theory, and the sport commitment model.⁶⁹ Although these theories are a fundamental part of the youth sport psychology literature, it is important to note that they were not necessarily intended for exclusive application to sport; virtually all can be considered in a multi-disciplinary context that may include sport, music study, the school classroom, and other activities.

Competence Motivation Theory

The first of the primary youth sport motivation theories, competence motivation theory, was developed by developmental psychologist Susan Harter.⁷⁰ Competence motivation theory is an outgrowth of White's effectance motivation theory.⁷¹ As its name suggests, Harter's competence motivation theory states that people, including children, are motivated by feelings of competence. In other words, when a child feels capable of doing well in a given activity, she is motivated to participate in that activity. This is true even when participation includes a significant amount of effort. In fact, Harter states that feelings of competence are created by "successful mastery attempts which provide an *optimal degree of challenge*."⁷²

One central feature of competence motivation theory is its emphasis on intrinsic, rather than extrinsic, motivation.⁷³ Intrinsic motivation occurs when

⁶⁹ Brustad, Babkes, and Smith, "Youth in Sport: Psychological Considerations," 605.

⁷⁰ Harter, "Effectance Motivation Reconsidered," 34-64.

⁷¹ R.W. White, "Motivation Reconsidered: The Concept of Competence," *Psychological Review* 66 (1959): 297-333.; Harter, "Effectance Motivation Reconsidered," 34.

⁷² Harter, "Effectance Motivation Reconsidered," 37.

⁷³ Ibid.

“behaviors and actions are self-directed and are performed for the fun, pleasure, challenge, and satisfaction that are embedded within activities.”⁷⁴ For example, when a child states that she wants to play the piano because she loves the sound that it makes, she is expressing intrinsic motivation; she is motivated by her enjoyment of the innate sound of the piano, rather than by any external benefits associated with playing the piano. With regard to competence motivation theory in particular, an even better example might be a child who states that she wants to perform a certain piece in a recital because she loves the piece and – very significantly – feels that she is able to play the piece well.

Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is derived from external sources of satisfaction: “Extrinsically motivated children typically seek social approval for their mastery attempts, and rely upon external guidance and performance evaluation.”⁷⁵ For example, when a child states that she loves participating in piano competitions because she enjoys receiving awards, she is expressing extrinsic motivation. This type of attitude would most likely not be aligned with Harter’s competence motivation theory. In fact, Harter states that children should use self-reward systems and mastery goals in order to strengthen their intrinsic motivation to succeed in an activity.⁷⁶ It might be construed that according to competence motivation theory, intrinsic rewards should be used in place of external rewards such as stickers, trophies, and other prizes. The debate between intrinsic and

⁷⁴ Weiss, *Developmental Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 367.

⁷⁵ Nigel Richard Chaumeton, “The Influence of Task and Ego Goal Orientations and Perceptions of Competence on Affect and Intrinsic Motivation in Competitive Youth Tennis” (PhD diss., University of Oregon, 1996, in ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <http://proquest.umi.com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/pqdweb?index=0&sid=2&srchmode=1&vinst=PROD&fmt=6&startpage=1&clientid=41954&vname=PQD&RQT=309&did=739559131&scaling=FULL&ts=1285691151&vtype=PQD&rqt=309&TS=1285691156&clientId=41954>, accessed February 7, 2010), 14.

⁷⁶ Harter, “Effectance Motivation Reconsidered,” 37.

extrinsic motivation and rewards is the subject of Alfie Kohn's well-known book *Punished by Rewards*.⁷⁷

Achievement Goal Theory

A second motivational theory, achievement goal theory, was established by the research of educational psychologist John G. Nicholls and sport psychologist Joan L. Duda.⁷⁸ Achievement goal theory, like competence motivation theory, involves individuals' desire to demonstrate mastery.⁷⁹ However, achievement goal theory suggests that there are two distinct ways in which individuals may be motivated to achieve mastery: task orientation and ego orientation.⁸⁰ When a person is task-oriented, she is motivated by the actual process of learning a skill.⁸¹ "Performing one's best" or "understanding and working hard in order to learn" are examples of task-oriented goals.⁸² Task orientation is a form of intrinsic motivation: "When an individual is task-involved, an activity is experienced more as an end in itself. In a state of task involvement, therefore, our task-related strivings are more likely to be intrinsically satisfying."⁸³

It is worth noting that while both Harter's competence motivation theory and the task orientation aspect of achievement goal theory emphasize intrinsic

⁷⁷ Alfie Kohn, *Punished by Rewards: The Trouble with Gold Stars, Incentive Plans, A's, Praise, and Other Bribes* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993).

⁷⁸ Nicholls, "Conceptions of Ability and Achievement Motivation," 39-73; Duda, "Motivation in Sport Settings," 57-92.

⁷⁹ Brustad, Babkes, and Smith, "Youth in Sport," 606.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Nicholls, "Conceptions of Ability and Achievement Motivation," 47; Duda, "Motivation in Sport Settings," 62.

⁸² John G. Nicholls, "What Is Ability and Why Are We Mindful of It," in *Competence Considered*, ed. John Kolligian, Jr. and Robert J. Sternberg (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 37.

⁸³ Duda, "Motivation in Sport Settings," 71, citing John G. Nicholls, *The Competitive Ethos and Democratic Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 142.

motivation, the latter emphasizes intrinsic motivation by the act of learning, rather than by the feeling of competence. This difference, while subtle, highlights the educational slant of achievement goal theory. This idea is perhaps best expressed by Nicholls, who states that “from an educational perspective, task-involvement appears an ideal state. Learning is an end in itself, our feelings of competence are a function of perception of learning, and we act to maximize our chances of learning and minimize behavior that will not produce gains in mastery.”⁸⁴

When a person is ego-oriented, on the other hand, she is extrinsically motivated by positive comparisons of herself to others, or by the feeling that she is more successful than others in a given task.⁸⁵ For example, a child who feels that another student’s mistake in a recital improves the standing of her own performance is experiencing positive ego orientation – that is, she views her performance in a more positive light than the performance of the other student.⁸⁶ Conversely, when an ego-oriented individual feels less successful than others, she may feel a lack of motivation.⁸⁷ For example, a child who states that she does not want to play in a recital because she is not as good as the other students is experiencing negative ego orientation.

Piano pedagogue Dylan Savage uses the terms “spirit” and “ego” to describe two motivational orientations in music performance that seem nearly identical to the

⁸⁴ Nicholls, “Conceptions of Ability and Achievement Motivation,” 47.

⁸⁵ Brustad, Babkes, and Smith, “Youth in Sport,” 605.

⁸⁶ Duda, “Motivation in Sport Settings,” 62.

⁸⁷ Duda, “Motivation in Sport Settings,” 69; Nicholls, “Conceptions of Ability and Achievement Motivation,” 43.

“task orientation” and “ego orientation” described in achievement goal theory.⁸⁸

Savage points out that most young children naturally exhibit an intrinsic, “spirit-” or task-based orientation:

It is a spirit-driven energy that usually attracts young children to the piano; the same spirit that enables tones from randomly struck notes to instill such delight and wonder in the beginning pianist that the stage may immediately be set for a life-long journey with the piano. At this point, the most innocent and honest way one can approach the instrument has taken place- an attraction yet unaltered by any external forces.⁸⁹

Teachers might be well-advised to consider making more conscious use of young children’s inherent inclination toward task orientation, since Nicholls himself states that inducing a task-oriented mindset among students can make their performance more effective.⁹⁰ Although Nicholls’s use of the word “performance” involves academic performance in an educational setting, his point still applies to music study and even music performance.

In addition to describing “spirit,” or task orientation, Savage also gives numerous examples of ego orientation in music performance:

The role of the ego (the part of us that traffics in fear) usually develops in young musicians after their music making becomes intertwined in the external world of teachers, recitals, auditions, competitions, and positions, to name a few. The ego voice can manifest itself in many ways: the first feelings of envy at something you feel you do not have; feelings of superiority when an accomplishment draws attention; how, when practicing and performing, it constantly tells you that you are not good enough; how defensive it may make you feel at even mild criticism of a performance; or that it restricts the impulse to complement the fine performance of another because you felt it might diminish the perception of your own ability. In and of themselves, these are perfectly normal ego reactions. Remember, one of

⁸⁸ Dylan Savage, “Spirit, Ego, and Music,” in *A Symposium for Pianists and Teachers: Strategies to Develop the Mind and Body for Optimal Performance*, ed. Kris Kropff (Dayton, OH: Heritage Music Press, 2002), 108.

⁸⁹ Savage, “Spirt, Ego, and Music,” 109.

⁹⁰ Nicholls, “Conceptions of Ability and Achievement Motivation,” 52.

the main functions of the ego is its defensive system; it wants to make you feel good about yourself and does not like detractors.⁹¹

Expectancy-Value Theory

A third motivational theory, expectancy-value theory, was formed by developmental and educational psychologist Jacquelynne S. Eccles and her colleagues.⁹² Expectancy-value theory deals primarily with the issue of activity choice among children. In other words, the theory attempts to understand why different children choose to participate in different activities or opportunities,⁹³ even if they have “equivalent past histories of success and failure in a particular subject area.”⁹⁴ According to expectancy-value theory, a child’s activity choice is informed by two factors. First, a student chooses a certain activity because she values certain qualities associated with that activity. For example, a child might choose to take piano lessons because she believes that they will be fun. Second, activity choice is informed by a student’s own self-evaluation of her capabilities to participate in that particular activity.⁹⁵ For example, a child may have various reasons for believing that she would be a capable piano student, many of which are socially influenced:

In sum, we are proposing that the value of a particular task to a particular person is a function of both the perceived qualities of the task and the individual’s needs, goals, and self-perceptions. Individual differences on these variables are created by differential past experiences with that task or with similar tasks, by social stereotypes (e.g., the perception of math as a male domain), and by differential information from parents, teachers, or

⁹¹ Savage, “Spirit, Ego, and Music,” 109-110.

⁹² Eccles (Parsons) et al., “Expectancies, Values, and Academic Behaviors,” 75-146; Jacquelynne S. Eccles and Rena D. Harold, “Gender Differences in Sport Involvement: Applying the Eccles’ Expectancy-Value Model,” *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology* 3 (1991): 7-35.

⁹³ Eccles and Harold, “Gender Differences in Sport Involvement,” 8; Brustad, Babkes, and Smith, “Youth in Sport,” 606-607.

⁹⁴ Eccles et al., “Expectancies, Values, and Academic Behaviors,” 78.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 90-91

peers about the importance of or difficulty involved in doing well. Intuitively, three clusters of variables seem to be particularly important mediators: (1) sex roles, (2) perceptions of the cost of success, and (3) previous affective experiences with similar tasks.⁹⁶

Expectancy-value theory has been applied to music study by several music education scholars, including Ghazali and McPherson, who studied the reasons why Malaysian children wanted to learn an instrument either in school or outside of school.⁹⁷ Ghazali and McPherson reference several additional music studies⁹⁸ that use expectancy-value theory to show that “even with very little previous experience, children begin their learning with preconceived ideas and beliefs about music.”⁹⁹

Sport Commitment Model

A fourth motivational theory, the sport commitment model, was developed by sport psychologists Tara K. Scanlan and Jeffery Simons and their colleagues.¹⁰⁰ Among the four primary motivational theories in the field of youth sport, the sport commitment model is perhaps the most specifically tailored to sport. However, it still translates well to other disciplines, including music study. Sport commitment is

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ghaziah M. Ghazali and Gary E. McPherson, “Malaysian Children’s Attitudes Towards Learning Music,” *Music Education Research* 11, no. 2 (June 2009): 193-219.

⁹⁸ Jacquelynne S. Eccles et al., “Age and Gender Differences in Children’s Self- and Task Perceptions During Elementary School,” *Child Development* 64 (1993): 830-847; Gary E. McPherson, “Commitment and Practice: Key Ingredients for Achievement During the Early Stages of Learning a Musical Instrument,” *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* 147 (2000): 122-127; Allan Wigfield et al., “Changes in Children’s Competence Beliefs and Subjective Task Values Across the Elementary School Years: A 3-Year Study,” *Journal of Educational Psychology* 89, no. 3 (1997): 451-469; Alexandra Lamont, “Young People’s Music In and Out of School,” *British Journal of Music Education* 20, no. 3 (2003): 229-241.

⁹⁹ Ghazali and McPherson, “Malaysian Children’s Attitudes Towards Learning Music,” 193.

¹⁰⁰ Tara K. Scanlan and Jeffery P. Simons, “The Construct of Sport Enjoyment,” in *Motivation in Sport and Exercise*, ed. Glyn C. Roberts (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1992), 199-215; Tara K. Scanlan et al., “An Introduction to the Sport Commitment Model,” 1-15; Tara K. Scanlan et al., “The Sport Commitment Model: Measurement Development for the Youth-Sport Domain,” *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology* 15 (1993): 16-38.

defined as “a psychological state representing the desire or resolve to continue sport participation.”¹⁰¹ The model proposes five influential factors in athletic participation: sport enjoyment, involvement alternatives, personal investments, social constraints, and involvement opportunities.¹⁰²

The first construct, sport enjoyment, is defined as “a positive affective response to the sport experience that reflects generalized feelings such as pleasure, liking, and fun.”¹⁰³ The sport enjoyment clause states that when a child enjoys a sport, she wants to continue participating; therefore, there is a direct relationship between sport enjoyment and sport commitment.¹⁰⁴ Interestingly, Scanlan and her colleagues mention that this is true even when sport participation involves a significant amount of effort.¹⁰⁵ This is reminiscent of Harter’s similar statement in her competence motivation theory.¹⁰⁶ Piano teachers can provide an “optimal degree of challenge”¹⁰⁷ by providing carefully leveled repertoire – and performing experiences – for their students.

The emphasis on enjoyment, rather than on competence, in the sport commitment model highlights a subtle yet significant difference from Harter’s competence motivation theory. This difference might be illustrated with the two subtly contrasting statements “I really like playing the piano, so I want to keep taking lessons” (sport enjoyment) and “I really feel like I am good at playing the piano, so I want to keep playing more” (competence motivation). Regardless of this

¹⁰¹ Scanlan et al., “An Introduction to the Sport Commitment Model,” 1.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Harter, “Effectance Motivation Reconsidered,” 37.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

difference, it is important to remember that both theories emphasize the importance of sheer joy in youth sport participation, regardless of whether this joy includes concrete feelings of competence. Scanlan and Simons's inclusion of Susan Harter's statement that "we should resurrect 'joy' as a legitimate construct and restore affect and emotion to its rightful place, as central to an understanding of behavior" illustrates the importance of joy in both theories, and indeed in youth sport and other organized activities in general.¹⁰⁸

The second construct of the sport commitment model, involvement alternatives, is defined as "the attractiveness of the most preferred alternative(s) to continued participation in the current endeavor."¹⁰⁹ Unlike with sport enjoyment, there is an inverse relationship between involvement alternatives and sport commitment.¹¹⁰ That is, when there are more attractive activities available, a child will have a lower commitment to her current activity.

The third construct of the sport commitment model, personal investments, is defined as "personal resources that are put into the activity which cannot be recovered if participation is discontinued."¹¹¹ Scanlan and her colleagues list time, effort, and money as the three most common personal investments.¹¹² Personal investments have a direct relationship to sport commitment, because investing resources into an activity leads to greater attachment and therefore continued

¹⁰⁸ Scanlan and Simons, "The Construct of Sport Enjoyment," 199, quoting Susan Harter, "The Development of Competence Motivation in the Mastery of Cognitive and Physical Skills: Is There Still a Place for Joy?," in *Psychology of Motor Behavior and Sport – 1980*, ed. Glyn C. Roberts and Daniel M. Landers (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1981), 4.

¹⁰⁹ Scanlan et al., "An Introduction to the Sport Commitment Model," 7.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

participation.¹¹³ There is a potential problem, however, in relating the financial component of the personal investments construct to children's piano lessons, since the vast majority of children do not pay for lessons themselves.¹¹⁴ Since most young students have not personally invested money into their piano study, they may not feel the burden of the cost of lessons. Parents, however, may feel this burden, and this raises issues of parental influence.

The fourth construct of the sport commitment model, social constraints, is defined as "social expectations or norms which create feelings of obligation to remain in the activity."¹¹⁵ Scanlan and her colleagues state that when participants feel outside pressure to continue participating in an activity, they are more likely to continue.¹¹⁶ This can also be described as awareness by participants of "the social costs of termination."¹¹⁷ When an individual feels that she would experience negative consequences from others if she terminated her participation in an activity, she is less likely to terminate and more likely to continue participating.

The fifth construct of the sport commitment model, involvement opportunities, is defined as "valued opportunities that are present only through continued involvement."¹¹⁸ The involvement opportunities construct involves a participant's anticipation of future positive experiences; Scanlan and her colleagues

¹¹³ Ibid., citing Caryl E. Rusbult, "Commitment and Satisfaction in Romantic Associations: A Test of the Investment Model," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 16, no. 2 (March 1980): 184.

¹¹⁴ Duke, Flowers, and Wolfe, "Children Who Study Piano with Excellent Teachers in the United States," 63.

¹¹⁵ Scanlan et al., "An Introduction to the Sport Commitment Model," 7.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 8.

use an example of an athlete who “might feel that she would miss out on anticipated good times derived from participating in the program if she left.”¹¹⁹

Motivating Factors for Young Athletes

Youth sport motivation theories can help coaches and teachers to better understand children’s thoughts and feelings about participating in organized activities. However, it is also important for coaches and teachers to understand why their players or students choose to participate in these activities in the first place. Understanding why children want to participate in organized activities illuminates what they feel is important, what they enjoy most, and what they value most about activities. Coaches and teachers should be aware of, and sensitive to, this information in order to truly relate to their athletes or students.

In the youth sport literature, the answer to the participation question is virtually undisputed: children participate because they want to have fun. Skubic was a pioneer in researching why children participate in organized activities, and having fun emerged as a motivating factor in this early study.¹²⁰ Gould, Feltz, and Weiss determined fun to be the primary motivating factor for the youth sport participants in their study,¹²¹ as did Smith, Smoll, and Smith.¹²² Klint and Weiss found that the desire to have fun was the primary motivating factor for the

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Elvera Skubic, “Studies of Little League and Middle League Baseball,” *Research Quarterly* no. 27 (1956): 102.

¹²¹ Daniel Gould, Deborah Feltz, and Maureen R. Weiss, “Motives for Participating in Competitive Youth Swimming,” *International Journal of Sport Psychology* 16, no. 2 (1985): 132, 135.

¹²² Smith, Smoll, and Smith, *Parents’ Complete Guide to Youth Sports*, 12.

recreational youth gymnasts in their study.¹²³ Orlick and Botterill devote an entire chapter of their book, *Every Kid Can Win*, to suggestions for making organized sport fun for participants.¹²⁴ Smith and Smoll emphasize fun as the most important prerequisite for organized youth sport, and state that “the basic right of the child athlete to have fun in participating should not be neglected.”¹²⁵

The desire to have fun is the primary motivating factor for young athletes; however, it is not the only motivating factor. Children participating in youth sport are motivated by numerous additional intrinsic and extrinsic factors. These factors generally fall into four broad categories: improving one’s skills; interacting with others, including making friends and enjoying a team atmosphere; enjoying the challenging aspects of participation; increasing physical fitness.¹²⁶ It is worth noting that while findings in the youth sport literature can often apply directly to children’s piano study, this is not always the case with motivating factors. For example, increasing physical fitness does not apply to piano lessons at all; in addition, experiencing a team atmosphere may or may not apply to piano lessons. If a student’s experience in piano lessons includes regular group activities, such as group lessons, repertoire classes, and regular performances, then she may experience a team-like camaraderie with her fellow piano students. However, since the majority of piano students experience private lessons rather than group

¹²³ K.A. Klint and Maureen R. Weiss, “Dropping In and Dropping Out: Participation Motives of Current and Former Youth Gymnasts,” *Canadian Journal of Applied Sport Sciences* 11, no. 2 (June 1986): 109.

¹²⁴ Terry Orlick and Cal Botterill, *Every Kid Can Win* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1977), 105-118.

¹²⁵ Smith and Smoll, “Psychosocial Interventions in Youth Sport,” 302.

¹²⁶ S. Jill Black and Maureen R. Weiss, “The Relationship Among Perceived Coaching Behaviors, Perceptions of Ability, and Motivation in Competitive Age-Group Swimmers,” *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology* 14 (1992): 310; Gould, Feltz, and Weiss, “Motives for Participating in Competitive Youth Swimming,” 132, 135; Klint and Weiss, “Dropping In and Dropping Out,” 109.

lessons,¹²⁷ and since the majority of piano students participate in recitals two times or less each year,¹²⁸ these peer-based social experiences may not exist as strongly as they do in youth sport.

Motivating Factors for Young Musicians

While motivation is a primary area of research in the youth sport literature, it has not been researched as thoroughly in the field of piano pedagogy. Because of this, research from the broader field of music education – including the study of other instruments and voice – is helpful in providing data that very clearly can be interpreted with young piano students in mind. The importance of fun, or enjoyment, does emerge in these studies. Ghazali and McPherson, for example, found that enjoyment was the number one reason why the children in their study wanted to learn an instrument outside of school.¹²⁹ Driscoll found that finding lessons boring – which can be considered the opposite of fun – was the most significant factor in influencing students to discontinue lessons.¹³⁰ However, in the piano pedagogy and music education literature, fun is not as strong a motivating factor as it is in the youth sport literature. In other words, while fun is indisputably the most important motivating factor for young athletes, it is not clearly so for young piano students.

¹²⁷ Sumpter, “Professional Status and the Independent Piano Teaching Occupation,” 105.

¹²⁸ Duke, Flowers, and Wolfe, “Children Who Study Piano with Excellent Teachers in the United States,” 66.

¹²⁹ Ghazali and McPherson, “Malaysian Children’s Attitudes Towards Learning Music,” 205.

¹³⁰ Jennifer Driscoll, “‘If I Play My Sax My Parents Are Nice To Me’: Opportunity and Motivation in Musical Instrument and Singing Tuition,” *Music Education Research* 11, no. 1 (March 2009): 48.

Duke, Flowers, and Wolfe conducted perhaps the most comprehensive study on pre-college piano students to date.¹³¹ They found that the most common reason students cited for starting piano lessons was “I just wanted to learn to play,” with 50% of students reporting this as a reason.¹³² While this statement does not clearly describe a specific motivating factor, it does portray a sentiment that many teachers can likely relate to, and may have even experienced themselves when starting lessons as a child: the desire to play the piano, without necessarily being able to explain why. The second most significant motivating factor to begin lessons – at 43% – was parents deciding that the child should study piano.¹³³ Being inspired by performers they had heard or seen ranked third, at 21%, and being motivated by friends who also took lessons ranked fourth, at only 6%.¹³⁴ The low ranking of being motivated by friends supports the suggestion that peer influence may play a less significant role in piano study than in youth sport.

As mentioned earlier, Ghazali and McPherson found enjoyment to be the most significant motivating factor for the students in their study. Other important factors in this study, in order of significance, were interest, usefulness, importance, and difficulty.¹³⁵ These factors are, perhaps purposely, broad in nature. For example, it is not clear whether “importance” involves student perceptions, parental perceptions, or other social or cultural values (interestingly, the study, which took place in Malaysia, categorized students in the sample according to their ethnic and

¹³¹ Duke, Flowers, and Wolfe, “Children Who Study Piano with Excellent Teachers in the United States.”

¹³² *Ibid.*, 63.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ Ghazali and McPherson, “Malaysian Children’s Attitudes Towards Learning Music,” 205.

religious backgrounds).¹³⁶ Rife found that playing a piece of music well was the most highly regarded motivating factor for enjoying private music lessons.¹³⁷ This finding may be interpreted as supporting either competence motivation theory or achievement goal theory, or perhaps both. Three factors involving adult influences – liking that one’s teacher provides help to improve, liking that one’s teacher is talented, and liking that one’s parents provide praise – tied as the second most highly regarded motivating factors in Rife’s study.¹³⁸ Improving one’s ability so as to be able to play more difficult pieces, and liking when friends compliment one’s playing, tied as the third most highly regarded motivating factors.¹³⁹

Correlating motivation research from youth sport to piano study can sometimes be problematic. For example, as mentioned earlier, physical fitness and team atmosphere are fundamental components of sport participation, but are not necessarily associated with music study. Another problematic area of correlation involves children’s attitudes toward performing. It is important to remember that the sport and music worlds – even at children’s levels – represent two very different performance cultures. Formal performances – in the form of games and matches – occur regularly in youth sport; however, formal performances – in the form of recitals, competitions, or festivals – occur relatively infrequently in piano study.¹⁴⁰ Because of this, performances may arguably be considered a more inextricable part

¹³⁶ Ibid., 197-198.

¹³⁷ Nora A. Rife et al., “Children’s Satisfaction with Private Music Lessons,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 49, no. 1 (Spring 2001), in EBSCOhost, <http://ehis.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/eds/detail?vid=3&hid=102&sid=0572820d4d584340b574f788e88dc24d%40sessionmgr110&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmU%3d#db=aph&AN=4463026> (accessed August 19, 2010).

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Duke, Flowers, and Wolfe, “Children Who Study Piano with Excellent Teachers in the United States,” 66.

of the day-to-day experience of young athletes than young pianists. When young athletes list factors that draw them to participate in sport, it is likely that these factors apply not just to practices but to actual performances. For example, a young soccer player who states that he believes soccer is fun is likely referring not just to soccer practice, but to actual soccer games. It is not always clear whether this is the case with young piano students, since much of the research on young music students' motivation addresses lessons and home practice rather than performances.

Two studies specifically address young music students' attitudes toward performing. Ryan studied performance attitudes in 26 sixth grade piano students.¹⁴¹ When asked how they felt about performing in recital, less than half of the students stated that they liked it (43%); students also responded that they were nervous (24%), or that they were nervous and liked it (33%).¹⁴² Interestingly, however, these responses differed by gender. The majority of boys (67%) stated only that they liked it, with fewer stating that they felt nervous.¹⁴³ This discrepancy may or may not be an example of reporting differences, rather than actual differences.

Driscoll studied performance attitudes in 481 thirteen- and fourteen-year-old students in the United Kingdom, all of whom who took music lessons outside of school.¹⁴⁴ One question asked which aspects of musical study students enjoyed most. In terms of the total number of points awarded, "playing alone for pleasure"

¹⁴¹ Ryan, "A Study of the Differential Responses of Male and Female Children to Musical Performance Anxiety," i.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 72.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ Driscoll, "'If I Play My Sax My Parents Are Nice To Me,'" 41.

ranked highest; “performing solo,” on the other hand, ranked second to last, with only half the number of points of “playing alone for pleasure.”¹⁴⁵

Performance Anxiety in Children

Children’s Anxiety Scales

Anxiety is a significant topic in the study of children’s performance, since several studies have shown that children do experience performance anxiety.¹⁴⁶ The 1950s marked the start of a productive period in children’s anxiety research. One particularly important area of study was the measurement of anxiety. Several psychologists sought to measure anxiety levels in children by developing anxiety scales, most of which were adapted from adult scales. A handful of anxiety scales for children – the Children’s Manifest Anxiety Scale,¹⁴⁷ the Test Anxiety Scale and General Anxiety Scale for Children,¹⁴⁸ and the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory for Children¹⁴⁹ – represent this line of research.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 50.

¹⁴⁶ Julie A. Simon and Rainer Martens, “Children’s Anxiety in Sport and Nonsport Evaluative Activities,” *Journal of Sport Psychology* 1, no. 2 (1979): 166-167; Ryan, “A Study of the Differential Responses of Male and Female Children to Musical Performance Anxiety,” i; Maria Terese Maroon, “Potential Contributors to Performance Anxiety Among Middle School Students Performing at Solo and Ensemble Contest” (PhD diss., Kent State University, 2002, in ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <http://proquest.umi.com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/pqdweb?index=0&did=765250771&SrchMode=1&sid=2&Fmt=6&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1285718894&clientId=41954>, accessed February 8, 2010), 76; Lydia Fehm and Katja Schmidt, “Performance Anxiety in Gifted Adolescent Musicians” *Journal of Anxiety Disorders* 20 (2006): 107.

¹⁴⁷ Alfred Castaneda, Boyd R. McCandless, and David S. Palermo, “The Children’s Form of the Manifest Anxiety Scale,” *Child Development* 27, no. 3 (September 1956): 317-326; Cecil R. Reynolds and Bert O. Richmond, “What I Think and Feel: A Revised Measure of Children’s Manifest Anxiety,” *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology* 6, no. 2 (1978): 271-280.

¹⁴⁸ Seymour B. Sarason et al., “A Test Anxiety Scale for Children,” *Child Development* 29, no. 1 (March 1958): 105-113; Seymour B. Sarason et al., “The Anxiety Scales,” in *Anxiety in Elementary School Children* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1960), 84-95.

¹⁴⁹ Charles D. Spielberger et al., *State-Trait Anxiety Inventory for Children: Sampler Set* (Menlo Park, CA: Mind Garden, 1973).

The Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale (CMAS) was created by Castaneda and his colleagues, based on Taylor's Manifest Anxiety Scale for adults.¹⁵⁰ The scale is designed for use with fourth, fifth, and sixth grade children.¹⁵¹ It assesses a child's anxiety level in the general sense ("I am secretly afraid of a lot of things"¹⁵²) and with regard to slightly more specific situations ("I notice my heart beats very fast sometimes").¹⁵³ However, the scale does not distinguish between these two types of anxiety. Children taking the CMAS are also given a score that indicates their propensity to lie, based on their responses to questions that should always be answered false ("I like everyone I know") or true ("I would rather win than lose in a game").¹⁵⁴ Reynolds and Richmond's revision of the CMAS shortened the length of the questionnaire, while expanding the scale for use with first through twelfth grade students.¹⁵⁵

The Test Anxiety Scale was developed by Seymour Sarason and his colleagues to assess second through fifth grade children's anxiety about taking a test.¹⁵⁶ Questions refer to general anxiety about test taking ("When the teacher says she is going to find out how much you have learned, does your heart begin to beat faster?") and anxiety before, during, and after test taking (After you have taken a test, do you worry because you think you did not do well?).¹⁵⁷ It is worth noting that a test can be compared to a musical performance, since both are anticipated

¹⁵⁰ Janet A. Taylor, "The Relationship of Anxiety to the Conditioned Eyelid Response," *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 41 (1951): 81-89; Castaneda et al., "The Children's Form of the Manifest Anxiety Scale," 317.

¹⁵¹ Castaneda, McCandless, and Palermo, "The Children's Form of the Manifest Anxiety Scale," 318.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 319.

¹⁵⁵ Reynolds and Richmond, "What I Think and Feel," 278, 271.

¹⁵⁶ Sarason et al., "A Test Anxiety Scale for Children," 107.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 106.

events in which students demonstrate their knowledge or ability; in many questions on the Test Anxiety Scale, the word “test” can be mentally replaced with the word “recital” quite easily. The General Anxiety Scale for Children consists of questions that assess a child’s predisposition to anxiety in daily life (“When you are away from home, do you worry about what might be happening at home?”¹⁵⁸) and is designed to be administered along with the Test Anxiety Scale.¹⁵⁹ The distinction between situation-specific anxiety and general daily anxiety – in two separate test components – was a pioneering feature of Sarason’s work, and is a fundamental part of later anxiety scales.

The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory for Children (STAIC) was developed by Charles Spielberger and his colleagues as an adaptation of his State-Trait Anxiety Inventory.¹⁶⁰ The STAIC is designed for use with fourth through sixth grade children.¹⁶¹ Like the STAI for adults, and like Sarason’s scales for children, the STAIC has two separate components that measure two distinct types of anxiety: state anxiety, which occurs with specific anxiety-inducing events such as tests or performances, and trait anxiety, which represents how prone an individual generally is to anxiety.¹⁶² The STAIC has become the most predominantly used anxiety inventory in children’s sport and music anxiety research.

In the late 1970s, psychologists began to develop anxiety scales for children specifically with respect to sport participation. These scales, like the ones described

¹⁵⁸ Sarason et al., “The Anxiety Scales,” 92.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 93

¹⁶⁰ Charles D. Spielberger, R.L. Gorsuch, and R.E. Lushene, *Manual for the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory* (Menlo Park, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press, 1970); Spielberger et al., *State-Trait Anxiety Inventory for Children*, 1.

¹⁶¹ Spielberger et al., *State-Trait Anxiety Inventory for Children*, 2.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 1.

above, were adapted from adult scales – in this case, adult sport anxiety scales. Martens developed an adult and a children’s version of the Sport Competition Anxiety Test to measure overall anxiety in sport competitions.¹⁶³ Smith, Smoll, Cumming, and Grossbard created the Sport Anxiety Scale-2 (SAS-2),¹⁶⁴ based on Smith, Smoll, and Schutz’s original Sport Anxiety Scale.¹⁶⁵ The SAS-2, unlike the original, can be used with all age groups, including children as young as nine years old.¹⁶⁶ It distinguishes between three specific types of sport anxiety: somatic, or physical, anxiety; worry; concentration disruption.¹⁶⁷

Osborne and Kenny developed an anxiety scale for adolescent musicians.¹⁶⁸ The Music Performing Anxiety Inventory for Adolescents (MPAI-A) is designed for use with 12- to 19-year-old musicians.¹⁶⁹ Like the SAS-2, it assesses somatic and cognitive anxiety; it also assesses children’s anxiety with regards to performance context (“I would rather play in a group or ensemble, than on my own”) and performance evaluation (“I worry that my parents or teacher might not like my performance”).¹⁷⁰

¹⁶³ Rainer Martens, *Sport Competition Anxiety Test* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1977).

¹⁶⁴ Ronald E. Smith et al., “Measurement of Multidimensional Sport Performance Anxiety in Children and Adults: The Sport Anxiety Scale-2,” *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology* 28 (2006): 479-501.

¹⁶⁵ Ronald E. Smith, Frank L. Smoll, and R.W. Schutz, “Measurement and Correlates of Sport-Specific Cognitive and Somatic Trait Anxiety: The Sport Anxiety Scale,” *Anxiety Research* 2 (1990): 263-280.

¹⁶⁶ Smith et al., “Measurement of Multidimensional Sport Performance Anxiety in Children and Adults,” 479.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 479, 489.

¹⁶⁸ Margaret S. Osborne and Dianna T. Kenny, “Development and Validation of a Music Performance Anxiety Inventory for Gifted Adolescent Musicians,” *Journal of Anxiety Disorders* 19 (2005): 725-751.

¹⁶⁹ Osborne and Kenny, “Development and Validation of a Music Performance Anxiety Inventory for Gifted Adolescent Musicians,” 725.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 733.

Do Children Experience Performance Anxiety?

The question of whether children experience performance anxiety has been investigated since the 1950s. Skubic began this line of research by studying whether participating in Little League baseball caused undue stress upon players.¹⁷¹ Her findings, based on galvanic skin responses, suggested that participating in youth sport was no more stressful than participating in physical education classes.¹⁷² Hanson monitored the heart rates of Little League baseball participants, and found that heart rates were highest while children were batting.¹⁷³

Simon and Martens used a shortened version of Spielberger's STAIC to assess the pre-event state anxiety levels (A-states) of nine- to 14-year-old boys participating in a variety of activities that were required, non-required, sport, non-sport, team, and individual; these included classroom tests, physical education class, band solos, band group competition, baseball, basketball, football, gymnastics, hockey, swimming, and wrestling.¹⁷⁴ The researchers found that students performing a band solo had the highest pre-event state anxiety of the participants in any of the activities.¹⁷⁵ This finding was a breakthrough in performance anxiety research for young musicians, as it showed that the "trend for individual evaluative activities to elicit higher A-states most likely is the result of the greater evaluation potential that exists when performing alone," when others cannot be blamed for

¹⁷¹ Elvera Skubic, "Emotional Responses of Boys to Little League and Middle League Competitive Baseball," *Research Quarterly* 26 (1955): 342-352.

¹⁷² Skubic, "Emotional Responses of Boys to Little League and Middle League Competitive Baseball," 342.

¹⁷³ D.L. Hanson, "Cardiac Response to Participation in Little League Baseball Competition as Determined by Telemetry," *Research Quarterly* 38 (1967): 385.

¹⁷⁴ Simon and Martens, "Children's Anxiety in Sport and Nonsport Evaluative Activities," 162, 160.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 165.

mistakes.¹⁷⁶ This trend has been supported in performance anxiety research involving adolescent musicians. Lorenz found that auditions caused the most anxiety in high school music students, followed by solo performances, and then ensemble performances.¹⁷⁷ Fehm and Schmidt found solo performances to cause more performance anxiety in high school music students than orchestral performances, chamber music performances, or lessons.¹⁷⁸

Lorenz studied performance anxiety in high school choral students. His research showed that more than half of the subjects reported experiencing “general nervousness” with regard to performing, with nearly a third reporting perspiration, “panicky feeling,” and worry.¹⁷⁹ Ryan and Maroon both assessed the anxiety levels of elementary and middle school students participating in musical performances. Ryan used heart rate monitors, the State portion of Spielberger’s STAIC, and an open-ended questionnaire to assess sixth grade piano students’ performance anxiety, as well as their views on performing in recitals. She found that the children’s heart rates were highest during performance,¹⁸⁰ and that more than half of the students stated that they feel nervous about performing in recitals, even if this nervousness is combined with liking recitals.¹⁸¹

Maroon used a questionnaire, along with the State portion of Spielberger’s STAIC, to assess performance anxiety levels of seventh and eighth grade students participating in a solo and ensemble contest. In her study, 93% of students stated

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 166.

¹⁷⁷ Lorenz, “Performance Anxiety within the Secondary Choral Classroom,” 46.

¹⁷⁸ Fehm and Schmidt, “Performance Anxiety in Gifted Adolescent Musicians,” 104.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 48.

¹⁸⁰ Ryan, “A Study of the Differential Responses of Male and Female Children to Musical Performance Anxiety,” 40.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 72.

that they were at least a little nervous, with 37% of students stating that they were very nervous.¹⁸²

Causes of Performance Anxiety in Children

Several researchers have sought to uncover the causes of performance anxiety in children. Five primary causes emerge in the children's performance anxiety literature: poor self-esteem, fear of social evaluation, lack of preparation, memory, and gender.

Poor self-esteem is a leading cause of performance anxiety in children. Coopersmith described self-esteem as "the feeling of personal worth" that can be assessed in part by one's "relative self-assurance or timidity and reactions to failures and criticism."¹⁸³ Jim Thompson, in his book *Positive Coaching*, gives a twofold definition of self-esteem:

1. the belief that one is worthy of life's blessings
2. the belief that one is competent to master life's challenges.¹⁸⁴

Scanlan and Passer state that "competitive stress occurs when a child perceives an imbalance between the demands of the competitive situation and his own performance capabilities under conditions where failure to meet the demands has important consequences to him."¹⁸⁵ They describe a child's belief that he or she is incapable of meeting the demands of a performance as a "perceived threat to self-

¹⁸² Maroon, "Potential Contributors to Performance Anxiety Among Middle School Students Performing at Solo and Ensemble Contest," 76.

¹⁸³ Coopersmith, "Studies in Self-Esteem," 96, 98.

¹⁸⁴ Thompson 1995 p. 84

¹⁸⁵ Tara K. Scanlan and Michael W. Passer, "Factors Related to Competitive Stress Among Male Youth Sport Participants," *Medicine and Science in Sports* 10, no. 2 (1978): 103.

esteem.”¹⁸⁶ Poor self-esteem was also found to cause competitive anxiety in another study by Scanlan and Passer.¹⁸⁷ In addition, poor self-esteem has been implicated in classroom anxiety¹⁸⁸ and in music performance anxiety in the work of Ryan¹⁸⁹ and Maroon.¹⁹⁰ Maroon states that performance anxiety is rooted in “negative perceptions and low self-esteem that may have existed in the individual since early childhood, the results of which are manifested in the concert situation.”¹⁹¹

Fear of social evaluation is another leading cause of performance anxiety in children. Scanlan and Passer define social evaluation as “the appraisal information that a child receives from other people regarding his motoric competence.”¹⁹² They state that “this social evaluation is particularly important because it is so extensive and is dispensed by very significant people to the child such as parents, coaches, and peers.”¹⁹³

Anxiety surrounding social evaluation is assessed in several children’s anxiety inventories. Two statements on the Children’s Manifest Anxiety Scale depict anxiety with regards to social evaluation: “I worry about what my parents will say to me” and “I feel someone will tell me I do things the wrong way.”¹⁹⁴ The

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Tara K. Scanlan and Michael W. Passer, “Sources of Competitive Stress in Young Female Athletes,” *Journal of Sport Psychology* 1 (1979): 152.

¹⁸⁸ Michael J. Fimian, “Predictors of Classroom Stress and Burnout Experienced by Gifted and Talented Students,” *Psychology in the Schools* 25 (October 1988): 403.

¹⁸⁹ Charlene Ryan, “Exploring Musical Performance Anxiety in Children,” *Medical Problems of Performing Artists* 13 (September 1998): 87.

¹⁹⁰ Maroon, “Potential Contributors to Performance Anxiety Among Middle School Students Performing at Solo and Ensemble Contest,” 41.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Scanlan and Passer, “Factors Related to Competitive Stress Among Male Youth Sport Participants,” 103.

¹⁹³ Ibid., citing Tara K. Scanlan, “Social Evaluation: A Key Developmental Element in the Competitive Process,” in *Children in Sport: A Contemporary Anthology*, ed. Richard A. Magill, Michael J. Ash, and Frank L. Smoll (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1978), 131-147.

¹⁹⁴ Castaneda, McCandless, and Palermo, “The Children’s Form of the Manifest Anxiety Scale,” 318.

STAIC has two similar statements: “I worry about my parents” and “I worry about what others think of me.”¹⁹⁵ Fear of social evaluation comprises an entire assessment category on the Music Performing Anxiety Inventory for Adolescents.¹⁹⁶

Research on music performance anxiety in children and adolescents illuminates the role of social evaluation in contributing to performance anxiety. LeBlanc and his colleagues found that the presence of an audience increased performance anxiety amongst high school band students.¹⁹⁷ Ryan found that the majority of the sixth grade piano students in her study cited a fear of “making mistakes in front of people.”¹⁹⁸ Maroon found that the presence of an adjudicator increased anxiety levels amongst the middle school musicians in her study.¹⁹⁹

The role that lack of preparation plays in contributing to performance anxiety is not entirely clear. It seems logical that if a student has not done enough work to thoroughly prepare a piece technically, or has not practiced performing a piece, she may feel unprepared and therefore anxious about a performance. However, it is difficult to empirically assess how well-prepared a student is. The amount of time spent practicing weekly and the length of time spent learning a piece are two measures that might reveal some information about a student’s level of preparedness; however, Maroon found no significant difference in performance

¹⁹⁵ Spielberger et al., *State-Trait Anxiety Inventory for Children*, 45.

¹⁹⁶ Osborne and Kenny, “Development and Validation of a Music Performance Anxiety Inventory for Gifted Adolescent Musicians,” 733.

¹⁹⁷ Alfred LeBlanc et al., “Effect of Audience on Music Performance Anxiety,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 45, no. 3 (Autumn 1997): 494.

¹⁹⁸ Ryan, “A Study of the Differential Responses of Male and Female Children to Musical Performance Anxiety,” 72.

¹⁹⁹ Maroon, “Potential Contributors to Performance Anxiety Among Middle School Students Performing at Solo and Ensemble Contest,” 71, 88.

anxiety levels with either of these variables.²⁰⁰ Fehm and Schmidt found that adolescent musicians listed “practicing strategies” as their most frequently utilized long-term coping mechanism;²⁰¹ this may or may not mean that students wished they had prepared more thoroughly.

Perhaps the most convincing evidence for the importance of thorough preparation comes from non-empirical writings. Jessica Baron Turner, in *Your Musical Child: Inspiring Kids to Play and Sing for Keeps*, lists “know[ing] your music backward and forward” as the first key to a successful performance.²⁰² Philip Johnston, in *The Practice Revolution*, states that being technically prepared on a piece is not enough to prepare for performance, since the pressure of performing will likely unnerve even the most technically solid student.²⁰³ He states that students must practice playing a piece well under pressure, “because just like scales, new pieces or difficult runs, *having to play under pressure can be practiced*, and will improve noticeably with attention. The next time the student has to perform, and is feeling a little nervous, playing while nervous will be familiar territory for them.”²⁰⁴ Wilma Machover and Marianne Uszler, in *Sound Choices: Guiding Your Child’s Musical Experiences*, encourage parents to play “preparation games” with their children in advance of recitals.²⁰⁵

The influence of playing from memory upon performance anxiety has mixed findings in the literature. Leglar found that the absence of the score in performance

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 68-70.

²⁰¹ Fehm and Schmidt, “Performance Anxiety in Gifted Adolescent Musicians,” 106.

²⁰² Jessica Baron Turner, *Your Musical Child: Inspiring Kids to Play and Sing for Keeps* (New York: String Letter Publishing, 2004), 175.

²⁰³ Johnston, *The Practice Revolution*, 150-151.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 151.

²⁰⁵ Machover Uszler, *Sound Choices*, 87.

significantly increased anxiety levels;²⁰⁶ however, the subjects in her study were college music majors and professional musicians, rather than children.²⁰⁷ Maroon found no relationship between performing from memory and anxiety levels amongst the middle school musicians in her study.²⁰⁸ However, Ryan found that the sixth grade piano students in her study reported having “fear of memory lapses.”²⁰⁹ Machover and Uszler cite memory lapses as a common post-recital discussion topic between children and parents.²¹⁰ Further complicating the issue of memory and performance anxiety is the possibility that what children, parents, and teachers perceive to be a “memory lapse” may actually be a lapse in concentration.

Many researchers have studied the question of whether gender impacts anxiety levels in children; the answer is a somewhat shaky “yes.” In the general children’s anxiety literature, Spielberger found that girls’ trait anxiety levels were slightly higher than those of boys, especially in the fourth and fifth grades.²¹¹ Reynolds and Richmond found that “females scored significantly higher than males” in manifest anxiety levels.²¹²

In the developmental and educational psychology literature, Harter found that while boys are more prone to experiencing mastery motivation, girls find social

²⁰⁶ Ryan, “A Study of the Differential Responses of Male and Female Children to Musical Performance Anxiety,” 21.

²⁰⁷ Mary Alice Leglar, “Measurement of Indicators of Anxiety Levels Under Varying Conditions of Musical Performance” (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1978, in ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <http://proquest.umi.com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/pqdweb?index=0&did=756560221&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=6&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1286298409&clientId=419> 54, accessed September 13, 2010), 67.

²⁰⁸ Maroon, “Potential Contributors to Performance Anxiety Among Middle School Students Performing at Solo and Ensemble Contest,” 65.

²⁰⁹ Ryan, “A Study of the Differential Responses of Male and Female Children to Musical Performance Anxiety,” 24, citing Ryan, “Exploring Musical Performance Anxiety in Children.”

²¹⁰ Machover and Uszler, *Sound Choices*, 87.

²¹¹ Spielberger, *State-Trait Anxiety Inventory for Children*, 8.

²¹² Reynolds and Richmond, “What I Think and Feel,” 271.

approval more important.²¹³ Since social evaluation can be a cause of performance anxiety in children,²¹⁴ girls' emphasis on social approval may make them more likely to experience performance anxiety.

In the children's sport literature, Eccles and Harold found that "already by the first grade, girls have a more negative assessment of their general athletic ability than do boys."²¹⁵ Given that low self-esteem can lead to increased levels of performance anxiety, these negative self-assessments may make young female athletes more prone to performance anxiety than their male counterparts. Smith and his colleagues found no difference in anxiety levels between the two genders, but found differences in the types of anxiety males and females experienced; specifically, they found that "females reported significantly higher levels of worry than males, whereas males indicated greater concentration disruption than females."²¹⁶

In the children's music performance anxiety literature, LeBlanc and his colleagues found that female high school band students experienced significantly higher anxiety levels and heart rates than their male counterparts.²¹⁷ Ryan found that girls followed the inverted-U relationship between anxiety and performance

²¹³ Susan Harter, "Developmental Differences in the Manifestation of Mastery Motivation on Problem-Solving Tasks," *Child Development* 46, no. 2 (June 1975): 370.

²¹⁴ Scanlan and Passer, "Factors Related to Competitive Stress Among Male Youth Sport Participants," 103, citing Tara K. Scanlan, "Social Evaluation: A Key Developmental Element in the Competitive Process," in *Children in Sport: A Contemporary Anthology*, ed. Richard A. Magill, Michael J. Ash, and Frank L. Smoll (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1978), 131-147; LeBlanc et al., "Effect of Audience on Music Performance Anxiety," 494; Ryan, "A Study of the Differential Responses of Male and Female Children to Musical Performance Anxiety," 72; Maroon, "Potential Contributors to Performance Anxiety Among Middle School Students Performing at Solo and Ensemble Contest," 71, 88.

²¹⁵ Eccles and Harold, "Gender Differences in Sport Involvement," 29.

²¹⁶ Smith et al., "Measurement of Multidimensional Sport Performance Anxiety in Children and Adults," 162.

²¹⁷ LeBlanc et al., "Effect of Audience on Music Performance Anxiety," 495.

quality, while boys did not; the boys with the highest performance quality in her study actually had high levels of anxiety.²¹⁸ Maroon found no difference in anxiety levels between the males and females in her study.²¹⁹ However, Ryan and Maroon both suggest that girls may be more comfortable expressing their feelings, and therefore reporting feelings of anxiety, than boys.²²⁰ This suggestion implies that girls may not actually experience more anxiety than boys; they may simply report it more readily.

Symptoms of Performance Anxiety in Children

Researchers have outlined several symptoms of performance anxiety in children. It is generally agreed upon in the literature that the symptoms of performance anxiety are associated with both the mind and the body. Many researchers believe that there are three aspects of performance anxiety: cognitive, behavioral, and physiological.²²¹ Cognitive symptoms involve a person's thoughts; interfering thoughts are a common cognitive symptom.²²² Behavioral symptoms involve a person's actions; avoiding performance is a common behavioral

²¹⁸ Ryan, "A Study of the Differential Responses of Male and Female Children to Musical Performance Anxiety," 91.

²¹⁹ Maroon, "Potential Contributors to Performance Anxiety Among Middle School Students Performing at Solo and Ensemble Contest," 79, 88.

²²⁰ Ryan, "A Study of the Differential Responses of Male and Female Children to Musical Performance Anxiety," 92; Maroon, "Potential Contributors to Performance Anxiety Among Middle School Students Performing at Solo and Ensemble Contest," 18.

²²¹ Fehm and Schmidt, "Performance Anxiety in Gifted Adolescent Musicians," 98-99; Lorenz, "Performance Anxiety within the Secondary Choral Classroom," 11.

²²² Ryan, "A Study of the Differential Responses of Male and Female Children to Musical Performance Anxiety, 11.

symptom.²²³ Physiological symptoms involve a person's body. Increased heart rate, upset stomach, and sweaty palms are the most common physiological symptoms in the children's anxiety literature.²²⁴ Other common physiological symptoms include tension,²²⁵ dry mouth, shortness of breath, dizziness, trembling, and cold hands, and nausea.²²⁶ As mentioned before, Smith and his colleagues differentiate between three components of anxiety: somatic symptoms, worry, and concentration disruption. Somatic symptoms are physiological symptoms, while worry and concentration disruption are cognitive symptoms.²²⁷

Does Anxiety Affect Performance in Children?

The question of whether children's anxiety affects their performance has mixed results in the literature. Much research in the elite sport and performance psychology literature has suggested that the relationship between arousal – which is sometimes associated with anxiety²²⁸ – and performance is shown in the shape of an

²²³ Ibid., 11-12; Fehm and Schmidt, "Performance Anxiety in Gifted Adolescent Musicians," 99, citing Johannes F.L.M. van Kemenade, Maarten J.M. van Son, and Nicolette C.A. van Heesch, "Performance Anxiety Among Professional Musicians in Symphonic Orchestras: A Self-Report Study," *Psychological Reports* 77, no. 2 (1995): 559 and Duncan B. Clark and W. Stewart Agras, "The Assessment and Treatment of Performance Anxiety in Musicians," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 148, no. 5 (1991): 604.

²²⁴ Spielberger, *State-Trait Anxiety Inventory for Children*, 45; Castaneda, McCandless, and Palermo, "The Children's Form of the Manifest Anxiety Scale, 318-319.

²²⁵ Smith et al., "Measurement of Multidimensional Sport Performance Anxiety in Children and Adults," 485.

²²⁶ Lorenz, "Performance Anxiety within the Secondary Choral Classroom," 48.

²²⁷ Smith et al., "Measurement of Multidimensional Sport Performance Anxiety in Children and Adults," 482.

²²⁸ Jennifer L. Altshuler and Diane N. Ruble, "Developmental Changes in Children's Awareness of Strategies for Coping with Uncontrollable Stress," *Child Development* 60, no. 6 (December 1989): 1346; Smith et al., "Measurement of Multidimensional Sport Performance Anxiety in Children and Adults," 479; Smith, Smoll, and Smith, *Parents' Complete Guide to Youth Sports*, 117.

inverted U.²²⁹ The inverted U shape – first proposed by Yerkes and Dodson in 1908²³⁰ suggests that “heightened arousal enhance[s] performance to a certain point, after which continued increases in arousal would hinder performance.”²³¹ However, it is not clear whether this is the case in children.

Some youth sport researchers have suggested that the inverted U does apply to children. Studies involving high school basketball players²³² and Little League baseball players²³³ have supported the inverted U theory; Smith, Smoll, and Smith include the inverted U in their book, *Parents’ Complete Guide to Youth Sports*.²³⁴ Fehm and Schmidt assessed the effects of performance anxiety upon high school musicians’ performance.²³⁵ The vast majority – 89% – of the students reported being impaired by performance anxiety, with an even greater percentage – 96% – claiming that performance anxiety had at least a somewhat negative influence on their performance.²³⁶ However, almost as great a percentage of students – 81% – stated that performance anxiety had at least a somewhat positive influence on their performance.²³⁷ This finding suggests that in adolescents, some performance

²²⁹ Daniel Gould, Christy Greenleaf, and Vikki Krane, “Arousal-Anxiety and Sport Behavior,” in *Advances in Sport Psychology*, 2nd ed., ed. Thelma Horn (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 2002), 214; Robert J. Sonstroem, “An Overview of Anxiety in Sport,” in *Psychological Foundations of Sport*, ed. John M. Silva III and Robert S. Weinberg (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1984), 109; Tim Woodman and Lew Hardy, “Stress and Anxiety,” in *Handbook of Sport Psychology*, 2nd ed., ed. Robert N. Singer, Heather A. Hausenblas, and Christopher M. Janelle (New York: Wiley, 2001), 293.

²³⁰ Robert M. Yerkes and John D. Dodson, “The Relation of Strength of Stimulus to Rapidity of Habit-Formation,” *Journal of Comparative Neurology and Psychology* 18 (1908): 459-482.

²³¹ Gould, Greenleaf, and Krane, “Arousal-Anxiety and Sport Behavior,” 213.

²³² P. Klavora, “An Attempt to Derive Inverted-U Curves Based on the Relationship Between Anxiety and Athletic Performance,” in *Psychology of Motor Behavior and Sport – 1977*, ed. Daniel M. Landers and Robert W. Christina (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1977), 369-377.

²³³ R. Lowe, “Stress, Arousal, and Task Performance of Little League Baseball Players” (unpublished doctoral diss., University of Illinois, 1973).

²³⁴ Smith, Smoll, and Smith, *Parents’ Complete Guide to Youth Sports*, 117.

²³⁵ Fehm and Schmidt, “Performance Anxiety in Gifted Adolescent Musicians,” 101.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 103.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

anxiety might be considered helpful for performance; this finding is somewhat reminiscent of the inverted U theory.

Other researchers have found either no relationship, or only a partial relationship, between anxiety and performance quality. Ryan found that, for the most part, anxiety levels and performance quality were not related for the children in her study.²³⁸ However, an analysis of her results by gender suggested that girls may be more prone to experience the inverted U than boys; in this very small-scale study, boys actually experienced better performance with higher levels of anxiety.²³⁹

Another possibility is that anxiety levels and performance quality have a completely inverse relationship. Rothlisberger and Maroon both found this to be the case for the adolescents in their studies. Rothlisberger, using both portions of the STAIC with eighth graders auditioning for honor band, found state anxiety and performance quality to have a “low inverse” relationship.²⁴⁰ Trait anxiety did not affect performance quality, although his study suggested that students high in trait anxiety might be more prone to experience high state anxiety when performing in an audition.²⁴¹ He suggested that “those students who report a lower state anxiety

²³⁸ Ryan, “Exploring Musical Performance Anxiety in Children,” 87.

²³⁹ Ryan, “A Study of the Differential Responses of Male and Female Children to Musical Performance Anxiety,” 91.

²⁴⁰ Dana John Rothlisberger, “Effects of Video Modeling Preparation on Student Instrumental Audition Performance Achievement and Performance Anxiety” (PhD diss., University of Maryland, 1992, in ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <http://proquest.umi.com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/pqdweb?index=0&did=744418801&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=6&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1286307375&clientId=41954>, accessed August 31, 2010), 78.

²⁴¹ Rothlisberger, “Effects of Video Modeling Preparation on Student Instrumental Audition Performance Achievement and Performance Anxiety,” 80.

might be operating in their region of anxiety which allows them to perform at an optimum level of performance when measured by an objective rating scale.”²⁴²

Maroon’s study also supports an inverse relationship, rather than an inverted U relationship, between anxiety levels and performance quality. In her study, students receiving the highest performance ratings generally had lower anxiety levels than those receiving inferior performance ratings.²⁴³ Maroon, interestingly, discusses this diversion from the inverted U as a result of differences in skill development between children and more elite performers:

Although this finding may initially seem to oppose the finding of Hamann (1982), who found experienced university musicians to perform well when they demonstrated moderately high anxiety scores, both studies support Hull’s Drive Theory, which states that moderately high levels of anxiety will be advantageous to a performer only when he or she has achieved task mastery. Most middle school students would undoubtedly have less experience with their instrument or voice than university musicians. Although they are gaining proficiency on their instruments, middle school students are still developing musical techniques and most have been playing their instruments for less than five years.²⁴⁴

Research also suggests that anxiety and performance have an inverse relationship with regards to test-taking; in other words, the less anxious students are, the better they perform on tests. Palermo, Castaneda, and McCandless found that when anxious and non-anxious fourth graders completed the same task, they had similar learning curves; however, the anxious students made more mistakes

²⁴² Rothlisberger, “Effects of Video Modeling Preparation on Student Instrumental Audition Performance Achievement and Performance Anxiety” 81.

²⁴³ Maroon, “Potential Contributors to Performance Anxiety Among Middle School Students Performing at Solo and Ensemble Contest,” 72, 76.

²⁴⁴ Maroon, “Potential Contributors to Performance Anxiety Among Middle School Students Performing at Solo and Ensemble Contest,” 76, citing Donald L. Hamann, “An Assessment of Anxiety in Instrumental and Vocal Performances,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 30, no. 2 (Summer 1982): 77-90 and Clark Leonard Hull, *Principles of Behavior* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1943).

throughout.²⁴⁵ Horn and Dollinger found an inverse relationship between anxiety and test performance in sixth and seventh grade students.²⁴⁶ While test-taking is similar to musical performance in that it is an anticipated event in which performance is judged by others, it is important to remember that test-taking does not require the motor coordination required for musical performance. Fine motor skills are often considered more susceptible to the effects of physiological arousal;²⁴⁷ this may interfere with the application of test anxiety findings to musical performance anxiety.

How Do Children Cope With Anxiety?

Several researchers have investigated how children, of their own devices, cope with anxiety. All researchers agree that there are several types, or categories, of coping strategies. Smith, Smoll, and Smith differentiate youth sport participants' coping strategies into three categories: mental, physical, and social.²⁴⁸ Several other researchers have categorized children's coping strategies even more thoroughly.

Altshuler and Ruble categorized children's coping responses to an uncontrollable stressful event into five categories: approach-based coping; direct emotion manipulation and tension reduction; partial avoidance; complete avoidance;

²⁴⁵ David S. Palermo, Alfred Castaneda, and Boyd R. McCandless, "The Relationship of Anxiety in Children to Performance in a Complex Learning Task," *Child Development* 27, no. 3 (September 1956): 335.

²⁴⁶ Jennifer L. Horn and Stephen J. Dollinger, "Effects of Test Anxiety, Tests, and Sleep on Children's Performance," *Journal of School Psychology* 27, no. 4 (1989): 378.

²⁴⁷ Smith et al, "Measurement of Multidimensional Sport Performance Anxiety in Children and Adults," 163.

²⁴⁸ Smith, Smoll, and Smith, *Parents' Complete Guide to Youth Sports*, 114.

maladaptive strategies.²⁴⁹ Approach-based coping involves addressing the problem that is causing stress; for example, trying to change the situation constructively, seeking information about the problem, or emphasizing positive aspects of the problem.²⁵⁰ Direct emotion manipulation and tension reduction includes using relaxation strategies and expressing one's emotions either to oneself or to another person.²⁵¹ Partial avoidance includes behavioral distraction, in which the child does something else instead, and cognitive distraction, in which the child thinks about something else.²⁵² Complete avoidance includes two facets: escape, in which the child leaves, or attempts to leave, the situation altogether; denial, in which the child denies that the stressful situation exists or tries not to think about it.²⁵³ Maladaptive strategies are those which do not effectively address the stressful situation; examples of maladaptive strategies are focusing on the stressful situation or eating candy.²⁵⁴ Altshuler and Ruble found that behavioral distraction was the most frequently used coping strategy among the children in their study.²⁵⁵

Nancy Muir Ryan studied not only which types of coping strategies school-aged children use most frequently, but which types of strategies they feel are most effective in helping them cope.²⁵⁶ Of a comprehensive list of 13 types of coping strategies, a handful were reported by children to be most effective: social support, such as talking to a parent or friend; cognitive activities, such as "figuring out what

²⁴⁹ Altshuler and Ruble, "Developmental Changes in Children's Awareness of Strategies for Coping with Uncontrollable Stress," 1341.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 1337.

²⁵⁶ Nancy Muir Ryan, "Stress-Coping Strategies Identified from School Age Children's Perspective," *Research in Nursing and Health* 12, no. 2 (April 1989): 118.

to do” and thinking positively; avoidant activities, such as leaving or ignoring the situation; distracting activities, which in this study referred to behavioral distraction by participating in other activities.²⁵⁷ Social support was not only overwhelmingly highest in perceived effectiveness among children, but was also the strategy in which students most frequently engaged.²⁵⁸ Interestingly, Ryan also found that “girls named significantly more social support and emotional behaviors than boys, while boys named significantly more physical exercise activities than girls.”²⁵⁹

Dise-Lewis organized adolescents’ coping responses to stressful life events into five categories: aggression, such as yelling, hitting, or fighting; stress-recognition, such as crying, writing, or talking to others; distraction, such as relaxing, exercising, or reading; self-destruction, such as hurting oneself; endurance, including “holding it in,” trying to take one’s mind off of the stressful event, and being alone.²⁶⁰ Dise-Lewis, like Altshuler and Ruble, found that distraction was the most frequent coping strategy; in her study, endurance-based strategies tied for first place.²⁶¹ It is worth noting, however, that several of the strategies included under the umbrella of “endurance” also involve distraction.²⁶² It is also worth noting that Dise-Lewis studied adolescents’ reactions to major life events such as the death of a loved one, the divorce of one’s parents, or getting suspended from school, rather than smaller-scale events such as music performances.²⁶³

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 116.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 111.

²⁶⁰ Jeanne E. Dise-Lewis, “The Life Events and Coping Inventory: An Assessment of Stress in Children,” *Psychosomatic Medicine* 50 (1988): 491-492.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 492.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid., 487.

Fehm and Schmidt categorized adolescent musicians' coping strategies into short-term strategies and long-term strategies.²⁶⁴ Short-term strategies included, in order of popularity, rehearsing, positive thinking, praying, smoking, relaxation, and calming substances.²⁶⁵ Long-term strategies included, in order of popularity, talking with classmates, talking with friends, talking with teachers, practicing strategies, relaxation, and counseling or therapy.²⁶⁶

Mental Skills Training for Children

Research on mental skills training for children is limited compared with research on mental skills training for elite performers. However, this research suggests that mental skills training can reduce anxiety, enhance performance quality, and improve daily life in children. In addition, these three facets are often viewed as interconnected. The most prominent researcher in the field of mental skills training for children is sport psychologist Terry Orlick, who states that mental skills training can be used in all areas of children's lives:

Our work in providing mental training services for children in and out of sport has demonstrated to us that children are highly capable of learning and applying a variety of important mind/body skills (e.g., imagery, goal setting, relaxation, focusing, and refocusing). They can apply these mental skills in a multitude of settings, for example in play, games, sport, academics, school, music, dance, performing arts, at home, during conflicts, when experiencing fear, during treatments, or when recovering from illness or injury. The applications for mental training reach far beyond sport psychology.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁴ Fehm and Schmidt, "Performance Anxiety in Gifted Adolescent Musicians," 105-106.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 105.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 106.

²⁶⁷ Orlick and McCaffrey, "Mental Training with Children for Sport and Life," 323-324.

Positive Living Skills

A discussion of mental skills training for children might best begin with a discussion of Orlick's concept of positive living skills. His book *Feeling Great: Teaching Children to Excel at Living* outlines a positive living skills program.²⁶⁸ The program has several components, including positive thinking, stress reduction and control, relaxation, imagination, and focusing.²⁶⁹ The latter three skills – relaxation, imagination (or imagery), and focusing (also called concentration) – are the most commonly represented mental skills in the children's performance literature.²⁷⁰ Indeed, Orlick mentions performance enhancement and the development of a healthy self-esteem as important benefits of a positive living skills program.²⁷¹ These two benefits may be more closely linked than many people realize, since poor self-esteem has been implicated as a cause of performance anxiety in children.²⁷²

According to Orlick, a positive mindset is the most fundamental component of a positive living skills program.²⁷³ He suggests using "highlights" to foster a positive attitude in children.²⁷⁴ Highlights can be defined as "any simple pleasure, joy, or any other positive experience that improves the quality of one's day."²⁷⁵

²⁶⁸ Terry Orlick, *Feeling Great: Teaching Children to Excel at Living* (Carp, Canada: Creative Bound, 1996).

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 9-10.

²⁷⁰ Orlick and McCaffrey, "Mental Training with Children for Sport and Life," 322.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*

²⁷² Scanlan and Passer, "Factors Related to Competitive Stress Among Male Youth Sport Participants," 103; Scanlan and Passer, "Sources of Competitive Stress in Young Female Athletes," 152; Maroon, "Potential Contributors to Performance Anxiety Among Middle School Students Performing at Solo and Ensemble Contest," 41.

²⁷³ Orlick, *Feeling Great*, 11.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 17-24.

²⁷⁵ Gilbert and Orlick, "Evaluation of a Life Skills Program with Grade Two Children.

Orlick states that highlights contribute not only to a positive mindset, but also to a healthy self-esteem: “Our research has clearly shown that when you teach children to look for highlights, they find more good things in each day, and as they find more good things, they begin to feel better and better about themselves.”²⁷⁶

Another useful tool in fostering a positive mindset in children is the use of affirmations. Canfield and Siccone define affirmations as “positive statements that affirm or declare a desired objective as if it were already achieved.”²⁷⁷ It is worth noting that this definition seems to link affirmations with visualization, and that visualization is a form of imagery. Starr and Starr define affirmations less as visualizations, and more as self-esteem building tools: “Affirmations are positive declarations about one’s self or about one’s performance of an activity. If repeated often enough while a person is in a relaxed state, affirmations can help build positive attitudes and a sense of self-worth. Properly used, affirmations also effectively erase negative thoughts and feelings.”²⁷⁸ Examples of affirmations provided by Starr and Starr include “There is no one just like me,” “Music is not alive until it is played,” and “The music I have learned is stored in my mind, and I can remember it whenever I want to.”²⁷⁹ The literature on affirmations for children is largely anecdotal, rather than empirical. However, affirmations are often included in conjunction with the three mental skills described in this section.

²⁷⁶ Orlick, *Feeling Great*, 18.

²⁷⁷ Canfield and Siccone, *The Power to Succeed in School and Beyond*, 87.

²⁷⁸ Starr and Starr, *To Learn with Love*, 85.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 87-89.

Relaxation

Relaxation can be defined as “an absence of unnecessary activity and tension; it is a period of stillness, in which the need for activity or any sense of deficiency is subjugated or at least interrupted for a period.”²⁸⁰ Relaxation, then, might be considered the antidote to anxiety. Since anxiety has been shown to decrease the quality of children’s performance,²⁸¹ relaxation should be considered a significant tool for performance enhancement. Like anxiety, relaxation involves the body and the mind. Physically, relaxation is often associated with reducing one’s heart rate, breathing rate, and muscular tension.²⁸² Cognitively, relaxation is often associated with clearing the mind.²⁸³

Progressive muscle relaxation – first developed by Jacobson in 1929 –²⁸⁴ has become a standard tool for relaxation not only with adults, but also with children.²⁸⁵ Jacobson’s progressive muscle relaxation exercise involves recognizing and then releasing muscular contraction systematically in “almost all of the noteworthy muscle-groups of the entire body” while lying on the floor.²⁸⁶ Jacobson suggests

²⁸⁰ Williamon, *Musical Excellence*, 222.

²⁸¹ Rothlisberger, “Effects of Video Modeling Preparation on Student Instrumental Audition Performance Achievement and Performance Anxiety,” 78; Maroon, “Potential Contributors to Performance Anxiety Among Middle School Students Performing at Solo and Ensemble Contest,” 72, 76; Palermo, Castaneda, and McCandless, “The Relationship of Anxiety in Children to Performance in a Complex Learning Task,” 335; Horn and Dollinger, “Effects of Test Anxiety, Tests, and Sleep on Children’s Performance,” 378.

²⁸² Linda B. and Leonard D. Zaichkowsky, “The Effects of a School-Based Relaxation Training Program on Fourth Grade Children,” *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology* 13, no. 1 (Spring 1984): 83; Orlick, *Feeling Great*, 73-77.

²⁸³ Gould and Damarjian, “Imagery Training for Peak Performance,” 37.

²⁸⁴ Jacobson, *Progressive Relaxation*, 42-43.

²⁸⁵ Zaichkowsky and Zaichkowsky, “The Effects of a School-Based Relaxation Training Program on Fourth Grade Children,” 83; Orlick and McCaffrey, “Mental Training with Children for Sport and Life,” 325; Maureen R. Weiss, “Psychological Skill Development in Children and Adolescents,” *The Sport Psychologist* 5, no. 4 (December 1991): 349; Orlick, *Feeling Great*, 70-72.

²⁸⁶ Jacobson, *Progressive Relaxation*, 42.

relaxing areas of the body in the following order: arms and hands, legs, abdominal muscles, respiratory muscles, chest and back, shoulders, and face.²⁸⁷

Orlick uses an activity called “Spaghetti Toes” to guide children in practicing progressive muscle relaxation.²⁸⁸ “Spaghetti Toes” teaches children – while sitting or lying down “in a comfortable position”²⁸⁹ – to relax specific parts of the body by discovering if they can “talk to your toes to get them to go soft and warm and sleepy like spaghetti lying on your plate.”²⁹⁰ After achieving relaxation in their toes, children progressively relax their feet, legs, fingers, arms, and finally their entire bodies.²⁹¹ Orlick also includes relaxation activities based on diaphragmatic breathing,²⁹² following one’s breaths,²⁹³ muscle massage,²⁹⁴ and relaxing in an imaginary “special place.”²⁹⁵ Ultimately, children participating in Orlick’s positive living skills program learn to relax in more immediate, practical ways: while standing up, and also with just one breath.²⁹⁶

Gilbert and Orlick found that second grade children were able to lower their heart rates after one minute of a relaxation activity, whereas children in a control group without the relaxation activity were not able to do so.²⁹⁷ Significantly, the children in the relaxation group were also able to later lower their heart rates at

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 43.

²⁸⁸ Orlick, *Feeling Great*, 69; Terry Orlick, *Spaghetti Toes: Positive Living Skills for Children*, Zone of Excellence, CD, 2004; Orlick and McCaffrey, “Mental Training with Children for Sport and Life,” 324-325.

²⁸⁹ Orlick, *Feeling Great*, 69.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 70.

²⁹¹ Ibid., 70-71.

²⁹² Ibid., 73.

²⁹³ Ibid., 76.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 77.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 82.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 83.

²⁹⁷ Gilbert and Orlick, “Evaluation of a Life Skills Program with Grade Two Children.”

will.²⁹⁸ Davis also worked with second graders in a stress management intervention.²⁹⁹ She emphasized the importance of relaxation in her curriculum, including the use of a “children’s relaxation room” at a school wellness event.³⁰⁰ Davis also encouraged students to relieve stress by sharing their feelings, either through craft projects used to communicate about stress, by talking to the teacher, or by writing in a journal.³⁰¹ It is worth noting that Davis’s strategies, when examined through the lens of Altshuler and Ruble’s research on coping, could be classified as direct emotion manipulation and tension reduction strategies;³⁰² alternatively, they could be viewed as social support and relaxation activities according to Nancy Muir Ryan’s coping categories.³⁰³

St. Denis and Orlick found that using a highlights intervention with fourth grade children caused them to feel more relaxed, even when they were not actively working on relaxation as a distinct mental skill:

Many children rated themselves as feeling more relaxed after the intervention program. Teaching positive perspectives may have the additional advantage of freeing children to feel more relaxed. Previous researchers who have taught children more direct methods of relaxation have found relaxation effects...However, the current study focused primarily on teaching positive perspectives and still seemed to have some influence on overall feelings of relaxation.³⁰⁴

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ Roxie Davis, “Teaching Stress Management in an Elementary Classroom,” *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance* (February 1991): 65.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 66.

³⁰² Altshuler and Ruble, “Developmental Changes in Children’s Awareness of Strategies for Coping with Uncontrollable Stress, 1341.

³⁰³ Ryan, “Stress-Coping Strategies Identified from School Age Children’s Perspective,” 116-117.

³⁰⁴ Marnie St. Denis and Terry Orlick, “Positive Perspectives: Intervention with Fourth-Grade Children,” *Elementary School Guidance and Counseling* 31, no. 1 (1996): 52-63, <http://libraries.ou.edu/access.aspx?url=http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=9612083975&site=ehost-live> (accessed June 3, 2010).

Taking these findings into consideration, it is likely that relaxation and positive attitude have a symbiotic relationship. While St. Denis and Orlick found that students who were trained in positive perspectives felt more relaxed, Galyean found that students who were trained in relaxation and imagery became more positive – or, more precisely, less negative. In Galyean’s study, low-achieving high school students who participated in a relaxation and imagery intervention exhibited fewer negative behaviors than those who did not participate in the intervention.³⁰⁵ For the students in the intervention group, Galyean used a script that she described as both a guided imagery and a meditation.³⁰⁶ The script contained elements that illustrate several hallmarks of relaxation and imagery training: closing the eyes, breathing deeply, mindfully following one’s breaths, visualizing oneself in a beautiful place, imagining warmth radiating gradually throughout one’s entire body, visualizing oneself using both an internal and external perspective, and using affirmations.³⁰⁷

Zaichkowsky and Zaichkowsky studied the effects of a mental skills training program – including relaxation and imagery – on tension in fourth grade children.³⁰⁸ Their relaxation training program was preceded by a “theoretical lesson” on what stress is.³⁰⁹ The actual relaxation training program consisted of abdominal breathing exercises, a progressive muscle relaxation activity, and mental imagery in the form

³⁰⁵ Beverly Galyean, “The Effects of a Guided Imagery Activity on Various Behaviors of Low Achieving Students,” *Journal of Suggestive-Accelerative Learning and Teaching* 5, no. 2 (1980): 87.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 89, 95.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 89-90.

³⁰⁸ Zaichkowsky and Zaichkowsky, “The Effects of a School-Based Relaxation Training Program on Fourth Grade Children,” 83.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

of “imagining warm relaxing scenes.”³¹⁰ Zaichkowsky and Zaichkowsky used heart rate, respiration rate, body temperature, and Spielberger’s STAIC to assess students’ anxiety levels before and after the relaxation training program.³¹¹ They concluded that “children can in fact learn tension/stress control in a period as short as six weeks.”³¹²

Hartke designed and implemented a performance psychology program for high school musicians. In this small study, relaxation techniques were reported by students to be the most valuable skills learned in the program; goal setting and “focusing on what you can control” were the next most valued skills.³¹³

Imagery

Imagery is a multi-faceted skill, but is essentially “an experience that mimics real experience.”³¹⁴ Imagery in the sport culture refers to an athlete imagining herself undertaking realistic, lifelike sport activities. Imagery can be multi-sensory, meaning that it can involve more than one of the five senses.³¹⁵ According to Gould and Damarjian, “although imagery is often associated with visualization, it can and should include senses other than sight. This is especially true in sports where the feel of the movement is so important.”³¹⁶ Imagery – at least in elite athletes – is

³¹⁰ Ibid., 84.

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ Hartke, “Psychology for High School Performing Artists,” 197.

³¹⁴ White and Hardy, “An In-Depth Analysis of the Uses of Imagery by High-Level Slalom Canoeists and Artistic Gymnasts,” 389.

³¹⁵ Hall, “Imagery in Sport and Exercise,” 537.

³¹⁶ Gould and Damarjian, “Imagery Training for Peak Performance,” 27.

often thought to be most effective when it is vivid.³¹⁷ Vividness can be described as “the clarity and reality in an athlete’s image.”³¹⁸ Research has shown that relaxation combined with imagery is more successful for performance enhancement than either single skill, including in children.³¹⁹

Imagery can be conducted from an internal perspective, or an external perspective: “Some athletes imagine themselves from the perspective that they are inside their body actually experiencing the imagined sensations, whereas others imagine themselves from the perspective of a spectator watching the performance.”³²⁰ Imagery can also be positive, in which athletes imagine a successful outcome, or negative, in which athletes imagine an unsuccessful outcome.³²¹

Paivio states that there are two types of imagery: cognitive imagery involves the mental rehearsal of technical skills, while motivational imagery involves more emotional, rather than technical, elements of performance.³²² Paivio also suggests subcategories for these two types of imagery. Cognitive specific imagery involves mentally rehearsing a specific skill.³²³ Many scholars refer to cognitive specific imagery as mental practice,³²⁴ and advocate its use during relatively early stages of

³¹⁷ Anne R. Isaac, “Mental Practice – Does it Work in the Field?” *The Sport Psychologist* 6, no. 2 (June 1992): 193, 197.

³¹⁸ Gould and Damarjian, “Imagery Training for Peak Performance,” 30.

³¹⁹ Craig A. Wrisberg and Mark H. Anshel, “The Effect of Cognitive Strategies on the Free Throw Shooting Performance of Young Athletes,” *The Sport Psychologist* 3, no. 2 (June 1989): 101.

³²⁰ Gould and Damarjian, “Imagery Training for Peak Performance,” 31.

³²¹ Hall, “Imagery in Sport and Exercise,” 535; Sisterhen, “The Use of Imagery, Mental Practice, and Relaxation Techniques for Musical Performance Enhancement,” 69.

³²² Paivio, “Cognitive and Motivational Functions of Imagery in Human Performance,” 23S.

³²³ Paivio, “Cognitive and Motivational Functions of Imagery in Human Performance,” 23S.

³²⁴ Gould and Damarjian, “Imagery Training for Peak Performance,” 28.

learning.³²⁵ Cognitive general imagery involves mentally rehearsing larger strategies,³²⁶ such as entire game plans.³²⁷ Motivational specific imagery involves imagining specific goals, while motivational general imagery involves using images to control or manipulate either arousal or affect.³²⁸ Motivational general imagery can also involve mastery.³²⁹

Wrisberg and Anshel studied the effects of relaxation and imagery training on 10- to 12-year-old male basketball players.³³⁰ Their study is particularly significant because it examined the effects of relaxation and imagery separately, as well as in combination; many studies only investigate the two skills in combination. Wrisberg and Anshel referred to relaxation training as “arousal reduction training.”³³¹ They distilled relaxation training into four steps: keeping the mind “free of visual and auditory distractions;” silently repeating a sound, word, or phrase in order to continue to prevent mental distractions; maintaining “a passive, ‘let it happen’ attitude;” using a comfortable, tension-free body position.³³² It is worth noting that the first and second components of this relaxation training program involve concentration. Children who received only this relaxation training did not experience an increase in the quality of their performance; in fact, they experienced a slight decrease.³³³ However, children who received both relaxation training and

³²⁵ Sisterhen, “The Use of Imagery, Mental Practice, and Relaxation Techniques for Musical Performance Enhancement,” xii.

³²⁶ Paivio, “Cognitive and Motivational Functions of Imagery in Human Performance,” 23S.

³²⁷ Hall, “Imagery in Sport and Exercise,” 531.

³²⁸ Paivio, “Cognitive and Motivational Functions of Imagery in Human Performance,” 23S.

³²⁹ Hall, “Imagery in Sport and Exercise,” 534.

³³⁰ Wrisberg and Anshel, “The Effect of Cognitive Strategies on the Free Throw Shooting Performance of Young Athletes.”

³³¹ *Ibid.*, 98.

³³² *Ibid.*, 99.

³³³ *Ibid.*, 100.

imagery training improved more than any other children.³³⁴ This finding supports the idea that relaxation seems to unlock the performance enhancing qualities of imagery.

The imagery training procedure in Wrisberg and Anshel's study was based upon the imagery guidelines from Terry Orlick's *Psyching for Sport: Mental Training for Athletes*.³³⁵ The training included observing the target of the basket, closing the eyes, feeling confident, internal perspective imagery of the preshot stance, concentration, mental rehearsal of multiple shots, and feeling "very confident and happy after each successful shot."³³⁶ Players who received only this imagery training improved noticeably over players in the control group. However, as mentioned earlier, players who received a combination of relaxation and imagery training experienced the greatest improvements by far in the quality of their performance.³³⁷

Zhang, Ma, Orlick, and Zitzelsberger studied the effects of mental skills training on the performance of 7- to 10-year-old table tennis players.³³⁸ Unlike Wrisberg and Anshel, Zhang and his colleagues did not separate the two mental skills of relaxation and imagery.³³⁹ The researchers divided the children in the study into three groups: those who participated only in video observation of elite players, those who received mental skills training in addition to video observation, and those

³³⁴ Ibid., 101.

³³⁵ Ibid., 99; Terry Orlick, *Psyching for Sport: Mental Training for Athletes* (Champaign, IL: Leisure Press, 1986).

³³⁶ Wrisberg and Anshel, "The Effect of Cognitive Strategies on the Free Throw Shooting Performance of Young Athletes," 99.

³³⁷ Ibid., 100.

³³⁸ Li-Wei Zhang et al., "The Effect of Mental-Imagery Training on Performance Enhancement with 7-10-Year-Old Children," *The Sport Psychologist* 6, no. 3 (September 1992): 230-241.

³³⁹ Ibid., 231.

in a control group.³⁴⁰ The researchers studied the effects of these training programs on the children's performance accuracy, as well as their technical quality. Students who participated only in video observation experienced moderate increases in their performance accuracy,³⁴¹ but experienced slight decreases in their technical quality.³⁴² Students who received mental skills training in addition to video observation experienced significant increases in their performance accuracy as well as their technical quality.³⁴³

The relaxation training sessions in the Zhang study included imagery-influenced affirmations such as “A warm stream is flowing from my face to my neck, to my shoulders, to my arms, to my hands, through my body, to my legs, to my feet.”³⁴⁴ During the imagery sessions, “subjects were focused on imagining and feeling themselves perform (in their mind and body) in the same manner as the player they most preferred from the videos – the one they most wanted to imitate and learn from and who they felt had the best skills suited to their own styles.”³⁴⁵ An imagery script was read aloud to guide the subjects in their imagery.³⁴⁶ The researchers discovered that six-minute imagery sessions seemed to be ideal for the children;³⁴⁷ this finding is noteworthy since attention span is often an issue with children.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ Ibid., 236.

³⁴² Ibid., 237.

³⁴³ Ibid., 236-237.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 232.

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 233.

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 233-234.

Rodgers, Hall, and Buckolz studied the use of imagery and verbalization training in adolescent figure skaters.³⁴⁸ One group of skaters received imagery training; for example, skaters in this group might look at drawings of a jump, and then imagine themselves completing the jump. A second group received verbalization training; for example, skaters in this group might verbally describe a jump to themselves using cue words.³⁴⁹ Both of these activities were considered to be forms of mental practice.³⁵⁰ While the researchers were not able to measure any significant changes in the skaters' performances based upon their use of imagery, they did conclude that "mental skills, such as the imagery and verbal manipulations used, can improve with practice."³⁵¹ Perhaps most significantly, they also found that "the skaters, coaches, and parents all felt the mental training was beneficial, and most chose to pursue the training program after the close of the study, an indication that they both like it and are committed to it."³⁵²

Two details of Rodgers, Hall, and Buckolz's findings may be particularly noteworthy for piano teachers and students. First, they found that "the skaters showed a higher tendency to use an external visual perspective;" the next most popular perspective was internal kinesthetic, followed by internal visual.³⁵³ It is not clear whether this might be the case with young piano students, since figure skaters may place more importance on the overall look of their bodies while skating.

However, this finding does show that adolescents are capable of utilizing a variety

³⁴⁸ Wendy Rodgers, Craig Hall, and Eric Buckolz, "The Effect of an Imagery Training Program on Imagery Ability, Imagery Use, and Figure Skating Performance," *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology* 3, no. 2 (1991): 109-125.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 114.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 120.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 123.

³⁵² *Ibid.*

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, 116.

of perspectives while undergoing imagery. Second, the researchers found that the skaters “reported seeing themselves skating incorrectly to an extent which is probably not desirable.”³⁵⁴ Rodgers, Hall, and Buckolz state that coaches must be vigilant to prevent the use of negative imagery among their athletes, because “coaches tend to point out errors and tell skaters ‘what not to do.’ This could actually promote the forming of negative and incorrect images by the skaters. If this explanation is correct, it suggests a need for more correct modeling and less negative instructions by coaches.”³⁵⁵

Two groups of researchers – Vadocz, Hall, and Moritz, as well as Munroe-Chandler, Hall, Fishburne, and Strachan – studied young athletes’ use of Paivio’s five imagery categories: cognitive specific, cognitive general, motivational specific, motivational general-arousal, and motivational general-mastery. Vadocz, Hall and Moritz studied “the relationship between imagery use, imagery ability, competitive anxiety and performance” among adolescent roller skaters.³⁵⁶ Their research led to four primary conclusions. First, athletes who used more motivational general-arousal (MG-A) imagery had higher levels of cognitive anxiety.³⁵⁷ Vadocz and her colleagues suggested that because of this, it might be best for athletes who tend to experience cognitive anxiety to avoid engaging in MG-A imagery. However, athletes who need help getting motivated for a performance might benefit from engaging in MG-A imagery. Second, the use of motivational general-mastery (MG-

³⁵⁴ Ibid., 122.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ Eva A. Vadocz, Craig R. Hall, and Sandra E. Moritz, “The Relationship Between Competitive Anxiety and Imagery Use,” *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology* 9, no. 2 (1997): 241.

³⁵⁷ Ibid., 248.

M) imagery led to higher levels of self-confidence.³⁵⁸ Third, athletes who had experienced a “best ever performance” in the past had lower levels of cognitive state anxiety; that is, they were less worried about performing well.³⁵⁹ Finally, athletes who engaged in visual imagery experienced lower levels of somatic anxiety; the authors suggested that this may be because strong visual imagers might be capable of changing negative images into positive images.³⁶⁰

Munroe-Chandler and her colleagues studied the use of imagery among seven- to 14-year-old male and female athletes in a variety of different sports.³⁶¹ They found that “similar to adult athletes, young athletes used all five of Paivio’s cognitive and motivational functions of imagery,”³⁶² although seven- to 10-year-olds “reported using fewer subcategories of motivational general-arousal and motivational general-mastery than their older counterparts.”³⁶³ The researchers also found gender differences in the children’s use of imagery: girls reported using imagery to control arousal and anxiety, as well as to improve self-confidence, while boys did not.³⁶⁴ However, it is possible that these differences may have resulted from reporting discrepancies, rather than actual discrepancies, between boys and girls. It is also possible that female-dominated sports in the study, such as

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Ibid., 250.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Krista J. Munroe-Chandler et al., “Where, When, and Why Young Athletes Use Imagery: An Examination of Developmental Differences,” *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport* 78, no. 2 (2007): 106.

³⁶² Ibid., 114.

³⁶³ Ibid., 113.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

gymnastics and dance, may have required more arousal and anxiety control than other sports.³⁶⁵

Hall, Munroe-Chandler, Fishburne, and Hall developed the Sport Imagery Questionnaire – Children’s Version (SIQ-C),³⁶⁶ which is based upon the Sport Imagery Questionnaire for adults.³⁶⁷ The SIQ-C is designed for use with seven- to 14-year-olds,³⁶⁸ and aims to gather information regarding children’s use of Paivio’s five categories of imagery: cognitive specific (“Before trying a skill, I see myself doing it perfectly”); cognitive general (“I imagine continuing with my game plan or routine even if it is not going well”), motivational specific (“I see the audience cheering for me”), motivational general-arousal (“In my head, I imagine how calm I feel before I compete”), and motivational general-mastery (“I see myself being in control in tricky situations”).³⁶⁹ Like Munroe-Chandler and her colleagues, the researchers found that children as young as seven years old regularly use all five types of imagery to enhance their sport performance.³⁷⁰

Children’s imagery research is not limited to youth sport. Research has also been conducted in classroom settings. Purkel and Bornstein studied the effects of imagery on second graders’ ability to commit learned information to memory.³⁷¹

Students were asked to remember information from sentences about objects or

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ Craig R. Hall et al., “The Sport Imagery Questionnaire for Children (SIQ-C),” *Measurement in Physical Education and Exercise Science* 13 (2009): 93-107.

³⁶⁷ Craig R. Hall et al., “Imagery Use by Athletes: Development of the Sport Imagery Questionnaire,” *International Journal of Sport Psychology* 29 (1998): 73–89.

³⁶⁸ Hall et al., “The Sport Imagery Questionnaire for Children (SIQ-C),” 93.

³⁶⁹ Ibid., 100.

³⁷⁰ Ibid., 105.

³⁷¹ Warren Purkel and Marc H. Bornstein, “Pictures and Imagery Both Enhance Children’s Short-Term and Long-Term Recall,” *Developmental Psychology* 16, no. 2 (1980): 153-154.

people.³⁷² One group of students initially learned the information only from hearing the sentences. A second group heard the sentences and looked at pictures that completely depicted the sentences. A third group heard the sentences, looked at somewhat incomplete pictures, and was asked to imagine the rest of the information from the sentences.³⁷³ Significantly, Purkel and Bornstein found that “object recall was enhanced equally if pictures of the objects accompanied the reading or if the children imagined the objects.”³⁷⁴ Sears and Johnson found that visual imagery was superior to auditory imagery in improving fourth through sixth graders’ spelling performance and retention.³⁷⁵

The imagery literature also extends beyond the academic sphere. The 1970s marked a period of increased curiosity regarding the power of visualization, often expressed by writers with New Age inclinations. Shakti Gawain’s bestselling book, *Creative Visualization*, perhaps best exemplifies this genre. In *Creative Visualization*, Gawain guides readers to use visualization exercises to achieve what they want in life.³⁷⁶ More recently, Jennifer Day adapted Gawain’s ideas for use with children in *Creative Visualization with Children: A Practical Guide*.³⁷⁷ Day describes creative visualization as a natural, easy process for children: “Using creative visualization with children is especially rewarding as it is usually near to

³⁷² Purkel and Bornstein, “Pictures and Imagery Both Enhance Children’s Short-Term and Long-Term Recall,” 153.

³⁷³ Ibid.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ Nedra C. Sears and Dale M. Johnson, “The Effects of Visual Imagery on Spelling Performance and Retention among Elementary Students,” *Journal of Educational Research* 79, no. 4 (March-April 1986): 230.

³⁷⁶ Shakti Gawain, *Creative Visualization: Use the Power of Your Imagination to Create What You Want in Your Life*, 25th anniversary edition (Novato, CA: New World Library, 2002).

³⁷⁷ Jennifer Day, *Creative Visualization With Children: A Practical Guide* (Boston: Element Books, 1994).

second nature for them. Children have both a natural need and an ability for creative and imaginative play that makes the consciously applied use of imagery almost effortless for them.³⁷⁸

Concentration

Concentration – often called focus – is the third mental skill that is frequently discussed in the children’s mental skills literature. According to Orlick,

Focusing (or total concentration) is the most important mental skill affecting learning and performance. By developing the skills necessary to focus fully and constructively, you directly influence the quality of children’s learning, performance and living. Children will learn to focus effectively through guidance and practice at connecting fully with essential things that are going on in the present moment.³⁷⁹

Smith, Smoll, and Smith include concentration in their description of “mental toughness,” or the ability of athletes to “mentally appraise themselves [in] pressure situations in ways that arouse a positive desire to achieve rather than a fear of failure.”³⁸⁰ According to Smith, Smoll, and Smith, concentration is central to mental toughness: “Mentally tough athletes are able to concentrate on the task at hand in situations where less capable athletes lose their focus of attention. They rarely fall victim to their own or others’ self-defeating thoughts and ideas, and they are not easily intimidated.”³⁸¹ Significantly, Smith, Smoll, and Smith specifically point to “self-defeating thoughts and ideas”³⁸² as distractions; this reinforces the

³⁷⁸ Day, *Creative Visualization With Children*, xi.

³⁷⁹ Orlick, *Feeling Great*, 113.

³⁸⁰ Smith, Smoll, and Smith, *Parents’ Complete Guide to Youth Sports*, 119.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 120.

³⁸² *Ibid.*

importance of positive self-esteem not only for the reduction of performance anxiety, but for the facilitation of mental skills development in children.

Smith, Smoll, Cumming, and Grossbard devote one of three categories of questions on their Sport Anxiety Scale-2 (SAS-2) to concentration disruption. Statements such as “It is hard to concentrate on the game,” “It is hard for me to focus on what I am supposed to do,” and “I cannot think clearly during the game” illustrate examples of concentration disruption among youth sport participants.³⁸³ In another study, these researchers found that concentration disruption did not rank as highly as somatic anxiety or worry in contributing to sport anxiety.³⁸⁴ However, the authors state that worry and concentration disruption often go hand in hand; because of this, it is difficult to assess when concentration disruption results from worry.³⁸⁵

Lorenz researched the effects of Alexander Technique exercises upon performance anxiety in high school choral students. While his results were largely inconclusive, his research showed that “predominantly cognitive components of anxiety,” including poor concentration, worry, general nervousness, and lack of confidence, showed “moderate improvement as a result of treatment.”³⁸⁶

Concentration often plays a role in the use of relaxation and imagery. Wrisberg and Anshel included aspects of concentration in their relaxation training (“keep the mind free of visual and auditory distractions;” “use a mental device...repeated silently to prevent ‘mind wandering’ and stop distracting

³⁸³ Smith et al. “Measurement of Multidimensional Sport Performance Anxiety in Children and Adults,” 501.

³⁸⁴ Joel R. Grossbard et al., “Competitive Anxiety in Young Athletes: Differentiating Somatic Anxiety, Worry, and Concentration Disruption,” *Anxiety, Stress, and Coping* 22, no. 2 (March 2009): 160.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 162.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 55.

thoughts”)³⁸⁷ and imagery training (“concentrate on taking the shot while blocking out other sights and sounds”) programs.³⁸⁸ Zhang and his colleagues included elements of focus in their imagery training script (“I am focusing on having good control over the direction of my moving arm...”).³⁸⁹

The meditation practice of mindfulness might be considered a practice in concentration. The Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh has written books on mindfulness not only for adults, but also for children and teens. In a book for adolescents, *Under the Rose Apple Tree*, Nhat Hanh defines mindfulness as “remembering to come back to the present moment. Everything we are looking for is right here in the present moment. If we allow ourselves to be in the present moment, we have the capacity to touch wonderful things. But if we do not allow ourselves to be in the present moment, we will continue to struggle.”³⁹⁰

Nhat Hanh advocates practicing mindfulness through mindful breathing, as exemplified by the statement “When I breathe in, I know that I am breathing in.”³⁹¹ Nhat Hanh states that the breath is “the link between your body and your mind.”³⁹² In the mindfulness sphere, as in the sport psychology sphere, concentration is almost inextricably linked with relaxation and imagery. An excerpt from a children’s book by Sister Susan, one of Nhat Hanh’s colleagues, illustrates the respective slants of relaxation and imagery in a mindfulness activity:

³⁸⁷ Wrisberg and Anshel, “The Effect of Cognitive Strategies on the Free Throw Shooting Performance of Young Athletes,” 99.

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

³⁸⁹ Zhang et al., “The Effect of Mental-Imagery Training on Performance Enhancement with 7-10-Year-Old Children,” 233.

³⁹⁰ Thich Nhat Hanh, *Under the Rose Apple Tree* (Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press, 2002), 10.

³⁹¹ Ibid., 19.

³⁹² Ibid.

Breathing in, I calm my whole body.
Breathing out, my whole body is calm.
Body, calm...
Breathing in, I see myself as a mountain.
Breathing out, I feel solid.
Mountain, solid.³⁹³

Focusing on the task at hand – often by focusing on one aspect of the task at a time – is an important skill for children who perform. However, the ability to refocus or shift focus is perhaps equally important. A child may start a performance fully focused, but may lose focus and have difficulty regaining it. Or, a child may be fully focused upon negative factors. Orlick calls the ability to shift focus “changing channels,” and uses an activity of the same name.³⁹⁴ He writes that “the long-range goal is to teach children to: (1) focus fully in the moment (in joyful, constructive, positive, uplifting and helpful ways), and (2) shift focus from negative to positive, or from destructive to constructive, in a variety of situations.”³⁹⁵

Parental Involvement

The fact that parents play an influential role in young athletes’ participation in sport is virtually undisputed in the youth sport literature. Smith, Smoll, and Smith place the role of parents as equal in significance to coaches and young athletes, referring to the relationship between these three parties as the “athletic triangle.”³⁹⁶ Smith and Smoll also refer to the “athletic triangle,”³⁹⁷ and include suggestions for parent-based interventions, in addition to athlete-based and coach-

³⁹³ Sister Susan and Thich Nhat Hanh, *Each Breath a Smile* (Berkeley, CA: Plum Blossom Books, 2001), 11, 13.

³⁹⁴ Terry Orlick, *Changing Channels: Positive Living Skills for Children*, Zone of Excellence, CD, 2005.

³⁹⁵ Orlick, *Feeling Great*, 137.

³⁹⁶ Smith, Smoll, and Smith, *Parents’ Complete Guide to Youth Sports*, 16.

³⁹⁷ Smith and Smoll, “Psychosocial Interventions in Youth Sport,” 290.

based interventions.³⁹⁸ Eccles and her colleagues found that parents have an even stronger influence upon students than teachers do.³⁹⁹

Because of the strength of parental influence, it is important for coaches and teachers to keep parents abreast of any mental skills activities in which their children participate. Orlick and McCaffrey state that parents “are in a position to help prevent or reduce unnecessary stresses within the environment. They are also in a position to reinforce the healthy perspectives and mental skills we are attempting to teach. Wherever possible, they should be part of the process or at least be provided with appropriate readings that explain and support your perspective.”⁴⁰⁰

If parents are unaware of the mental skills that coaches or teachers are implementing with students, they may unknowingly interfere with these skills. Smith and Smoll relate a story about a coach whose efforts to focus on the positive aspects of a losing performance were undermined by parents’ focus on the negative aspects:

As I talked, I could see [the players’] spirits lifting. I felt they had learned more than just how to play baseball that night. But as I mingled with the parents in the stands afterward, I was shocked to hear what they were saying to the boys. The invariable theme was, ‘Well, what happened to *you* tonight?’ One father pulled out a note pad and went over his son’s mistakes play by play. Another father dressed down his son for striking out twice. In five minutes, the parents had undermined every principle I had set forth.⁴⁰¹

Starr and Starr describe a situation in which a parent’s negativity interfered with a teacher’s desire for a positive attitude in music lessons:

³⁹⁸ Ibid., 300-307.

³⁹⁹ Eccles et al., “Expectancies, Values, and Academic Behaviors,” 137.

⁴⁰⁰ Orlick and McCaffrey, “Mental Training with Children for Sport and Life,” 322.

⁴⁰¹ Smith and Smoll, “Psychosocial Interventions in Youth Sport,” 300, quoting D.R. McNeil, “Little Leagues Aren’t Big Leagues,” *Reader’s Digest*, June 1961, 142.

As the class was preparing to leave, Janet's mother stopped to talk to me. "Janet is very slow in catching on to new things. Her brother is so quick in everything he does, but Janet just seems to take a long time before she understands." Janet was standing at her elbow.

I wanted to protest. "Do you really think that Janet doesn't hear what you're saying? Do you realize that right now the word 'slow' is probably being added to her inner descriptive file?"

Instead I tried to counter her negative remarks with positive ones. "Janet is a very attentive little girl. I like the way she listens and watches when I play for her. She always waits until I give her the signal to begin. Her bow and her posture at the keyboard are very good. I'm very happy to have her as a student."⁴⁰²

Parents are also in a special position to help students cope if a performance does not go as well as the student had hoped. Machover and Uszler, in *Sound Choices: Guiding Your Child's Musical Experiences*, state that "Your child needs to know that she is loved no matter what happens...good after-recital comments carry no 'buts.'"⁴⁰³ They go on to state that "Later, when things are calm and normal, the teacher is likely to discuss the 'buts.' This is not parent territory."⁴⁰⁴ Orlick reinforces the suggestion that even coaches, or teachers, should wait to address the negative aspects of a performance until well after the performance has ended: "Generally we should offer support first and look for the lesson in the loss at another time. In some ways it is like meeting the immediate needs of a child who gets hurt. The child wants to be held and comforted...before hearing you say what should or should not have been done."⁴⁰⁵

Orlick also states that it is important for parents and coaches to value children as individuals, not just as performers: "By offering your support you can

⁴⁰² Starr and Starr, *To Learn with Love*, 144.

⁴⁰³ Machover and Uszler, *Sound Choices*, 88.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁵ Terry Orlick, *Coaches Training Manual to Psyching for Sport* (Champaign, IL: Leisure Press, 1986), 65.

clearly demonstrate that you are capable of separating a person from his or her performance, and that a person's essence and importance extends beyond any performance."⁴⁰⁶ Thompson, in reiterating Orlick's suggestion to value children as people, rather than merely as performers, gives perhaps the most heartfelt suggestion on how parents can best support their children in organized activities: "What many children...need more than anything else is to have someone who loves them not because of anything the child can do for the adult, but *just because*."⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁶ Orlick, *Coaches Training Manual to Psyching for Sport*, 66.

⁴⁰⁷ Thompson, *Positive Coaching*, 89.

CHAPTER THREE

STUDENT WORKBOOK FOR MENTAL SKILLS ACTIVITIES

Note to the Reader

Positive attitude, relaxation, imagery, and concentration are the four most important mental skills with regard to performance in children. These skills, used separately and in combination, have been shown to reduce anxiety⁴⁰⁸ and improve performance quality⁴⁰⁹ in children. The current chapter features 31 mental skills activities, addressing these four important skills, in a workbook format designed for six- to 12-year-old piano students. Four of the activities address positive attitude, five address relaxation, 15 address imagery, and seven address concentration.

Some activities involve repertoire, and others do not. For activities that involve repertoire, some are designed for use with specific pieces while others are designed for use with any piece selected by the student and/or teacher. All repertoire-specific activities utilize the music of educational composer Jon George, since George's music has remained in print for more than three decades and is widely respected by teachers. Repertoire examples come from several elementary

⁴⁰⁸ Linda B. and Leonard D. Zaichkowsky, "The Effects of a School-Based Relaxation Training Program on Fourth Grade Children," *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology* 13, no. 1 (Spring 1984): 84; Marnie St. Denis and Terry Orlick, "Positive Perspectives: Intervention with Fourth-Grade Children," *Elementary School Guidance and Counseling* 31, no. 1 (1996): 52-63, <http://libraries.ou.edu/access.aspx?url=http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=9612083975&site=ehost-live> (accessed June 3, 2010); Jenelle N. Gilbert and Terry Orlick, "Evaluation of a Life Skills Program with Grade Two Children," *Elementary School Guidance and Counseling* 31, no. 2 (1996), <http://libraries.ou.edu/access.aspx?url=http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=tfh&AN=9703066779&site=ehost-live> (accessed June 3, 2010).

⁴⁰⁹ Craig A. Wrisberg and Mark H. Anshel, "The Effect of Cognitive Strategies on the Free Throw Shooting Performance of Young Athletes," *The Sport Psychologist* 3, no. 2 (June 1989): 100; Li-Wei Zhang et al., "The Effect of Mental-Imagery Training on Performance Enhancement with 7-10-Year-Old Children," *The Sport Psychologist* 6, no. 3 (September 1992): 236-237.

and intermediate level George collections, including *Kaleidoscope Solos*, *A Day in the Jungle*, *Jon George's Festival of Favorites*, *Artistry at the Piano*, and the *Students' Choice* books from the *Music Tree* series.

It is not necessary for the student to complete the activities in order; however, some activities are prerequisites for others. Chapter Four, "Teacher Manual for Mental Skills Activities," includes a suggested order of study and other organizational materials to assist teachers in incorporating the activities into their students' lessons. In addition, Chapter Four includes a corresponding entry for each activity in a teacher manual format, with detailed teaching steps and suggestions.

Guide to Student Workbook Activity Entries

Activities in the current chapter use language that is believed to be appropriate for most six- to 12-year-olds. Most students in this age group would likely be able to read the activities themselves, while all students in this age group would likely be able to understand the activities when read aloud by a teacher or parent.

There are six sections in each activity entry in the current chapter: (1) a broad introductory section; (2) a more specific introductory section titled "About This Activity;" (3) a section titled "In Your Lesson" that outlines the steps to be completed during the first lesson on the activity; (4) a section titled "At Home" that outlines the student's practice assignment for the first week on the activity; (5) a set of follow-up questions titled "What Do You Think;" (6) figures for some activities.

At the beginning of each activity entry in the current chapter, opening paragraphs preview the mental skill(s) addressed in the activity. These skills are usually previewed through references to non-musical, child-centered activities such as reading, acting, playing, or imagining.

About This Activity

The next section in each activity entry, “About This Activity,” relates the concept(s) broadly previewed in the introductory section more specifically to music and piano study. The general purpose of the activity is briefly stated in one or two sentences. Figures for the activity – which may include lists, worksheets, and/or musical excerpts – are briefly described.

In Your Lesson

Following the “About This Activity” section, the “In Your Lesson” section provides a numbered list of instructions outlining the steps to be completed during the first lesson on the activity.

At Home

At the beginning of each “At Home” entry, the student is encouraged to review the steps completed during the lesson with the teacher. Then, the student is instructed to complete several steps, presented in a numbered list, that comprise the practice assignment for the first week on the activity. In some activities, a partner – such as a parent, relative, or friend – is required to complete some of the “At Home”

steps. For example, a parent may read a relaxation script out loud to the student or serve as an audience member for an at-home performance.

What Do You Think?

Near the end of each activity entry, the “What Do You Think?” section presents a numbered list of follow-up questions to promote self-reflection and awareness in the student. The teacher should ideally pose at least two or three of these questions to the student for each activity, perhaps in the second lesson on the activity. It is not necessary for the student to complete written responses to the questions; a brief verbal discussion during a lesson is sufficient.

Finally, at the end of each entry, any figures for the activity – which may include lists, worksheets, and/or musical excerpts – are printed.

Positive Attitude Activities

Positive Attitude Activity 1: “Who, Me?”

You are a really special, important, and unique person. There is no one else in the whole world exactly like you. No one enjoys all of the same things for all of the same reasons that you do. No one sees little things each day just the way that you see them. And, no one has exactly the same talents and gifts that you have.

One thing that makes you really special is being able to play the piano! There are a lot of things that you do really well when you play the piano. Maybe you practice almost every day. Maybe you are good at playing five-finger patterns. Maybe you are great at note-naming. Maybe you are really good at trying what

your teacher tells you to do. Or, maybe you are good at something else. No matter what you are good at, you are a really special pianist!

About This Activity

In this activity, you will make a list of all of the good things that make you a really special pianist. This list will help you to remember that there are a lot of things that you are good at in piano – even when you have a bad piano day.

In Your Lesson

Your teacher will help you complete the following steps in your lesson:

1. Think about all of the good things that make you special as a pianist.
2. Make a list of all of these special things in the spaces in figure 3.1.

At Home

At home, review the steps you completed with your teacher in your lesson.

Then, complete the following steps:

1. Add to the list in figure 3.1 as you think of more things that make you special as a pianist. Remember to list only good things!
2. Read the questions in the “What Do You Think?” section and think about your answers.

What Do You Think?

After you have finished doing “Who, Me?” read the following questions and think about your answers. Your teacher will ask you about some of your answers at your next lesson:

1. Were you able to think of some good things that make you a special pianist?
2. How did looking at your list make you feel?
3. Which item on your list makes you feel the best?
4. Which item on your list did you have to try the hardest to achieve?
5. Are there any items on your list that you feel are more important than other items? Why or why not?
6. Why do you think it is a good idea to remember all of the good things about yourself as a pianist?
7. Can you think of a specific time – such as when you are having a bad piano day, or when you are getting ready for a recital – when it might be helpful to think about all of the good things about yourself as a pianist?

A large rectangular box containing ten horizontal lines, intended as a blank list for the 'Who, Me?' activity.

Figure 3.1. Blank list for “Who, Me?”

Positive Attitude Activity 2: “I Gave You Three Gifts”

When you perform music, you give a gift to whoever is listening – the gift of sharing music!

About This Activity

Sharing the music is a big gift. You also share smaller gifts when you play. These small gifts are little things that you do really well in your performance. No performance is perfect – but every performance has at least three small gifts! Examples of small gifts are playing your dynamics really well, focusing on the sound of the music really well, continuing to play without stopping even when you make mistakes, getting most of the notes right, playing well from memory, and trying really hard. Can you think of other examples of small gifts that you might give in a performance? Write them down in figure 3.2.

In Your Lesson

Your teacher will help you complete the following steps in your lesson:

1. Choose a piece of music that you can play well.
2. Perform your piece for a partner, such as your teacher or someone else in your teacher's studio. Performing includes walking up to the piano, playing your piece, taking a bow afterward, and anything else that is part of the performance routine that your teacher has taught you.
3. After your performance, thank your partner for listening and ask him or her to please stay there for about a minute or two.
4. While your partner is waiting, think about the performance you just gave. Which three gifts did you give? You may list your three gifts in a journal or notebook if you would like.

5. Tell your partner which three gifts you gave. For example, if you really played your dynamics well, tell your partner “I really played my dynamics well.”

At Home

At home, review the steps you completed with your teacher in your lesson.

Then, complete the following steps:

1. Brainstorm some more ideas of “small gifts” that you might give in a performance.
2. Write these ideas in your list in figure 3.2.
3. Complete steps 1 through 5 from the “In Your Lesson” section with a new partner such as a parent, relative, or friend. Do this at least twice this week.
4. Read the questions in the “What Do You Think?” section and think about your answers.

What Do You Think?

After you have finished doing “I Gave You Three Gifts,” read the following questions and think about your answers. Your teacher will ask you about some of your answers at your next lesson:

1. Were you able to come up with some ideas for small gifts?
2. How did it feel to perform your piece for your partner?

3. After your performance, while your partner was waiting, were you able to think of three gifts that you gave in your performance?
4. How did it feel to tell your partner about the gifts you gave?
5. How did your partner react to you telling him or her which gifts you gave?
6. Do you think this activity might make you think about your performance differently than you normally would, if you were not thinking about small gifts? How?
7. Have you ever heard small gifts in another person's playing (for example, at a recital or while another student was finishing his or her lesson before your lesson)? How do you think it would make someone feel if you told him or her that you heard a gift in their playing?

A large rectangular box with a thin black border. Inside the box, there are ten horizontal lines spaced evenly down the page, providing a template for writing a list of ideas.

Figure 3.2. Blank list for brainstorming ideas for small gifts.

Positive Attitude Activity 3: “Sending a Postcard”

Have you ever experienced something so great that you really wanted to share it with someone else? Maybe you had a soccer game that was so great that you just had to call your grandma afterwards to tell her about it. Or, maybe you did so well on a spelling test that you just couldn’t wait to tell your dad after school.

In this activity, you will think about what it would feel like if you had a piano recital that was that great! You will imagine that your performance in the

recital was so fantastic that you just had to share it with someone – and then you will create an imaginary postcard to do exactly that!

About This Activity

In this activity, you will create an imaginary postcard that tells the story of how great you feel after your best performance ever. You will use the blank spaces in figures 3.3 and 3.4 to create your postcard.

In Your Lesson

Your teacher will help you complete the following steps in your lesson:

1. Imagine that you have just given your best performance ever. Think about what made this performance so great.
2. Think of some adjectives to describe how you would feel, and what you would look like, after giving this amazing performance. (You may close your eyes if it helps you to imagine these things.) You may write your answers in a journal or notebook if you would like.

At Home

At home, review the steps you completed with your teacher in your lesson.

Then, complete the following steps:

1. On the front of the postcard, in figure 3.3, draw a picture that shows how great you feel immediately after your best performance ever. For

example, it might show you bowing with a huge smile right after playing. Or, it might show a close-up of your happy face.

2. Color your postcard picture to make it bright and beautiful!
3. On the back of the postcard, in figure 3.4, write a message on the left side that describes why your performance was so good, and how good it made you feel. For example, you might write something like, “Today I played my best ever, and I am really proud of myself!” Or, you might even write specific details about the performance, such as “When I lost focus, I did a good job of bringing my attention back to the sound of the melody.”
4. Finally, address your imaginary postcard to someone who would be happy to receive it from you. This might be your teacher, a friend, a parent, a relative, or even yourself!
5. Read the questions in the “What Do You Think?” section and think about your answers.

What Do You Think?

After you have finished doing “Sending a Postcard,” read the following questions and think about your answers. Your teacher will ask you about some of your answers at your next lesson:

1. What does the picture on the front of your postcard show?
2. What did you write in your message on the back of the postcard?

3. How do you feel when you read this message? How do you think the person you addressed the postcard to would feel when reading it?
4. Can you imagine what it would feel like to experience the picture and message on this postcard in real life, after a real performance?

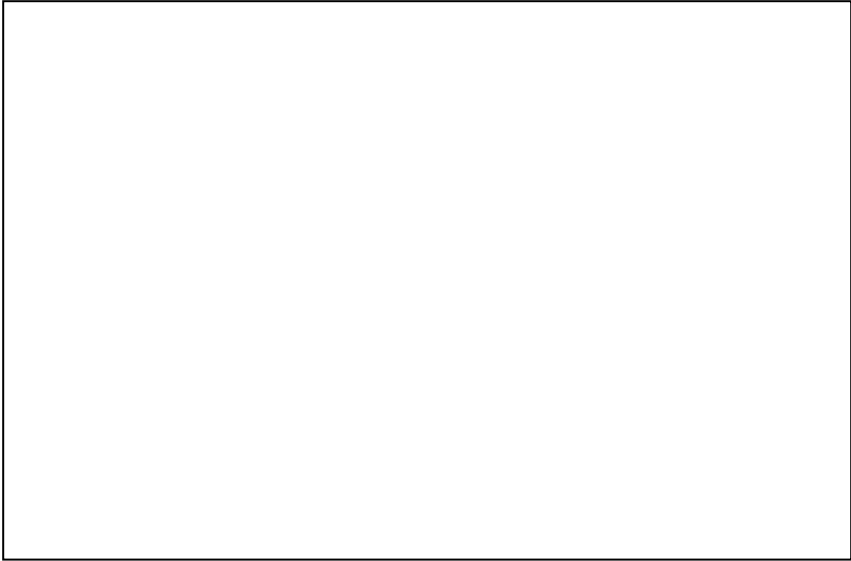


Figure 3.3. Blank front of postcard for “Sending a Postcard.”

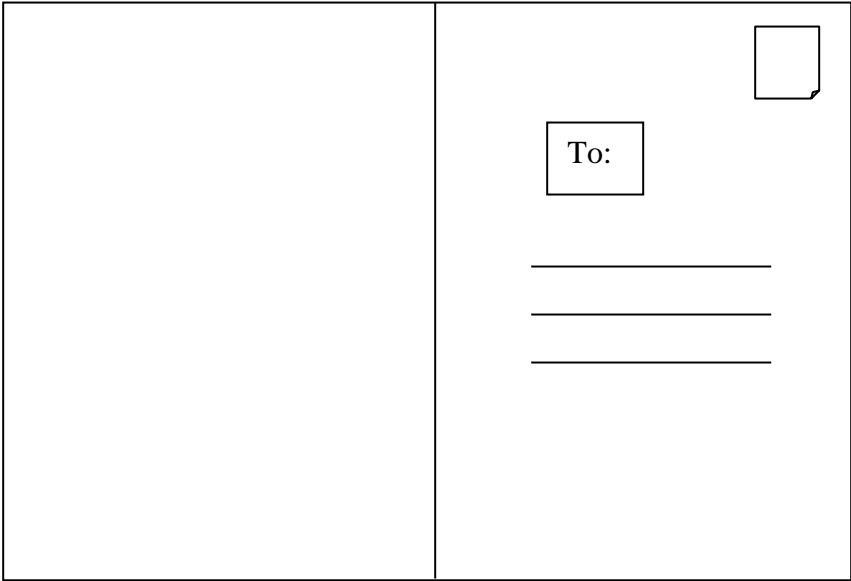


Figure 3.4. Blank back of postcard for “Sending a Postcard.”

Positive Attitude Activity 4: “My Own Script”

A script is a book or a packet that a person reads when preparing for a role in a play or a movie. A script includes all of the lines that will be read out loud. It also includes other words that are not read out loud. For example, a script might tell the actors when and where to move, or when to make certain expressions with their faces. All of the words in the script, when put into action, bring a story to life.

About This Activity

In this activity, you will create your own script that describes your most ideal piano performance – a performance that goes exactly the way you want it to. You will use the script to help you prepare for your own starring role in a real piano performance!

You may find that reading your script several times in the weeks leading up to a recital can make a performance seem familiar and predictable, almost like an old friend. When it is time for the real recital, you may feel like you already know what to expect, because you have read the script for the performance so many times.

In Your Lesson

Your teacher will help you complete the following steps in your lesson:

1. Read one part of the script, shown in figure 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, or 3.9.
2. Fill in the blank spaces in this part of the script with good words that describe your most ideal performance – a performance that goes exactly the way you want it to!

At Home

At home, review the steps you completed with your teacher in your lesson. Then, complete the following steps. Your teacher may ask you to do all of these steps, or only some of them, this week:

1. Read another part of the script, shown in figure 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, or 3.9.
2. Fill in the blank spaces in this part of the script with good words that describe your most ideal performance – a performance that goes exactly the way you want it to!
3. Repeat steps 1 and 2 until you have completed all five parts of the script shown in figures 3.5 through 3.9.
4. Read all five parts of your completed script several times in the weeks leading up to your next performance. As you read, really imagine all of the details in your script in your mind.
5. Read the questions in the “What Do You Think?” section and think about your answers.

What Do You Think?

After you have finished doing “My Own Script,” read the following questions and think about your answers. Your teacher will ask you about some of your answers at your next lesson:

1. Were you able to think of some words to fill in the blank spaces in the script?

2. When you read your script, can you imagine your ideal performance?
Does it seem real and life-like in your mind?
3. Do you think that reading your script several times in the weeks leading up to a performance might help you? How?
4. Do you think that you might be able to change your script to fit a specific performance? How?
5. Is there anything in your script that is new to you, or that you have not already done in real life? Why did you put this in the script?

The Morning of My Ideal Performance

It is _____ in the morning. I roll over in my bed, and gently open my eyes. I just had a great night's sleep! I feel _____ and ready to start my day. This is a really _____ day – the day of the recital!

I take a shower, get dressed, and have a delicious breakfast of _____ with my family. This meal gives me the perfect amount of energy to go to the piano and play a little bit.

Figure 3.5. Blank script for the morning of an ideal performance.

Warming Up On the Day of My Ideal Performance

It is time to warm up! I start by playing some _____. I play slowly and easily, to let my fingers wake up. When my fingers feel _____, I go to my recital pieces. I play each piece all the way through at a slow, _____ tempo. As I play, I make sure to focus on something specific, such as _____, to keep my mind on the music. Then, I practice other parts so that they feel really _____. I don't need to practice too hard today, because I have already done all the hard work in the past several weeks! Today's practice is just to warm up my fingers and my mind.

Next, I practice performing. I sit in a chair, and try to imagine how I will feel right before it is my turn to play. Then, I walk up to the piano. I play the beginning of my first piece at my performance tempo. I take a quick break, and then play the ending. I put my hands in my lap in between pieces, and take all the time I need to feel _____. I bring my hands up to the keys for my second piece, and play the beginning and the ending.

Figure 3.6. Blank script for warming up on the day of a performance.

Finally, I stand up and take a bow. As I do this part of my practice, I imagine that I am playing in the real recital. This way, I will feel really _____ when I get to the real recital. Now I have practiced just the right amount and I feel _____. The next time I play my pieces will be at the recital!

Figure 3.6 continued

Right Before My Performance

I am sitting in a chair at the recital. It feels _____. As I look at my program and see all of the other students play, I know that it is getting closer to my turn! I notice that my _____ is/are _____. I do my favorite activity to calm myself – _____. This makes me feel _____.

The student right before me has just finished playing, and is walking back toward the chairs. It is my turn!

Figure 3.7. Blank script for right before an ideal performance.

During My Performance

I stand up and walk _____ toward the piano. I sit down on the bench, and adjust it slightly so that it feels really comfortable. I close my eyes and take a deep breath.

I think about _____. When I open my eyes, I know that the piano is ready for me to play it! I am going to do a _____ job.

As I play my first piece, I keep my mind on the music by focusing on _____. When I start to become distracted, I do a really great job of bringing my attention right back to the music.

In between pieces, I place my hands in my lap and take all the time that I need, until I feel _____. When I feel _____, I bring my hands to the keys and start my second piece. As I play, I keep my mind on the music by focusing on _____. When I start to become distracted, I do a really great job of bringing my attention right back to the music.

As I get to the end of my last piece, I make sure to focus on _____, to keep my mind on the music until the very end of the piece. As I play the last note, I realize how _____ it sounds!

Figure 3.8. Blank script for during an ideal performance.

Right After My Performance

I have finished! Wow, I really did a _____ job! Everyone is clapping to thank me for performing, and to tell me that they think my performance was _____.

I take a bow, to say “thank you” to the audience for _____ing and _____ing. As I walk back to my chair, I feel _____. I sit down, and take some deep breaths. With each breath, I enjoy the _____ feeling of this moment!

After the recital is over, I find my _____ and my _____. They tell me that I played really _____. I can tell how _____ they are! I feel really _____ about my performance. For now, all I want to do is _____!

This really was a/an _____ performance!

Figure 3.9. Blank script for right after an ideal performance.

Relaxation Activities

Relaxation Activity 1: “Tree Spine”

Have you ever been to a place where there are a lot of trees? Maybe you have taken a walk in the woods, or seen palm trees at the beach. Maybe you have seen trees in your neighborhood park, or even in your own yard. Trees are tall, strong, healthy, and full of life. Even though they may look motionless, trees are actually full of energy. Trees have so much energy inside of them that they share it with the plants, animals, and people around them.

About This Activity

Your spine is a lot like a tree. It is tall, strong, healthy, and full of life. It is also full of energy. In this activity, you will imagine that your spine is actually a tree!

In Your Lesson

Your teacher will help you complete the following steps in your lesson:

1. Choose a piece, or some exercises such as five-finger patterns or scales, that you can play well.
2. Sit down on the piano bench.
3. Drop your arms to your sides, so that they feel heavy and relaxed from your shoulders to your fingertips.

4. Now, focus your attention on your spine. Imagine that your spine is a tree. This tree is tall, strong, healthy, and full of life. Picture it in your head. Imagine the rich brown color of its bark, and the shape and color of its leaves. You might even imagine the fresh smell of the forest.
(You may close your eyes if it helps you imagine your tree spine.)
5. Imagine that your tree spine is actually growing, very slowly, little by little. As it grows, it pulls your back up a tiny bit, even though your deep roots still connect you to the piano bench. This makes you feel taller, and very strong!
6. Now, imagine that the tree is growing beautiful, healthy leaves. The tree has grown so tall that these leaves are actually the hair on your head! Enjoy the feeling of the top of your head being connected to your tall, strong tree spine.
7. Imagine that your tree spine is actually giving you all of the energy you need to lift and move your arms. Feel this energy as you bring your hands up to the keyboard.
8. If you closed your eyes, open them now. Play the piece or exercises that you chose, at a relaxed, easy tempo. As you play, focus all of your attention on the energy that your tree spine is providing. Be aware of how strong your tree spine is, and imagine that all of your energy is coming from it. This might feel different than your usual way of playing.

At Home

At home, review the steps you completed with your teacher in your lesson.

Then, complete the following steps:

1. Find a partner, such as a parent or relative, who can read steps 1 through 8 in the “At Your Lesson” section out loud while you complete the activity at home.
2. Complete steps 1 through 8 from the “In Your Lesson” section, while your partner reads the steps out loud to you. Do this at least once this week.
3. Spend a minute or two focusing on your tree spine each day that you practice this week.
4. Read the questions in the “What Do You Think?” section and think about your answers.

What Do You Think?

After you have finished doing “Tree Spine,” read the following questions and think about your answers. Your teacher will ask you about some of your answers at your next lesson:

1. How does thinking about your tree spine make you feel?
2. How did lifting your arms feel different when you were thinking about your tree spine?
3. Does thinking about your tree spine make a difference in your playing?
How?

Relaxation Activity 2: “Warming Up”

Have you ever heard someone talk about “warming up?” Warming up means getting ready to play. Athletes warm up by stretching and doing exercises. Pianists warm up by playing scales and practicing parts of their music. You have probably warmed up before playing in a recital.

About This Activity

In this activity, you are going to “warm up” in a different way – by imagining that your body is getting warm! Have you ever lied in the sun? Or, have you ever sipped hot cocoa on a cold day? You may have noticed that as your body starts to feel warm, you start to feel more relaxed. Even just imagining the feeling of warmth in your body can help you to feel more relaxed and calm.

In Your Lesson

Your teacher will help you complete the following steps in your lesson:

1. Sit down on the piano bench and close your eyes.
2. Imagine that your body is becoming nice and warm all over. Maybe gentle rays of sunlight are shining on you. Maybe you are drinking a cup of warm hot cocoa. Or, maybe you are sitting in front of a cozy campfire. The warmth starts in your hands. Your hands and fingers feel really toasty! Enjoy this feeling.
3. Now, imagine this warmth traveling up your arms and into your shoulders. Your shoulders are so warm that it feels like they might even

be glowing! Feel your body start to relax as your arms and shoulders warm up.

4. Imagine the warmth traveling from your shoulders down your back and spine. Take as much time as you need to do this. Your spine is like a warm rope – you can feel the warmth shining throughout your whole back.
5. Imagine the warmth traveling through your legs, and finally to your feet. Your whole body feels really cozy and relaxed.
6. Once you feel warm all over, double check that your hands and fingers still feel warm. If you need to, warm them up again!

At Home

At home, review the steps you completed with your teacher in your lesson.

Then, complete the following steps:

1. Find a partner, such as a parent or relative, who can read steps 1 through 6 in the “In Your Lesson” section out loud while you complete the activity at home.
2. Complete steps 1 through 6 in the “In Your Lesson” section while your partner reads the steps out loud to you. Do this at least twice this week.
3. By yourself, practice “Warming Up” while standing up.
4. By yourself, practice “Warming Up” while sitting on a chair.
5. By yourself, practice “Warming Up” on the piano bench and then playing a piece of music right afterward.

6. Read the questions in the “What Do You Think?” section and think about your answers.

What Do You Think?

After you have finished doing “Warming Up,” read the following questions and think about your answers. Your teacher will ask you about some of your answers at your next lesson:

1. Were you able to warm up your body? Were certain parts of your body easier to warm up than others?
2. Which part of your body do you think is most helpful to warm up before playing the piano? Why?
3. After you had warmed up your whole body, when you double-checked your hands and fingers, were they still warm?
4. Would you like to try warming up your body in a different order – that is, starting with another part of your body instead of your hands?
5. Besides the word “warm,” what other words could you use to describe how your body felt as it warmed up?
6. Do you think imagining warmth in your body might change your playing? Why?
7. Can you imagine warming up right before playing in a recital? Do you think this might be a good idea? Why or why not?

Relaxation Activity 3: “Here, I Feel Calm”

Do you have a favorite place? This is a place where you feel really good, or really happy. When you are in your favorite place, you probably feel like it is the best place in the world. You might even wish that you could stay there for a really long time!

You may even have more than one favorite place. Each of your favorite places might make you feel a little different. For example, being in the woods might make you feel thoughtful. Or, being at a theme park might make you feel excited. One of your favorite places might even be a place that you have never been to in real life, but that you love in your imagination!

About This Activity

In this activity, you will imagine yourself in a favorite place that makes you feel calm. This might be the woods, a lake, a mountaintop, a garden, or a special spot in your own backyard. In this place, you are calm, relaxed, and happy. This place is really special. Being here makes you feel so good that you can’t help but smile a little. Here, you feel calm.

Imagining this calm place can be a good way to relax in a short amount of time. You can do this activity anytime when you would like to feel more relaxed.

In Your Lesson

Your teacher will help you complete the following steps in your lesson:

1. Choose a piece that you can play well. If you will be playing with the music, place it on the music rack on the piano.
2. Sit on the piano bench. Drop your arms to your sides, so that they feel heavy and relaxed.
3. Now, close your eyes and imagine yourself in a place that makes you feel calm, relaxed, and happy. Take plenty of time as you imagine this place – there is no hurry at all. Be still and quiet, and enjoy the calm feeling that this place gives you.
4. Now, tell yourself that you are going to imagine a beautiful piano sitting in the middle of your calm place. This might seem like a silly place for a piano – in the middle of the woods, or at the lake. Wait patiently for this piano to appear in your calm place, just for you.
5. Imagine yourself walking up to the piano, touching its beautiful wooden case, and sitting down on the bench. This piano is just for you! You can't wait to play it, and to see how wonderful it sounds in this amazing place.
6. Now, open your eyes. As you open them, notice the piano in front of you. Just like the piano in your imagination, this piano is just for you, waiting for you to play it!
7. Take one deep breath, imagining that you are breathing in the calm feeling of your favorite place one more time. When you feel ready, bring your hands up to the keyboard, and play the piece that you have chosen.

At Home

At home, review the steps you completed with your teacher in your lesson.

Then, complete the following steps:

1. Find a partner, such as a parent or relative, who can read steps 1 through 7 in the “In Your Lesson” section out loud while you complete the activity at home.
2. Complete steps 1 through 7 from the “In Your Lesson” section, while your partner reads the steps out loud to you.
3. Think of your calm place, and then play your piece, at least three times this week.
4. Read the questions in the “What Do You Think?” section and think about your answers.

What Do You Think?

After you have finished doing “Here, I Feel Calm,” read the following questions and think about your answers. Your teacher will ask you about some of your answers at your next lesson:

1. Where was your calm place? Why does this place make you feel calm?
2. Have you been to your favorite calm place in real life, or only in your imagination?
3. Were you able to imagine that there was a piano sitting in the middle of your calm place? How did it feel to do this?

4. Did imagining your calm place, and then playing your piece, make your performance feel different? How?
5. Which do you like better – the regular calm place, or the calm place with the piano? Why?

Relaxation Activity 4: “Arm-agination”

Have you ever picked up a carton of milk? When it is full, it feels very heavy. Not heavy like cement – just heavy like milk. The milk might swoosh around in the carton when you carry it from place to place.

About This Activity

In this activity, you will imagine that your arms are two full milk cartons. They are heavy – but not heavy like cement, just heavy like milk. You might notice that imagining your arms as full milk cartons makes your arms feel more relaxed.

Feeling that your arms are relaxed can help you to play with more weight in the keys. This can make the notes you play sound really full and heavy – maybe more than you have ever noticed in the past!

An example of a piece that you might study in piano, and use with this activity, is “Elephant Walking,” by Jon George. The first few measures of “Elephant Walking” are shown in figure 3.10.

In Your Lesson

Your teacher will help you complete the following steps in your lesson:

1. Sit on the piano bench.
2. Imagine that your arms are cartons filled with milk. Imagine the milk swooshing around inside as you lift and move your arms.
3. Play some five-finger patterns or scales, and focus your attention on your milk carton arms the whole time. Do they feel heavy like full milk cartons, even as you play?
4. Play “Elephant Walking” with milk carton arms. Do your arms feel heavy and relaxed? Is your sound full and heavy?
5. Play “Elephant Walking” while imagining that your arms are actually long, thick, heavy elephant trunks, swinging from side to side as you play.
6. Notice how these two images – milk cartons and elephant trunks – make your arms and your playing feel different.

At Home

At home, review the steps you completed with your teacher in your lesson.

Then, complete the following steps:

1. Repeat steps 4, 5 and 6 from the “In Your Lesson” section. Remember to notice how the two images make your arms and your playing feel different.
2. Play “Elephant Walking” while imagining that you are actually the elephant, walking through the jungle, carrying lots of cargo. Imagine that each of your arms is actually a cargo bag full of supplies: bottles of

water, peanuts, snacks, and other things. They are really heavy as you play!

3. Choose the image, or imaginary picture, that you like the best – milk cartons, elephant trunks, or the actual elephant. Play “Elephant Walking” all the way through while focusing on this image, and the heavy feeling it gives you in your arms.
4. Perform “Elephant Walking” for an audience member such as a parent, relative, or friend while thinking of your favorite heavy image (milk cartons, elephant trunks, or elephant carrying cargo bags).
5. Read the questions in the “What Do You Think?” section and think about your answers.

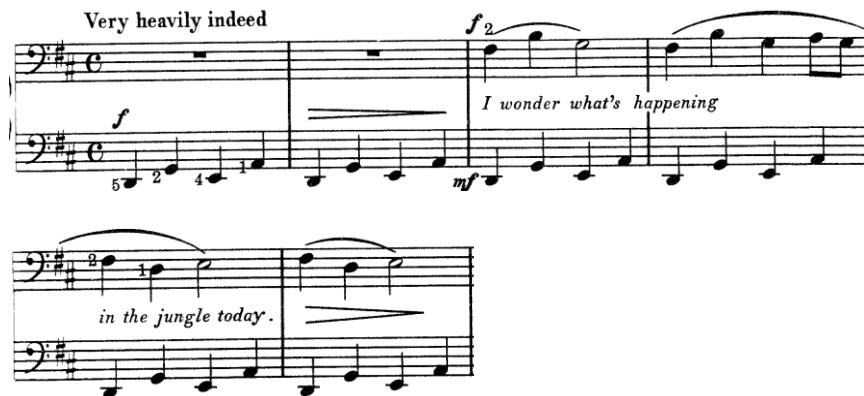
What Do You Think?

After you have finished doing “Arm-agination,” read the following questions and think about your answers. Your teacher will ask you about some of your answers at your next lesson:

1. Were you able to make your arms feel heavy and relaxed?
2. Which image was your favorite – milk cartons, elephant trunks, or the elephant carrying cargo bags? Why?
3. How did your arms feel different in each of the three versions of “Arm-agination?”
4. Can you think of other images that you could imagine to make your arms feel heavy and relaxed?

5. How do your arms feel different when you do “Arm-agination,” compared to when you do not imagine anything about your arms?
6. Were you able to focus on the heavy feeling in your arms as you played?
7. Were you able to do “Arm-agination” while you were playing for someone else?
8. How do you think doing “Arm-agination” might change the sound of your performance?

Figure 3.10. “Elephant Walking” (mm. 1-6), by Jon George. From *A Day in the Jungle*. Copyright © 1968 by Summy-Birchard Music. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Alfred Music Publishing Co., Inc.



Relaxation Activity 5: “Swimmer Breathing”

Swimmers really pay attention to their breathing when they swim. This is probably because they know that they need to breathe in order to stay afloat!

When swimmers practice, they work on the timing of their breathing. When they perform in a swim meet, they know exactly when they are going to take breaths because they have already worked this out in practice.

Breathing is also important for pianists. When you breathe, you give your body oxygen. This gives you the energy you need to get through pieces. Paying attention to your breathing also helps to keep your breathing regular, which is especially important when you are nervous.

Just like swimmers, pianists can also work on breathing during practice. By working on your breathing ahead of time, you will be sure to “stay afloat” by breathing really well during a performance!

About This Activity

One way to breathe really well while you play piano is to use a “breathing routine.” A breathing routine can help you decide exactly where to take breaths as you perform. A list of breathing routines is shown in figure 3.11. Two examples of pieces that you might study in piano, and use with this activity, are “Lotus Blossom” and “Autumn Leaves,” by Jon George. An example of using a breathing routine with “Lotus Blossom” is shown in figure 3.12. An example of using a different breathing routine with “Autumn Leaves” is shown in figure 3.13.

In Your Lesson

Your teacher will help you complete the following steps in your lesson:

1. Choose a piece that you can play well. If the piece is more than one page long, you might want to choose just one section of the piece, such as the A section.

2. Choose one of the breathing routines shown in figure 3.11. Some breathing routines work better with slower pieces, and some breathing routines work better with faster pieces. If you are not sure about which breathing routine to choose, your teacher can help you decide.
3. Listen to your teacher play your piece, while you breathe along with the music using your chosen routine.
4. Play your piece or section while breathing with your chosen routine. Your teacher will help you by saying the “ins” and “outs” out loud at first.
5. Play your piece or section while breathing with a different routine shown in figure 3.11.
6. Notice how the two breathing routines feel different.

At Home

At home, review the steps you completed with your teacher in your lesson.

Then, complete the following steps:

1. Play your piece or section while breathing with all six of the routines shown in figure 3.11, one at a time. Take a short break in between each play-through. (If your teacher told you to skip certain routines because they would not work as well for your piece, skip these routines.)
2. Notice how each breathing routine feels different.
3. Choose a favorite breathing routine from all of the routines that you tried.

4. Using a pencil, write the words “in” and “out” in your music to mark your breaths for your favorite breathing routine. (Figures 3.12 and 3.13 show examples of how to mark your breaths in your music.) In some pieces, you may notice that the “ins” and “outs” may not always match at the beginning of each line.
5. Perform your piece for an audience member – such as a parent, relative, or friend – while using your favorite breathing routine. Really focus on your breathing routine as you perform!
6. Read the questions in the “What Do You Think?” section and think about your answers.

What Do You Think?

After you have finished doing “Swimmer Breathing,” read the following questions and think about your answers. Your teacher will ask you about some of your answers at your next lesson:

1. How did it feel to play while using a breathing routine?
2. Did your breathing feel shallower or deeper in different routines? Or, did you control your breath differently in different routines?
3. Which breathing routine felt the best?
4. Why did your favorite routine feel better than the others?
5. How did it feel different to play while using a breathing routine, compared to when you were not using a breathing routine?

6. Were you able to focus on your breathing routine while you performed for someone else?
7. Can you think of another piece that you are working on that “Swimmer Breathing” might help you with?

1. Breathe in for one measure, then out for one measure. Repeat this pattern until you reach the end of the piece or section.
2. Breathe out for one measure, then in for one measure. Repeat this pattern until you reach the end of the piece or section.
3. Breathe in for two measures, then out for two measures. Repeat this pattern until you reach the end of the piece or section.
4. Breathe out for two measures, then in for two measures. Repeat this pattern until you reach the end of the piece or section.
5. Breathe in for four measures, then out for four measures. Repeat this pattern until you reach the end of the piece or section.
6. Breathe out for four measures, then in for four measures. Repeat this pattern until you reach the end of the piece or section.

Figure 3.11. List of breathing routines for “Swimmer Breathing.”

Figure 3.12. “Swimmer Breathing,” routine no. 1, used with “Lotus Blossom” (mm. 1-4), by Jon George. From *Jon George’s Festival of Favorites*. Copyright © 1996 Warner Bros. Publications. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Alfred Music Publishing Co., Inc. Breathing routine added by the author.



Figure 3.13. “Swimmer Breathing,” routine no. 3, used with “Autumn Leaves” (mm. 1-8), by Jon George. From *Kaleidoscope Solos Book Five*. Copyright © MCMLXXIV by Alfred Publishing Co., Inc. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Alfred Music Publishing Co., Inc. Breathing routine added by the author.



Imagery Activities

Imagery Activity 1: “Picture This”

Pictures can sometimes help people understand or remember things more clearly. For example, some books have pictures that help you understand the story. Sometimes, just imagining pictures can help you understand or remember things more clearly. For example, when you read books without pictures, you probably

imagine the characters in your head to help you keep track of the story. Pictures can be really helpful – even if they are only in your head!

About This Activity

In this activity, you will use pictures to help you learn the piece “Orchid Blooming,” by Jon George. First, you will draw pictures that go along with the music. Then, you will imagine these pictures in your head. Figure 3.14 shows an excerpt of “Orchid Blooming.” Figure 3.15 provides spaces in which you will draw pictures for this activity. In figure 3.15, a few pictures have been drawn already to help you get started.

In Your Lesson

Your teacher will help you complete the following steps in your lesson:

1. Play the left hand part of “Orchid Blooming” while naming the left hand intervals out loud.
2. Imagine that the intervals in the left hand show how the orchid blooms. Each time the interval gets larger, the petals of the orchid open up a little bit. Each time the interval gets smaller, the petals of the orchid close a little bit.
3. In the boxes in figure 3.15, draw pictures that show how the orchid blooms. Draw a flower with more open petals when the left hand intervals are larger. Draw a flower with more closed petals when the left hand intervals are smaller. (Your teacher will help you get started.)

Each box equals one measure in the music. Draw one flower in each box.

At Home

At home, review the steps you completed with your teacher in your lesson.

Then, complete the following steps:

1. Finish your orchid pictures to complete the picture grid shown in figure 3.15. Remember, each box equals one measure.
2. Use crayons, colored pencils, or markers to make your orchid pictures bright and beautiful!
3. Play “Orchid Blooming” with your colorful orchid pictures set next to your music, noticing how your hand looks different when the orchid is more open, and when it is more closed.
4. Play “Orchid Blooming” with your colorful orchid pictures set next to your music, noticing how your hand feels different when the orchid is more open, and when it is more closed.
5. Play “Orchid Blooming” with your colorful orchid pictures set next to your music, noticing how the left hand part sounds different when the orchid is more open, and when it is more closed.
6. Try playing “Orchid Blooming” while looking only at your orchid pictures, and not at the music. If you would like, you may try this step one line at a time. If this feels tricky, look at the music and the pictures again.

7. Sometime this week, instead of looking at your orchid pictures, try just imagining your orchid pictures while you play. Can you picture your colorful orchids in your mind? When is the orchid more open, and when is it more closed?
8. Sometime this week, look at your orchid pictures away from the piano. While you look at the pictures, try to imagine how it feels to play “Orchid Blooming.” Then, try to imagine what “Orchid Blooming” sounds like.
9. Read the questions in the “What Do You Think?” section and think about your answers.

What Do You Think?

After you have finished doing “Picture This,” read the following questions and think about your answers. Your teacher will ask you about some of your answers at your next lesson:

1. Did you like having the orchid pictures next to your music on the piano while you practiced?
2. Were you able to imagine the orchid pictures in your head while you played “Orchid Blooming?” How did this feel different than when you played the piece while actually looking at the pictures? Which way did you like better?
3. Do you think the orchid pictures helped you to notice how your hand felt different in each measure? How?

4. Do you think the orchid pictures helped you to notice how the music sounded different in each measure? How?
5. Were you able to look at the orchid pictures away from the piano and imagine what it felt like to play “Orchid Blooming?”
6. Were you able to look at the orchid pictures away from the piano and imagine what “Orchid Blooming” sounds like?
7. Can you think of a different type of picture you could create to show the left hand intervals in “Orchid Blooming,” instead of orchids? How would you change these pictures in each measure?
8. Do you think drawing and imagining pictures might help you on a different piece you are working on?

Figure 3.14. “Orchid Blooming” (mm. 1-4), by Jon George. From *A Day in the Jungle*. Copyright © 1968 by Summy-Birchard Music. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Alfred Music Publishing Co., Inc.







 m. 1	 m. 2	 m. 3	 m. 4		

Figure 3.15. Picture grid for “Picture This,” used with “Orchid Blooming.”

Imagery Activity 2: “Comic Strip”

Have you ever played a really fast piece and imagined someone running or jumping? Or, have you ever played a slow piece and imagined a more peaceful scene, like a bird gliding through the sky? Sometimes, a piece of music seems to tell a story. Often, the title of a piece can give you a good idea for a story that can go along with the music. Thinking of this story while you play can really make your performance exciting!

About This Activity

One way of telling a story is by using words. Another way of telling a story is by drawing pictures. In this activity, you will draw pictures to create a comic strip that tells a story for a piece of music. Then, you will picture your comic strip in your head as you perform the piece.

An example of a piece that you might study in piano, and use with this activity, is “Stagecoach Comin’!” by Jon George. Figures 3.16 through 3.19 show the music for “Stagecoach Comin’!” and figure 3.20 provides spaces in which you can draw your comic strip for the piece.

In Your Lesson

Your teacher will help you complete the following steps in your lesson:

1. Listen to or play “Stagecoach Comin’!” while you think of a story that could go along with the piece. You may need to listen to or play the piece a few times.

2. With your teacher's help, decide which part of your story happens in each line of the music. Try to use different characters or scenery for lines in which the music sounds different.
3. With a pencil, draw a sketch for the part of the story that happens in the first line of "Stagecoach Comin'!" in the first square in figure 3.20.
4. Set this sketch on the piano next to your music. Play the first line of "Stagecoach Comin'!" while looking at your comic strip square. Does your comic strip square, and the story it shows, seem to fit well with the music? Make changes to your comic strip if you would like.

At Home

At home, review the steps you completed with your teacher in your lesson. Then, complete the following steps. Your teacher may ask you to do all of these steps, or only some of them, this week:

1. Draw a sketch for the part of the story that happens in second line of "Stagecoach Comin'!" in the second square in figure 3.20.
2. Set this sketch on the piano next to your music. Play the second line of "Stagecoach Comin'!" while looking at your comic strip square. Make changes to your comic strip if you would like.
3. Repeat these steps for the third line, and then the fourth line, of "Stagecoach Comin'!"
4. Set your comic strip, with sketches in all four boxes, on the piano.

5. Play “Stagecoach Comin’!” all the way through, without stopping, while looking at your comic strip. Does your comic strip fit well with the music? If you would like, you may make changes to your comic strip.
6. Color your comic strip. The more colorful you can make your pictures, the better!
7. Play “Stagecoach Comin’!” while looking at your bright, colorful comic strip.
8. Play “Stagecoach Comin’!” without actually looking at your comic strip, while trying to picture your comic strip in your head as you play.
9. Away from the piano, look at your comic strip and try to imagine how “Stagecoach Comin’!” sounds.
10. Away from the piano, look at your comic strip and try to imagine how it feels to play “Stagecoach Comin’!”
11. Play “Stagecoach Comin’!” all the way through, without stopping, for an audience – while picturing your comic strip in your head. Your audience might be a parent, a relative, or a friend.
12. Read the questions in the “What Do You Think?” section and think about your answers.

What Do You Think?

After you have finished doing “Comic Strip,” read the following questions and think about your answers. Your teacher will ask you about some of your answers at your next lesson:

1. What happens in your story for “Stagecoach Comin’?” Why did you choose this story?
2. Do you think your comic strip fits well with the music for “Stagecoach Comin’?” Are there specific places in the music that fit well with specific places in your comic strip?
3. Were you able to picture your comic strip in your head while you played “Stagecoach Comin’?”
4. When you lost focus, were you able to bring your attention back to your comic strip?
5. How do you think focusing on your comic strip changed your performance of “Stagecoach Comin’?”
6. How did it feel different to focus on your comic strip while you were performing “Stagecoach Comin’!” for someone else, compared to when you were playing it by yourself?
7. Can you think of another piece that you would like to make a comic strip for?

Figure 3.16. “Stagecoach Comin’!” (mm. 1-4) by Jon George. From *Kaleidoscope Solos Book One*. Copyright © MCMLXXIII by Alfred Publishing Co., Inc. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Alfred Music Publishing Co., Inc.



Figure 3.17. “Stagecoach Comin’!” (mm. 5-8) by Jon George. From *Kaleidoscope Solos Book One*. Copyright © MCMLXXIII by Alfred Publishing Co., Inc. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Alfred Music Publishing Co., Inc.



Figure 3.18. “Stagecoach Comin’!” (mm. 9-12) by Jon George. From *Kaleidoscope Solos Book One*. Copyright © MCMLXXIII by Alfred Publishing Co., Inc. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Alfred Music Publishing Co., Inc.



Figure 3.19. “Stagecoach Comin’!” (mm. 13-16) by Jon George. From *Kaleidoscope Solos Book One*. Copyright © MCMLXXIII by Alfred Publishing Co., Inc. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Alfred Music Publishing Co., Inc.



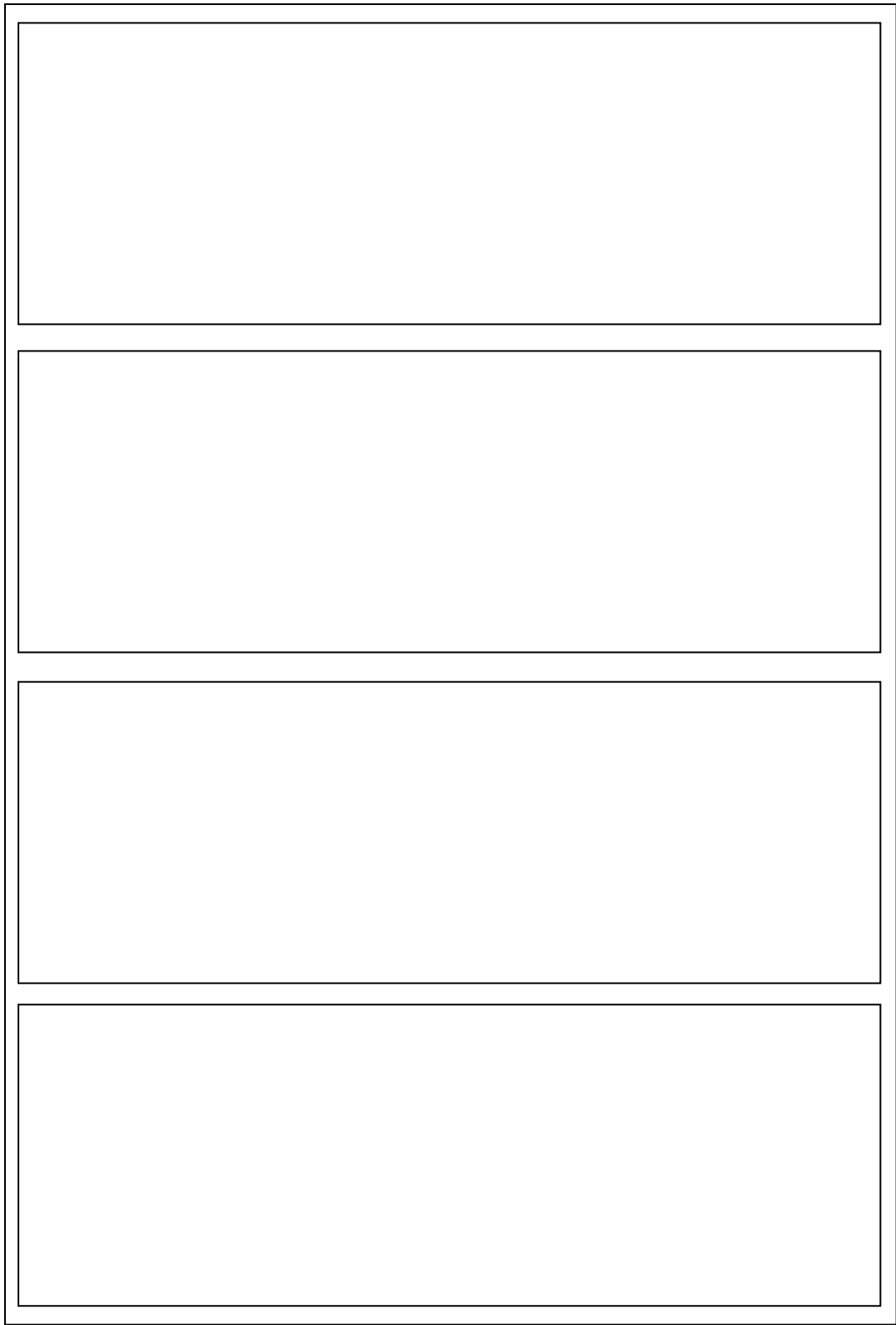


Figure 3.20. Blank squares for “Comic Strip.”

Imagery Activity 3a: “In Character” Version A

Characters are people inside a story who bring the story to life. When you read a book, you might have a favorite character – someone who really makes the story fun, interesting, or exciting. You may even imagine lots of details about that character that aren’t in the book. For example, you might imagine the color of the character’s clothes, the way the character walks, or what the character’s voice sounds like. Can you think of a favorite character from a book or a story that you know?

About This Activity

Have you ever played a character yourself? Maybe you have played dress-up, make-believe, or acted in a play. When you play the part of a character, it is called being in character. Actors and actresses are experts at being in character. To prepare the part of a certain character, actors and actresses ask themselves a lot of questions about that character. Examples of questions that an actor or actress might ask to get in character are shown in figure 3.22.

When you play the piano, you can choose to play the part of a character to bring a story to life. This can make playing a piece more fun and exciting. For example, imagining that you are a princess or a soldier in a piece can be more interesting than just thinking about playing the notes correctly.

An example of a piece that you might study in piano, and use with this activity, is “The Little Princess,” by Jon George. A few measures of “The Little Princess” are shown in figure 3.21.

In Your Lesson

Your teacher will help you complete the following steps in your lesson:

1. Listen to or play “The Little Princess.”
2. Look at the six questions shown in figure 3.22. Think of some answers to these questions, based on the character of the princess from the piece.
3. Using pencil, write down your answers in the blank spaces in figure 3.23.

At Home

At home, review the steps you completed with your teacher in your lesson.

Then, complete the following steps:

1. Play “The Little Princess.”
2. If you did not finish answering the questions in figure 3.22, finish them now.
3. Practice walking and talking like the princess. Imagine that you are wearing the princess’s dress, shoes, or crown. How does the dress feel? Do the shoes make a sound while you walk? Does wearing the crown make you walk differently?
4. Play “The Little Princess” again. As you play, try to picture what you, as the princess, are doing in different parts of the piece. Are you having a happy moment with your friends? Are you having a thoughtful moment by yourself? Are you singing to someone, or about someone? Picture these scenes in your head.

5. When you play “The Little Princess” this week, imagine that you really are the princess. Each time you play the piece, try to imagine more detail about the princess. The more vivid, colorful, and detailed you can make your character, the better.
6. Once you feel comfortable imagining that you are the princess, perform “The Little Princess” in character for a special guest such as a parent, relative, or friend. This might feel really different, and even a little funny, at first. Imagine that you are acting in a play that your special guest has come to see! As you play, focus your attention on all the details of your character. Perform “The Little Princess” in character at least twice this week.
7. Read the questions in the “What Do You Think?” section and think about your answers.

What Do You Think?

After you have finished doing “In Character” Version A, read the following questions and think about your answers. Your teacher will ask you about some of your answers at your next lesson:

1. How does being in character change the way you feel while playing the piece?
2. How did it feel different to be in character by yourself, compared to when you were in character in front of someone else?
3. Were you able to stay in character as you played for someone else?

4. Are there any other details about the princess that you would like to imagine? You may write these details in the blank spaces in figure 3.24 if you would like.
5. Can you think of any extra questions that you would like to add to the list in figure 3.22? How would you answer these questions?

Figure 3.21. “The Little Princess” (mm. 1-4), by Jon George. From *Kaleidoscope Solos Book One*. Copyright © MCMLXXIII by Alfred Publishing Co., Inc. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Alfred Music Publishing Co., Inc.



1. What does the character look like?
2. What is the character wearing?
3. What is the character’s personality?
(Examples: Happy or sad; funny or serious; bold or shy)
4. What does the character’s voice sound like?
5. How does the character walk?
6. What do you think the character is feeling, thinking, or doing, in this piece?

Figure 3.22. List of questions for getting “in character.”

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Figure 3.23. Blank spaces for answers to questions in figure 3.22.

Figure 3.24. Optional blank spaces for other details about the princess.

Imagery Activity 3b: “In Character” Version B

Characters are people inside a story who bring the story to life. When you read a book, you might have a favorite character – someone who really makes the story fun, interesting, or exciting. You may even imagine lots of details about that character that aren’t in the book. For example, you might imagine the color of the character’s clothes, the way the character walks, or what the character’s voice sounds like. Can you think of a favorite character from a book or a story that you know?

About This Activity

Have you ever played a character yourself? Maybe you have played dress-up, make-believe, or acted in a play. When you play the part of a character, it is called being in character. Actors and actresses are experts at being in character. To prepare the part of a certain character, actors and actresses ask themselves a lot of questions about that character. Examples of questions that an actor or actress might ask to get in character are shown in figure 3.26.

When you play the piano, you can choose to play the part of a character to bring a story to life. This can make playing a piece more fun and exciting. For example, imagining that you are a princess or a soldier in a piece can be more interesting than just thinking about playing the notes correctly.

An example of a piece that you might study in piano, and use with this activity, is “The King’s Guard,” by Jon George. A few measures of “The King’s Guard” are shown in figure 3.25.

In Your Lesson

Your teacher will help you complete the following steps in your lesson:

1. Listen to or play “The King’s Guard.”
2. Look at the six questions shown in figure 3.26. Think of some answers to these questions, based on the character of the guard from the piece.
3. Using pencil, write down your answers in the blank spaces in figure 3.27.

At Home

At home, review the steps you completed with your teacher in your lesson.

Then, complete the following steps:

1. Play “The King’s Guard.”
2. If you did not finish answering the questions in figure 3.26, finish them now.
3. Practice walking and talking like the guard. Try standing tall and proud, and walking with long strides. Imagine that you are wearing the guard’s armor. How does it feel? Does the armor make a sound when you walk? Are you holding a sword? Do you have a horse?
4. Play “The King’s Guard” again. As you play, try to picture what you, as the guard, are doing in different parts of the piece. Are you marching in front of the king? Are you joking with the other guards? Are you singing about something? Picture these scenes in your head.

5. When you play “The King’s Guard” this week, imagine that you really are the guard. Each time you play the piece, try to imagine more detail about the guard. The more vivid, colorful, and detailed you can make your character, the better.
6. Once you feel comfortable imagining that you are the guard, perform “The King’s Guard” in character for a special guest such as a parent, relative, or friend. This might feel really different, and even a little funny, at first. Imagine that you are acting in a play that your special guest has come to see! As you play, focus your attention on all the details of your character. Perform “The King’s Guard” in character at least twice this week.
7. Read the questions in the “What Do You Think?” section and think about your answers.

What Do You Think?

After you have finished doing “In Character” Version B, read the following questions and think about your answers. Your teacher will ask you about some of your answers at your next lesson:

1. How does being in character change the way you feel while playing the piece?
2. How did it feel different to be in character by yourself, compared to when you were in character in front of someone else?
3. Were you able to stay in character as you played for someone else?

4. Are there any other details about the king's guard that you would like to imagine? You may write these details in the blank spaces in figure 3.28 if you would like.
5. Can you think of any extra questions that you would like to add to the list in figure 3.26? How would you answer these questions?

Figure 3.25. "The King's Guard" (mm. 1-8), by Jon George. From *Jon George's Festival of Favorites*. Copyright © 1996 Warner Bros. Publications. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Alfred Music Publishing Co., Inc.

Majestically

1

2

5

1

1. What does the character look like?
2. What is the character wearing?
3. What is the character's personality? (Examples: Happy or sad; funny or serious; bold or shy)
4. What does the character's voice sound like?
5. How does the character walk?
6. What do you think the character is feeling, thinking, or doing, in this piece?

Figure 3.26. List of questions for getting “in character.”

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Figure 3.27. Blank spaces for answers to questions in figure 3.26.



Figure 3.28. Optional blank spaces for other details about the king’s guard.

Imagery Activity 4: “Let’s Write a Story”

Sometimes, listening to or playing a piece of music can make you think of a story. You may even be able to imagine this story taking place in your head as you hear the music – almost like a music video for the piece!

About This Activity

One way of telling a story is with words. In this activity, you will use words to write a story for a piece of music. An example of a piece that you might study in piano, and use with this activity, is “Snake Charmer,” by Jon George. The music for “Snake Charmer” is shown in figures 3.29 through 3.32.

In Your Lesson

Your teacher will help you complete the following steps in your lesson:

1. Listen to or play “Snake Charmer” while you think of a story that could go along with the piece. You may need to listen to or play the piece a few times.
2. Fill in the blank spaces for the “Five Ws,” shown in figure 3.33, for your story.
3. With your teacher’s help, decide which parts of the story happen in at least the first and second lines of the music.
4. Fill in the blank spaces in figure 3.34 to write your story for at least the first and second lines of “Snake Charmer.”

At Home

At home, review the steps you completed with your teacher in your lesson.

Then, complete the following steps:

1. If you did not finish writing your story during your lesson, finish it now in the blank spaces in figure 3.34.
2. Play “Snake Charmer” while thinking about your story. Does your story fit with the music? Make changes to your story if you would like.
3. Read the questions in the “What Do You Think?” section and think about your answers.

What Do You Think?

After you have finished doing “Let’s Write a Story,” read the following questions and think about your answers. Your teacher will ask you about some of your answers at your next lesson:

1. Were you able to come up with a story for “Snake Charmer?”
2. What happens in your story?
3. Who are the different characters in your story?
4. Who is your favorite character in the story? Why?
5. What is the most exciting moment in the story? Where does this happen in the music?
6. Can you imagine focusing on this story as you perform “Snake Charmer?”
7. Can you think of a second story, different from the one that you already created, that would also work well for “Snake Charmer?”
8. Can you think of another piece you are working on that could use a story?

Figure 3.29. “Snake Charmer” (mm. 1-4), by Jon George. From *Kaleidoscope Solos Book One*. Copyright © MCMLXXIII by Alfred Publishing Co., Inc. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Alfred Music Publishing Co., Inc.



Figure 3.30. “Snake Charmer” (mm. 5-8), by Jon George. From *Kaleidoscope Solos Book One*. Copyright © MCMLXXIII by Alfred Publishing Co., Inc. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Alfred Music Publishing Co., Inc.



Figure 3.31. “Snake Charmer” (mm. 9-12), by Jon George. From *Kaleidoscope Solos Book One*. Copyright © MCMLXXIII by Alfred Publishing Co., Inc. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Alfred Music Publishing Co., Inc.

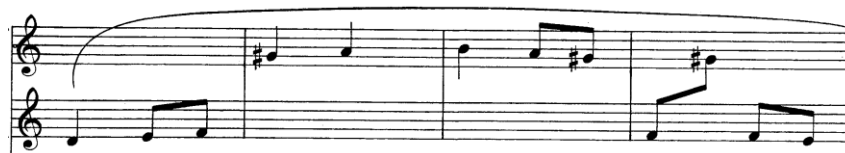


Figure 3.32. “Snake Charmer” (mm. 13-16), by Jon George. From *Kaleidoscope Solos Book One*. Copyright © MCMLXXIII by Alfred Publishing Co., Inc. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Alfred Music Publishing Co., Inc.



Who: _____

What: _____

When: _____

Where: _____

Why: _____

Figure 3.33. Blank spaces for the “Five Ws” for Take Three.

Line 1:

Line 2:

Line 3:

Line 4:

Figure 3.34. Blank spaces for a story based on each line of “Snake Charmer.”

Imagery Activity 5: “Take Three”

In “Let’s Write a Story,” you created a story to go along with a piece of music. Now, you will bring that story to life!

About This Activity

In “Take Three,” you will experiment with three different ways, or “takes,” of using a story that you created for a piece:

- Take One – using words to describe important parts of your story to yourself as you play, like a narrator
- Take Two – seeing your story in your head, like a music video
- Take Three – imagining that you are a character inside of your story or music video

This activity uses the piece “Snake Charmer,” by Jon George, as an example. The music for this piece is shown in figures 3.29 through 3.32 in the activity “Let’s Write a Story.” But, you can really use any piece for “Take Three” – as long as you can play it well, and as long as you have written a story for it.

In Your Lesson

Your teacher will help you do Take One and Take Two in your lesson by completing the following steps:

1. To start Take One, look at the story that you created for “Snake Charmer” in “Let’s Write a Story.”

2. For at least the first two lines of your story, shorten the sentences to just two or three words that are easy to remember. For example, if you wrote “The people are watching the snake charmer play his music,” shorten it to “People watching.” You can call these words cue words. (The activities “On Cue” and “I’m in the Band (or Orchestra)” Part One also involve cue words.)
3. Using pencil, write your cue words in your music.
4. Play the first two lines of “Snake Charmer” while saying your cue words out loud at the beginning of each line. Your teacher will help you at first.
5. To start Take Two, play the first two lines of “Snake Charmer” while you picture the scenes and characters from your story as vividly as you can – almost like a movie in your head!

At Home

At home, review the steps you completed with your teacher in your lesson.

Then, complete the following steps:

1. For Take One, finish creating your cue words for all four lines of “Snake Charmer.”
2. Play “Snake Charmer” while saying your cue words out loud.
3. Play “Snake Charmer” while saying your cue words in your head.
4. For Take Two, play “Snake Charmer” all the way through while picturing your story in your head. Do this step at least three times this

week. Each time you do this step, try to add more details – such as scenery, colors, and even smells – into your imagery. For example, if your story included a line about a gypsy walking by, exactly where does this happen in the music? Picture her when you get to that spot in the music! Can you smell her perfume?

5. For Take Three, choose a specific character from your story that you would like to play. You may choose the snake charmer or another character. (The activity “In Character” also involves playing a character.)
6. Play “Snake Charmer” all the way through, without stopping. As you play, try to experience the action in the story from your character’s point of view! What does it feel like to be that character? What are you doing, seeing, hearing, feeling, and smelling at different places in the music?
7. Practice the three different “takes” as often as you can this week!
8. Read the questions in the “What Do You Think?” section and think about your answers.

What Do You Think?

After you have finished doing “Take Three,” read the following questions and think about your answers. Your teacher will ask you about some of your answers at your next lesson:

1. Which “take” is your favorite, and why?
2. How do the three “takes” make you feel different while you play?

3. Did any of the “takes” change the way you feel about “Snake Charmer?”
How?
4. Can you imagine using any of the “takes” while performing “Snake Charmer” in a recital?
5. How do you think that using one of the three “takes” might change your performance, compared to if you did not use one of the “takes?”

Imagery Activity 6: “It’s All in My Head”

Using your imagination can be really fun. When you were younger, you probably used your imagination to play dress up, or to play house. You probably still use your imagination every day – for example, by imagining what your lunch will taste like, by imagining the characters in a book you are reading, or by imagining what it would be like to be a famous actor, athlete, or someone else.

In addition to being fun, using your imagination can be really helpful. Have you ever done a math problem in your head, instead of on paper? Or, have you ever read silently, instead of out loud? When you do these activities in your head, you are actually using your imagination in a really powerful way. In “It’s All in My Head,” you will practice using your imagination to help you learn a piece of music really well.

About This Activity

In this activity, you will practice playing a piece of music in your head, away from the piano. In other words, you will play a piece in your imagination!

Practicing or playing a piece in your head is sometimes called mental practice.

When you use mental practice, you are actually practicing – but you are the only person who can hear it! Mental practice can help you to learn a piece really well – even better than if you only practiced it on the piano.

In Your Lesson

Your teacher will help you complete the following steps in your lesson:

1. Choose a piece that you can play well. It is best if you have not memorized the piece yet.
2. Bring your music away from the piano.
3. While you read the music, sing, hum, or whistle the tune of the music out loud, with your teacher.
4. While you read the music, sing, hum, or whistle the tune of the music out loud, by yourself.
5. While you read the music, hear the sound of the music in your head, without making any sounds out loud. Repeat this step until it feels comfortable and easy.
6. As you read and hear the music away from the piano, use your fingers to pretend to play the piece on a sturdy surface such as a tabletop or your legs. Actually move your fingers, just as you would if you were playing the piece on a real piano. Try to match your finger movements with the sound of the music in your head.

At Home

At home, review the steps you completed with your teacher in your lesson.

Then, complete the following steps:

1. Continue practicing step 6 from the “In Your Lesson” section. This might feel funny, or even tricky, at first. Just keep practicing this step until it feels comfortable and easy.
2. Repeat this step, but instead of actually moving your fingers just imagine that you are moving them! In other words, read the music with your eyes, hear it in your head, and imagine the movements you would make with your fingers if you were actually playing the piece.
3. Read the questions in the “What Do You Think?” section and think about your answers.

What Do You Think?

After you have finished doing “It’s All in My Head,” read the following questions and think about your answers. Your teacher will ask you about some of your answers at your next lesson:

1. Were you able to sing, hum, or whistle the tune of the music while you read the music?
2. Were you able to hear the sound of the music in your head, without making any sounds out loud?
3. How did it feel to pretend to play the piece with your fingers away from the piano?

4. How did it feel to pretend to play the piece in your imagination, without actually moving your fingers?
5. Do you think that doing mental practice is easier, more difficult, or equally difficult than doing regular practice? Why?
6. Why do you think that being able to hear and practice a piece away from the piano might be helpful?

Imagery Activity 7: “Let’s Give an Imaginary Performance” Part One

People often imagine pictures, sounds, smells, tastes, or feelings in their heads. When people do this, it is called imagery. Imagery means imagining an experience in your head.

About This Activity

In this activity, you will use imagery to help you give an imaginary performance. You will begin by playing a piece on the piano and paying special attention to all of the things that you see, hear, or feel when performing it. Then, you will imagine these things while playing the piece in your head! Figures 3.35, 3.36, and 3.37 show examples of things you might think about while performing.

In Your Lesson

Your teacher will help you complete the following steps in your lesson:

1. Choose a piece that you can play well.

2. Play the piece, or a section of the piece, all the way through without stopping.
3. Read the questions in figures 3.35, 3.36, and 3.37.
4. Choose one of the following three senses: seeing, hearing, or feeling with your body.
5. Play the piece again. As you play, try to really focus on what you are experiencing with this sense! Thinking about the questions in either figure 3.35, 3.36, or 3.37 may help you with this step.
6. Move away from the piano and listen to your teacher play the piece. While your teacher plays, imagine that you are actually playing the piece, just like you did a minute ago. (You may close your eyes if it helps you with your imaginary performance.) As you give this imaginary performance, focus on the one sense that you thought about before. What do you see while you play the piece? Or, what do you hear? Or, what do you feel with your body?

At Home

At home, review the steps you completed with your teacher in your lesson.

Then, complete the following steps:

1. Play your piece while focusing on one particular sense: seeing, hearing, or feeling with your body. As you play, try to really focus on what you are experiencing with this sense! Thinking about the questions in either figure 3.35, 3.36, or 3.37 may help you with this step.

2. Away from the piano, give an imaginary performance of the piece.
Imagine that you are actually playing the piece, just like you did a minute ago. (You may close your eyes if it helps you with your imaginary performance.) As you give this imaginary performance, focus on the one sense that you thought about before. Try to re-create the sights, sounds, or feelings that you experienced while you were actually playing! What do you see while you play the piece? Or, what do you hear? Or, what do you feel with your body?
3. Repeat these two steps – actually playing, and then giving an imaginary performance – for each of the three senses this week.
4. Read the questions in the “What Do You Think?” section and think about your answers.

What Do You Think?

After you have finished doing “Let’s Give an Imaginary Performance” Part One, read the following questions and think about your answers. Your teacher will ask you about some of your answers at your next lesson:

1. Were you able to give an imaginary performance?
2. Which sense was your favorite – seeing, hearing, or feeling with your body? Why?
3. When you focused on feeling with your body, which part of your body was it most helpful to focus on, and why?

4. Why do you think it is a good idea to notice what you are seeing, hearing, or feeling with your body during a performance?
5. Can you imagine choosing one sense – such as seeing, hearing, or feeling with your body – to focus on during a real performance?
6. How do you think focusing on seeing, hearing, or feeling with your body might change your performance, compared to if you did not focus on one of these senses?

Seeing

1. Do you see the music rack, the keys, or your hands while you play?
2. Do you switch your view between different things during the piece?
3. Which view do you like best, and why?

Figure 3.35. Questions for visual imagery in “Let’s Give an Imaginary Performance.”

Hearing

1. What does the music sound like from where you are sitting on the piano bench?
2. Can you hear the difference between the loud and soft parts?
3. Can you hear the sound of the melody really clearly?

Figure 3.36. Questions for aural imagery in “Let’s Give an Imaginary Performance.”

Feeling with Your Body

1. How does your body, or a certain part of your body, feel when you play this piece?
2. Do your arms feel heavy?
3. Do your fingertips feel different when you are playing loud or soft, staccato or legato?

Figure 3.37. Questions for physical or kinesthetic imagery in “Let’s Give an Imaginary Performance.”

Imagery Activity 8: “Let’s Give an Imaginary Performance” Part Two

In the first version of “Let’s Give an Imaginary Performance,” you performed a piece in your imagination. In your imaginary performance, you focused on one particular sense at a time: seeing, hearing, or feeling with your body. In other words, you imagined what you saw, heard, or felt as you performed a piece in your imagination. You may have found that giving an imaginary performance made you more aware of all of the things that you experience when you perform.

About This Activity

In this activity, you will give an imaginary performance of a piece in a slightly different way – by imagining that you are actually playing in a recital! You will specifically focus on what you would see, hear, or feel at the piano in the place where your recital will be held.

In Your Lesson

Your teacher will help you complete the following steps in your lesson:

1. Choose one of the following three senses: seeing, hearing, or feeling with your body.
2. Find the blank list, in figure 3.38, 3.39, or 3.40, that matches the sense that you chose.
3. Using the blank spaces in this figure, make a list of things that you might notice with this sense while playing in a recital. One example has already been listed to help you get started.
4. Choose one piece that you will be playing in a recital or other performance in a few weeks or so.
5. Play your piece while trying to imagine what you might experience with your chosen sense while playing at the actual recital! This will feel different from your usual way of playing, because in a recital there are different things for you to notice with your senses. Thinking about your list may help you with this step.

At Home

At home, review the steps you completed with your teacher in your lesson.

Then, complete the following steps:

1. Play your piece while focusing on the sense that you chose during your lesson: seeing, hearing, or feeling with your body. As you play, try to imagine what you might experience with this sense while playing at the

actual recital! Thinking about the list that you made during your lesson may help you with this step.

2. Complete the lists in figures 3.38, 3.39, and 3.40 for the two senses that you have not yet completed.
3. Focus on one of these three senses, while playing your recital piece, at least once each day that you practice this week. Make sure that you have practiced each of the three senses by the end of the week.
4. Perform your recital piece for an audience member such as a parent, relative, or friend. Performing includes walking up to the piano, playing your piece, taking a bow afterward, and anything else that is part of the performance routine that your teacher has taught you. As you play, imagine the details that you might experience with one of your senses while playing at the actual recital.
5. Read the questions in the “What Do You Think?” section and think about your answers.

What Do You Think?

After you have finished doing “Let’s Give an Imaginary Performance” Part Two, read the following questions and think about your answers. Your teacher will ask you about some of your answers at your next lesson:

1. Were you able to imagine specific details, with each sense, for a recital performance?

2. Which sense was your favorite – seeing, hearing, or feeling with your body? Why?
3. Of all of the details that you paid attention to in this activity, which one(s) do you think you usually notice the most during a real recital?
4. Why do think it is important to think about these special details as you prepare for a recital?

<p><u>Seeing</u></p> <p><i><u>The look of the shiny grand piano, instead of my piano at home</u></i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Figure 3.38. Blank list for visual imagery for “Let’s Give an Imaginary Performance” Part Two.

Hearing

The sound of paper programs rustling in the audience _____

Figure 3.39. Blank list for aural imagery for “Let’s Give an Imaginary Performance” Part Two.

Feeling with Your Body

The feel of my toes inside of my dress shoes as I use the pedal _____

Figure 3.40. Blank list for physical or kinesthetic imagery for “Let’s Give an Imaginary Performance” Part Two.

Imagery Activity 9: “Let’s Watch an Imaginary Performance”

You may already know that when you imagine an experience in your head, it is called imagery. You may also know that there are a lot of different types of imagery, and that you can use imagery when you play piano.

About This Activity

In this activity, you are going to use imagery to imagine what you look and sound like when you play the piano in a recital. In other words, you are going to imagine that you are in the audience, watching yourself perform! You can also think of this as watching a “video” of yourself perform.⁴¹⁰

In Your Lesson

Your teacher will help you complete the following steps in your lesson:

1. Choose a piece that you can play well.
2. Play your piece all the way through, without stopping. As you play, try to think about any features of the piece – and your performance – that are really striking. In other words, what would someone notice about the piece, or your performance, even if he or she were sitting in the last row of the recital hall?

⁴¹⁰ Craig R. Hall, “Imagery in Sport and Exercise,” in *Handbook of Sport Psychology*, 2nd ed., ed. Robert N. Singer, Heather A. Hausenblas, and Christopher M. Janelle (New York: Wiley, 2001), 537.

3. Play your piece again. This time, try to picture what your body might look like to someone watching you from the audience. How do your body movements affect the sounds that you are creating?
4. Move away from the piano and listen to your teacher play the piece. While your teacher plays, imagine that you are actually playing the piece, just like you did a minute ago. (You may close your eyes if it helps you with your imaginary performance.) Can you hear the striking features that you noticed before? Can you imagine what your body would look like while performing these passages?

At Home

At home, review the steps you completed with your teacher in your lesson.

Then, complete the following steps:

1. Sit down in a comfortable place, away from the piano.
2. Imagine yourself walking up to the piano in a recital, sitting down on the bench, and beginning to play. (You may close your eyes if it helps you to imagine the performance. You may also keep your music close by if it helps you to follow along with the performance.)
3. Imagine yourself performing the entire piece, or at least one section of the piece. As you watch the “video” of your imaginary performance, try to hear the music in your head – especially the striking musical features you noticed during your lesson. And, try to visualize the gestures you

make with your body as you perform. Do the loud parts look and sound really exciting? Do the soft parts look and sound really tender?

4. At the end of the imaginary performance, visualize yourself standing up and taking a bow. You look so proud of your performance – and you should be!
5. Watch a “video” of your imaginary performance of this piece at least three times this week. Each time you watch the “video,” try to imagine your performance in greater detail. Try to hear the music even more clearly, or try to imagine more subtle things that you do with your body during the performance.

What Do You Think?

After you have finished doing “Let’s Watch an Imaginary Performance,” read the following questions and think about your answers. Your teacher will ask you about some of your answers at your next lesson:

1. How did it feel to watch a “video” of yourself giving an imaginary performance?
2. Which physical gestures were the most dramatic in your “video?” How did these gestures affect the sound of the music?
3. What surprised you about watching the “video” of yourself?
4. Were you able to picture yourself performing? Were you able to hear the music in your head as you watched the “video?”

5. How do you think watching a “video” of yourself might help you prepare for an upcoming performance?

Imagery Activity 10: “I’m in the Band (or Orchestra)” Part One

The piano is a very unique instrument. As a pianist, you get to play really low notes, really high notes, and notes in the middle. You can also play more than one note at the same time. These things are not possible on many other instruments!

About This Activity

Even though the piano sounds great all by itself, it can be fun to imagine the sounds of other instruments when you play it. For example, when you play a piece on the piano, you can have fun imagining that the sound coming out of the instrument is actually the sound of a flute, a clarinet, a violin, or any other instrument. Sometimes, imagining these sounds while you play seems to make the music sound even better. In this activity, you will imagine the sounds of other instruments while you play the piano.

An example of a piece that you might study in piano, and use with this activity, is “The Sad Gypsy,” by Jon George. Excerpts from “The Sad Gypsy” are shown in figures 3.41 and 3.42.

In Your Lesson

Your teacher will help you complete the following steps in your lesson:

1. Play the first two lines of “The Sad Gypsy.” Which hand plays the melody?
2. Choose an instrument that you can imagine playing the melody in these lines. Try to match the instrument to the sound of the melody in this passage. In other words, choose a low instrument for a low melody, or a high instrument for a high melody.
3. Play the first two lines of “The Sad Gypsy” with your left hand alone. As you play, imagine that you are actually creating the sound of the instrument that you chose in step 2. Try to hear the sound clearly in your mind! And, try to visualize someone – either another person or yourself – playing the melody on that instrument.
4. Play the first two lines of “The Sad Gypsy,” shown in figure 3.41, with both hands. As you play, focus on the sound and images of your chosen instrument for the left hand melody.
5. Now, choose a different low instrument to play the melody in the third and fourth lines of “The Sad Gypsy.” The first part of this music is shown in figure 3.42. For example, if you chose a cello for the first two lines, you might choose a tuba, bass clarinet, or bassoon here. Your teacher can give you other ideas if you would like.
6. Play the third and fourth lines of “The Sad Gypsy.” As you play, imagine that you are actually creating the sound of the new instrument that you chose in step 5. Start with the left hand alone, and then play

with both hands. How does this imagining this new instrument make you hear the music differently than in the first two lines?

7. Play the entire piece without stopping. As you play the first half of the piece, imagine the sound of the first instrument, and visualize someone – maybe even yourself – playing that instrument. As you play the second half of the piece, imagine the sound and images of the second instrument.
8. Play “The Sad Gypsy” all the way through while your teacher sings the cue words shown in figures 3.43 and 3.44 or 3.45. (The activities “On Cue” and “Take Three” also involve cue words.)
9. Repeat step 8 while you sing these cue words out loud with your teacher.

At Home

At home, review the steps you completed with your teacher in your lesson.

Then, complete the following steps:

1. Play “The Sad Gypsy” all the way through, while imagining the sounds and visual images of your chosen instruments, at least once each day that you practice this week.
2. Practice using the cue words shown in figures 3.43, 3.44, and 3.45. First, sing the cue words out loud while you play. Then, sing the cue words in your head while you play.

3. Perform “The Sad Gypsy” for another person – such as a parent, relative, or friend – while imagining the sounds and visual images of your chosen instruments.
4. Read the questions in the “What Do You Think?” section and think about your answers.

What Do You Think?

After you have finished doing “I’m in the Band (or Orchestra)” Part One, read the following questions and think about your answers. Your teacher will ask you about some of your answers at your next lesson:

1. Were you able to choose an instrument for the first half of the piece?
How about for the second half?
2. How do your two instruments sound different from one another?
3. Did you imagine another person, or yourself, playing each instrument?
What did this look like for each instrument?
4. Did you use the cue words in figures 3.43, 3.44, and 3.45? How did using these cue words affect your performance?
5. Were you able to imagine the different instruments while you performed “The Sad Gypsy” for another person?
6. Can you imagine performing “The Sad Gypsy” in a recital, while imagining the sounds of the different instruments?

7. How do you think imagining the different instruments changed your performance of “The Sad Gypsy,” compared to when you were not imagining the different instruments?
8. Can you think of other instruments – besides the two that you already chose – that could be used to play the melody in “The Sad Gypsy?”
9. Can you think of another piece you are working on in which imagining the sounds of different instruments might help you?

Figure 3.41. “The Sad Gypsy” (mm. 1-4), by Jon George. From *Kaleidoscope Solos Book Two*. Copyright © MCMLXXIII by Alfred Publishing Co., Inc. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Alfred Music Publishing Co., Inc.

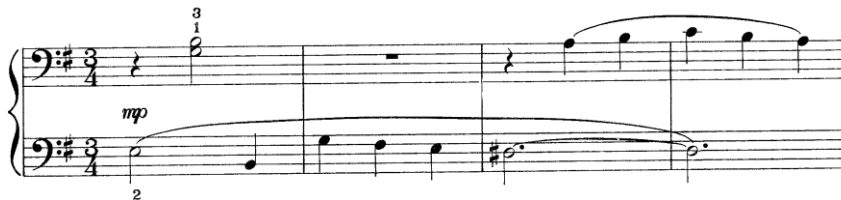


Figure 3.42. “The Sad Gypsy” (mm. 9-12), by Jon George. From *Kaleidoscope Solos Book Two*. Copyright © MCMLXXIII by Alfred Publishing Co., Inc. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Alfred Music Publishing Co., Inc.



Figure 3.43. Optional cue words for “I’m in the Band (or Orchestra)” Part One, used with “The Sad Gypsy” (mm. 7-8), by Jon George. From *Kaleidoscope Solos Book Two*. Copyright © MCMLXXIII by Alfred Publishing Co., Inc. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Alfred Music Publishing Co., Inc. Cue words created by the author.

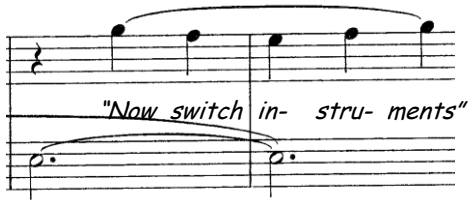


Figure 3.44. Optional cue words for “I’m in the Band (or Orchestra)” Part One, used with “The Sad Gypsy” (mm. 13-16), by Jon George. From *Kaleidoscope Solos Book Two*. Copyright © MCMLXXIII by Alfred Publishing Co., Inc. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Alfred Music Publishing Co., Inc. Cue words created by the author.



Figure 3.45. Alternate cue words for “I’m in the Band (or Orchestra)” Part One, used with “The Sad Gypsy” (mm. 13-16), by Jon George. From *Kaleidoscope Solos Book Two*. Copyright © MCMLXXIII by Alfred Publishing Co., Inc. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Alfred Music Publishing Co., Inc. Cue words created by the author.



Imagery Activity 11: “I’m in the Band (or Orchestra)” Part Two

Have you ever imagined the sounds of other instruments while playing the piano? For example, you might imagine the sound of a flute while playing a beautiful treble clef melody. Or, you might imagine the sound of a cello while playing a smooth left hand passage. It can be really fun to imagine that as you play a piece on the piano, you are actually creating the sounds of other instruments.

About This Activity

In this activity, you will transform a piano piece into a different type of instrumental piece – in your imagination! You will do this by imagining the sounds of a variety of different instruments and ensembles as you play. You might choose to imagine a symphony, a concerto with an orchestra and a soloist, a string quartet, or any other type of piece.

An example of a piece that you might study in piano, and use with this activity, is “Capriccio,” by Jon George. The music for “Capriccio” is shown in figure 3.46.

In Your Lesson

Your teacher will help you complete the following steps in your lesson:

1. Listen to or play “Capriccio” all the way through.
2. Look at the music for “Capriccio,” shown in figure 3.46. Notice the six blank lines that are added to the music, highlighting six different passages.

3. Play the first two passages of “Capriccio,” one at a time, on the piano.
4. Choose instruments or ensembles that seem appropriate for each of these two individual passages. For example, you might choose a high-pitched solo instrument for a treble clef melody, or a low-pitched instrument for a bass clef melody. Or, you might choose a large ensemble, such as a full orchestra, for a strong and impressive passage.
5. In the first two blank lines in figure 3.46, write the name of your chosen instruments or ensembles.
6. Play the first two lines of “Capriccio” while imagining that you are actually creating the sounds of the instruments or ensembles that you chose in step 4. Really try to hear the sound of each instrument clearly in your mind as you play. And, try to picture different musicians taking turns to play each section. If you chose a piano for one section, picture yourself in a tuxedo or evening gown, playing in front of an orchestra! When the instrumentation changes, try to instantly shift the sound you hear and the images you picture in your mind.

At Home

At home, review the steps you completed with your teacher in your lesson.

Then, complete the following steps:

1. Finish choosing instruments for all six sections of “Capriccio,” shown in figure 3.46.

2. Play “Capriccio” all the way through, while imagining the sounds and visual images of your chosen instruments, at least once each day that you practice this week. With each change of instrumentation, try to instantly shift the sound you hear and the images you picture in your mind.
3. Perform “Capriccio” for another person – such as a parent, relative, or friend – while imagining the sounds and visual images of your chosen instruments.
4. Read the questions in the “What Do You Think?” section and think about your answers.

What Do You Think?

After you have finished doing “I’m in the Band (or Orchestra)” Part Two, read the following questions and think about your answers. Your teacher will ask you about some of your answers at your next lesson:

1. Were you able to choose different instruments, or different ensembles, for the different sections of “Capriccio?” Why did you choose certain instruments or ensembles?
2. Were you able to shift focus from instrument to instrument as you moved from section to section?
3. Which type of imagery did you like best – imagining the sounds of the instruments, picturing the performers, or both?
4. How do you think imagining these instruments might change your performance of “Capriccio?”

5. Which section of the piece do you think is especially effective, based on the instrument or ensemble you chose for it?
6. How does the music sound and feel different when you imagine a soloist, compared to an ensemble?
7. Were you able to imagine the different instruments while you performed for someone else? How did this feel different than imagining the instruments while you played by yourself?

Figure 3.46. “Capriccio,” by Jon George. From *Artistry at the Piano Repertoire Book Four*. Copyright © 2007 by Artistry Press International. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Artistry Press International. Numbered spaces added by the author.

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Capriccio" by Jon George, arranged in six systems. Each system consists of a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and fingerings. Key markings and dynamics include:

- Section 1:** Marked *animato*. Includes a first ending bracket.
- Section 2:** Marked *molto*. Includes a first ending bracket.
- Section 3:** Marked *più di mf* and *serioso*. Includes a first ending bracket.
- Section 4:** Marked *energico*. Includes a first ending bracket.
- Section 5:** Includes a first ending bracket.
- Section 6:** Marked *senza rit.*. Includes a first ending bracket.

Numbered spaces (1-6) are indicated by small boxes above the first measure of each system, corresponding to the question numbers in the text above.

Imagery Activity 12: “A Colorful Performance” Part One

Have you ever noticed that thinking of a particular color can make you feel a certain way? Imagine your favorite color. (You may close your eyes if you would like.) How does this color make you feel? Does it make you feel happy, energetic, thoughtful, or something else?

Sometimes, thinking of the same color might make you feel a certain way one day, and a different way another day. For example, purple might make you feel proud one day, and cheery the next day. Thinking of different shades of the same color can also make you feel different. For example, bright blue might make you feel bold and energetic, while light blue might make you feel relaxed and calm.

About This Activity

In this activity, you will imagine different colors as you play a piece of music. Imagining different colors in a piece can make the piece seem more special, and can also help you to focus on the music while you perform.

An example of a piece that you might study in piano, and use with this activity, is “Lotus Blossom,” by Jon George. The music for “Lotus Blossom” is shown in figures 3.47 and 3.48.

In Your Lesson

Your teacher will help you complete the following steps in your lesson:

1. Play the first line of “Lotus Blossom,” shown in figure 3.47. Be sure to play it *piano* and *legato*.

2. Take a moment to think about this music. Which color does this music make you think of? Or, which color do you think fits most perfectly with the sound of this music? Which shade of that color seems to fit this music best?
3. Play the first line of “Lotus Blossom” again. This time, imagine the color that you chose while you play. You might imagine that as you play each note, you are painting that color in the sky. Or, you might simply imagine that the whole sky is that color already! Or, you might imagine a reflection of that color in a pool of water. Do you think that the color you chose works well for this music? You may try different colors if you would like.
4. Play the second line of “Lotus Blossom,” shown in figure 3.48. Even though the music is very similar to the music in the first line, choose a different color – or a different shade of the same color.
5. Play the second line of “Lotus Blossom,” while imagining the second color in your head.
6. Play the entire piece, without stopping. As you play the first line, imagine the first color. It is so beautiful! As you get to the second line, imagine the color completely changing to the second color. That color is so beautiful too, but in a different way!

At Home

At home, review the steps you completed with your teacher in your lesson.

Then, complete the following steps:

1. Play “Lotus Blossom” all the way through, while imagining your colors, at least once each day that you practice this week.
2. At least once this week, play “Lotus Blossom” while imagining different colors, instead of the ones you chose during your lesson.
3. Perform “Lotus Blossom” for an audience – such as a parent, relative, or friend – while imagining your favorite colors and your color change.
Really focus on your colors as you play!
4. Read the questions in the “What Do You Think?” section and think about your answers.

What Do You Think?

After you have finished doing “A Colorful Performance” Part One, read the following questions and think about your answers. Your teacher will ask you about some of your answers at your next lesson:

1. Were you able to choose a color for each line of the music?
2. Why did you choose each color for each line?
3. Which shades were your colors? Were they bright, dark, or light?
4. Were you able to imagine these colors in your head as you played?

5. How did you picture each color in your head – as paint, as the sky, as a plain block of color, as a pool of colorful water, or as something else?
What did this look like?
6. Did the color change, between the two lines, make you hear each line differently? How?
7. Were you able to focus on each color throughout your performance?
8. How do you think that imagining colors might change your performance of “Lotus Blossom,” compared to if you were not imagining colors?
9. Can you imagine thinking of these colors while playing “Lotus Blossom” in a recital?
10. Can you think of another piece you are working on that might work well with “A Colorful Performance?”

Figure 3.47. “Lotus Blossom” (mm. 1-4), by Jon George. From *Jon George’s Festival of Favorites*. Copyright © 1996 Warner Bros. Publications. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Alfred Music Publishing Co., Inc.



Figure 3.48. “Lotus Blossom” (mm. 5-8), by Jon George. From *Jon George’s Festival of Favorites*. Copyright © 1996 Warner Bros. Publications. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Alfred Music Publishing Co., Inc.



Imagery Activity 13: “A Colorful Performance” Part Two

You have probably noticed that different colors can influence your emotions in different ways. For example, the color yellow may make you feel cheery, while the color green may make you feel calm. Sometimes, different emotions can even make you think of different colors! For example, the expression “feeling blue” is sometimes used to describe the feeling of sadness.

About This Activity

In addition to influencing the way you feel, colors can also influence your piano performances. In this activity, you will imagine different colors as you play a piece of music. Imagining different colors as you perform a piece can help to make your performance more interesting, fun, and meaningful. It can also help you to focus on the music while you perform.

An example of a piece that you might study in piano, and use with this activity, is “Reflets dans l’eau,” by Jon George. The music for “Reflets dans l’eau” is shown in figures 3.49 and 3.50.

In Your Lesson

Your teacher will help you complete the following steps in your lesson:

1. Listen to or play “Reflets dans l’eau” all the way through. As you listen or play, try to notice specific places in the music that seem to suggest a color change, or a shift in the type of sound being created. Color changes often occur with section changes.

2. Play the A section of “Reflets dans l’eau,” shown in the first three lines in figure 3.49, with dynamics and pedal.
3. Take a moment to think about this music. Which color does this music make you think of? Or, which color do you think fits most perfectly with the sound of this music? Which shade of that color seems to fit this music best?
4. Play the A section of “Reflets dans l’eau” again, while imagining the color that you chose. You might imagine that as you play each note, you are painting that color in the sky. Or, you might imagine a reflection of that color in a pool of water, or a large canvas that is completely covered in that color. Does that color work well for this music?
5. Play the slightly different version of the A section of “Reflets dans l’eau,” shown mm. 19-35 in figure 3.50. Even though this music is very similar to the music in the first A section, choose a different color – or a different shade of the same color – for this section.
6. Play the section version of the A section while imagining your second color in your head. Does imagining this color make you hear the music differently than in the first A section?
7. Play mm. 15-18, shown in the last line in figure 3.49. As you play, imagine that the crescendo and decrescendo in this passage represent a transition from your first color to your second color. Visualize the first color smoothly changing and blending, and finally emerging as the new color in m. 19.

At Home

At home, review the steps you completed with your teacher in your lesson.

Then, complete the following steps:

1. Play mm. 1-34 of “Reflets dans l’eau” while focusing on your color imagery.
2. Play the ending of “Reflets dans l’eau,” shown in the last four measures in figure 3.50. Begin this passage by imagining the color of the second A section, which began in m. 19 at the beginning of figure 3.50. As you play, imagine this color transforming into a different color of your choice.
3. Experiment with several different color transformations for the ending. Try transforming back to the original color from the beginning of the piece. Try transforming to a completely different color. Try fading to a lighter shade of the same color, or intensifying to a darker shade of the same color. Try fading to black, white, or clear.
4. Choose your favorite color transformation for the ending of “Reflets dans l’eau.”
5. Play “Reflets dans l’eau” all the way through without stopping. As you play the first section, enjoy imagining the first color. It is so beautiful! As you get to the first color transition, imagine that color subtly blending to the next color. That is so beautiful too, but in a different way! As you end the piece, focus on your favorite color transformation.

6. Perform “Reflets dans l’eau,” while focusing on your colors and color transformations, for an audience member such as a parent, relative, or friend.
7. Read the questions in the “What Do You Think?” section and think about your answers.

What Do You Think?

After you have finished doing “A Colorful Performance” Part Two, read the following questions and think about your answers. Your teacher will ask you about some of your answers at your next lesson:

1. Were you able to choose colors for the different sections of “Reflets dans l’eau?”
2. Why did you choose each color for each section?
3. Which shades were your colors? Were they bright, dark, or light?
4. How did you picture each color in your head – as the sky, as water, as a canvas, or as something else? What did this look like?
5. How did imagining the color changes make you hear the sections of the piece differently? Do you think that these color changes were noticeable in your performance?
6. Of the different color transformations that you tried for the ending, which one was your favorite? Why?
7. Were you able to focus on your colors and color changes throughout your performance?

8. How did it feel different to give “A Colorful Performance” for yourself, compared to when you performed for someone else? Were you able to focus on your colors, even in front of your audience?

Figure 3.49. “Reflets dans l’eau” (mm. 1-18), by Jon George. From *Artistry at the Piano Repertoire Book Two*. Copyright © 2006 by Artistry Press International. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Artistry Press International.

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Reflets dans l'eau" by Jon George, covering measures 1 through 18. The score is written for piano in 2/4 time and consists of four systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef). The first system includes performance instructions: *mp* la melodia enfatico ma teneramente, *p*, and *pedal lightly*. The second system includes the instruction *simile*. The third system is mostly blank with some notes. The fourth system includes the instruction *poco rit.* at the end. The music features a melodic line in the right hand and a rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand, with various dynamics and articulation marks.

Figure 3.50. “Reflets dans l’eau” (mm. 19-39), by Jon George. From *Artistry at the Piano Repertoire Book Two*. Copyright © 2006 by Artistry Press International. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Artistry Press International.

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Reflets dans l'eau" by Jon George, covering measures 19 through 39. The score is written for piano and consists of four systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef). The first system includes dynamic markings of *mp* and *p*, and the tempo marking *a tempo*. A *simile* marking is placed below the first system. The second system continues the melodic and harmonic development. The third system features a *diminuendo al fine* marking. The fourth system concludes with a *ritardando* marking and a final cadence. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 1-5 above notes, and a pedaling instruction (81) is shown in the bass clef of the final system.

Imagery Activity 14: “A Dynamic and Colorful Performance”

You probably already know that when you perform, it is a good idea to try to focus on the music. When you focus on the music, you can stay connected to your performance, instead of thinking about other things that don’t really matter at that moment.

About This Activity

One good way of focusing while you play is to concentrate on one specific part of the music at a time. In this activity, you will focus on something different in each different section of a piece. You will start by focusing on the dynamics of the piece – and you will use colors to help you do this. Then, in a different section of the piece, you will focus on your breathing. Practicing this activity can help you to stay connected to the music, and to your performance, as you play.

An example of a piece that you might study in piano, and use with this activity, is “Waltz,” by Jon George. The music for “Waltz” is shown in figures 3.52 and 3.53.

In Your Lesson

Your teacher will help you complete the following steps in your lesson:

1. Play “Waltz” all the way through, paying special attention to the dynamics.
2. Label the A section and the B section in your score.
3. Find and circle all of the dynamic indications in the score for “Waltz” (*crescendo*, *diminuendo*, *mf*, etc.).
4. Choose a color that seems appropriate for loud sounds, including different intensities of loud sounds such as *mf*, *f*, and *ff*. For example, if you choose green for loud, you might color bright green for *mf*, dark green for *f*, and very dark green for *ff*. Or, you might simply choose one green colored pencil, and shade it lighter (pressing more lightly as you

color) for *mf* and darker (pressing more strongly as you color) for *f*.

Shade these “loud” colors in the key in figure 3.51.

5. Use colored pencil to color in your circles for every loud dynamic marking in at least the first two lines of “Waltz.” Color different shades for different degrees of loud, matching the colors in your key in figure 3.51.
6. Choose a color that seems appropriate for soft sounds, including different intensities of soft sounds such as *pp*, *p*, and *mp*. Shade these “soft” colors in the key in figure 3.51.
7. Use colored pencil to color in your circles for every soft dynamic marking in at least the first two lines of “Waltz.” Color different shades for different degrees of soft, matching the colors in your key in figure 3.51.
8. Now, play the first phrase of “Waltz,” shown in the first two lines in figure 3.52. Decide where you would like to place the peak of the *crescendo* in this phrase, and what dynamic volume you would like to assign it (*f*, *ff*, etc.). Your teacher can help you with this step if you would like.
9. Using a pencil, add this dynamic marking in the appropriate measure in your score. Then, circle it and color it in as you did for the other dynamic markings.

10. Play the first phrase of “Waltz” again. As you play, try to really focus on the look of the colors you added to the page. Try to match the look of these colors to the sound of your dynamics.

At Home

At home, review the steps you completed with your teacher in your lesson.

Then, complete the following steps:

1. Repeat steps 7 and 8 in the “In Your Lesson” section – adding a dynamic indication to the score, circling it, and coloring it in – for the second phrase of “Waltz,” beginning on the last note in the second line in figure 3.52.
2. Play the entire A section of “Waltz,” shown in figure 3.52. As you play, try to really focus on the look of the colors you added to the page. Try to match the look of these colors to the sound of your dynamics.
3. Play the B section (mm. 17-32) of “Waltz,” shown in the first four lines in figure 3.53.
4. Choose a breathing routine for the B section. One example of a breathing routine that you could use in the B section is shown in figure 3.54. (See the activity “Swimmer Breathing” for a detailed example of using breathing routines.)
5. Once you have found a comfortable breathing routine, pencil the words “in” and “out” in the appropriate measures in your score.

6. Rehearse your breathing routine for the B section until it feels comfortable.
7. Play “Waltz” all the way through while looking at the music. As you play the A section, focus on your dynamic colors, and try to match the look of these colors to the sound of your dynamics. As you play the B section, focus on your breathing routine, and imagine that your breath is inflating and deflating the *crescendos* and *diminuendos* in the music just like it is inflating and deflating your lungs. As you return to the A section, refocus your attention onto your dynamic colors.
8. Play “Waltz” all the way through from memory. As you play the A section, focus on your dynamic colors, and try visualize the look of your colors – either on the page, or in a different way. As you play the B section, focus on your breathing routine. As you return to the A section, refocus your attention onto your dynamic colors.
9. Perform “Waltz” for a parent, relative, or friend while focusing on your dynamic colors and your breathing routine.
10. Read the questions in the “What Do You Think?” section and think about your answers.

What Do You Think?

After you have finished doing “A Dynamic and Colorful Performance,” read the following questions and think about your answers. Your teacher will ask you about some of your answers at your next lesson:

1. Were you able to focus on your dynamic colors, and then your breathing routine, and then your dynamic colors again, as you performed “Waltz?”
2. When you lost focus, were you able to bring your attention back to the music?
3. Do you think that focusing on your dynamic colors, and then your breathing routine, and then your dynamic colors made a difference in your performance of “Waltz?” How?
4. Were you able to focus on these things while you performed “Waltz” for an audience member? How did this feel different than when you focused while playing by yourself?
5. Why do you think it might be a good idea to shift focus in the middle of a piece?
6. When you played “Waltz” from memory, how did you focus on your dynamic colors – by visualizing your colorful circles from the music, or by picturing the colors in a different way?
7. Do you think that focusing on the colors affected your performance of the dynamics?
8. Which breathing routine worked best for the B section of “Waltz?” Why?
9. Can you think of something else that you could focus on – other than a breathing routine – in the B section of “Waltz?”

10. Can you think of an entirely different performance strategy for “Waltz” that you would like to try (for example, focusing on other things besides colors and breathing)?

Figure 3.51. Blank key for color scheme for “A Dynamic and Colorful Performance.”

<i>pp</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>mp</i>	<i>mf</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>ff</i>
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Figure 3.52. “Waltz” (mm. 1-16), by Jon George. From *Artistry at the Piano Repertoire Book Four*. Copyright © 2007 by Artistry Press International. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Artistry Press International.

The musical score for "Waltz" by Jon George, measures 1-16, is presented in four systems. The first system (measures 1-4) features a melodic line in the right hand with a 5-finger fingering and a bass line with a 5-finger fingering. Performance instructions include *mf grazioso ma con dolore*, *crescendo*, *pedal lightly*, and *simile*. The second system (measures 5-8) includes *diminuendo* and *mf* markings, with a 4-finger fingering in the bass line. The third system (measures 9-12) includes a *crescendo* marking and a 2-finger fingering in the bass line. The fourth system (measures 13-16) includes *diminuendo* and *mf* markings, with a 3-finger fingering in the bass line. The score concludes with a repeat sign.

Figure 3.53. “Waltz” (mm. 17-36), by Jon George. From *Artistry at the Piano Repertoire Book Four*. Copyright © 2007 by Artistry Press International. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Artistry Press International.

The musical score for "Waltz" (mm. 17-36) by Jon George is presented in five systems. Each system consists of a treble and bass staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The first system (mm. 17-20) features a *crescendo* marking. The second system (mm. 21-24) includes fingering numbers 1, 2, and 1. The third system (mm. 25-28) includes a *mf* dynamic and a *crescendo* marking. The fourth system (mm. 29-32) includes a *poco rit.* marking, a *p* dynamic, and a *D# al* marking. The fifth system (mm. 33-36) includes an *allargando* marking and a final measure with a *1 3* fingering. The score is written in a standard piano format with various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

Figure 3.54. Example of a breathing routine used with “Waltz” (mm. 17-24), by Jon George. From *Artistry at the Piano Repertoire Book Four*. Copyright © 2007 by Artistry Press International. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Artistry Press International. Breathing routine added by the author.



Imagery Activity 15: “On Cue”

Sometimes, words can help people notice or remember things. If you are playing basketball in the street and see a car coming, you might call out the word “Car!” to help your friends notice the car. This lets them know that they should move to a safer place. When you are writing, you might tell yourself “I before E except after C.” This helps you remember how to spell a word. When you use words to help you notice or remember things, you can call them cue words.

About This Activity

Cue words can also help you when you play the piano. In this activity, you will use cue words for the piece “Distant Chimes,” by Jon George. Figures 3.55 and 3.56 show excerpts from “Distant Chimes,” with cue words to go with the music. These cue words will help you notice and remember how your hands feel on the

keyboard at different moments in the piece. They will also help you to stay focused on the music while playing the piece.

This activity also includes visualization – imagining pictures in your mind. These pictures will make your cue words more meaningful. For “Distant Chimes,” you will picture two different bell instruments in your mind. The first is a set of long, narrow chimes that you strike with two small, hard mallets. The second is a large, circular gong that you play with a large, fluffy mallet; you use this mallet to make large, circular motions on the face of the gong. Your teacher will show you pictures of these instruments.

In Your Lesson

Your teacher will help you complete the following steps in your lesson:

1. Rehearse the passages that your teacher points out, where you will imagine the two different bell instruments.
2. Play the section of “Distant Chimes” shown in figure 3.55 while your teacher reads the cue words out loud. Notice how your teacher matches the sound of the cue words to the rhythm of the music.
3. Play the section of “Distant Chimes” shown in figure 3.55, saying the cue words out loud with your teacher in rhythm. As you play and say the cue words, imagine the different bell instruments at the places your teacher showed you.
4. Play at least part of the section of “Distant Chimes” shown in figure 3.55, saying the cue words by yourself.

At Home

At home, review the steps you completed with your teacher in your lesson.

Then, complete the following steps:

1. Play the section of “Distant Chimes” shown in figure 3.55, saying the cue words out loud by yourself. Remember to match the rhythm of the cue words to the rhythm of the music. And, try to imagine the bell instruments as you play.
2. Repeat the previous step while saying the cue words in your head instead of out loud. Remember to imagine the bell instruments as you play!
3. Repeat the previous two steps with the section of “Distant Chimes” shown in figure 3.56.
4. Play “Distant Chimes” all the way through while saying the cue words in your head and imagining the bell instruments. (In mm. 17-28, you may use the cue words from mm. 1-12.) Do this step at least once each day that you practice for the rest of this week.
5. At least once this week, say the cue words for the whole piece away from the piano. While you say them, try to imagine what it feels like to play “Distant Chimes.”
6. At least once this week, say the cue words for the whole piece away from the piano and try to imagine what “Distant Chimes” sounds like.
7. Read the questions in the “What Do You Think?” section and think about your answers.

What Do You Think?

After you have finished doing “On Cue,” read the following questions and think about your answers. Your teacher will ask you about some of your answers at your next lesson:

1. Were you able to say the cue words in your head as you played “Distant Chimes?”
2. Which cue words were most helpful to you? Why?
3. When you said the cue words away from the piano, could you imagine what it feels like to play “Distant Chimes?”
4. When you said the cue words away from the piano, could you imagine what “Distant Chimes” sounds like?
5. Can you imagine performing “Distant Chimes” in a recital, while saying the cue words and picturing the bell instruments in your head? How do you think using the cue words might change your performance, compared to if you did not use the cue words?
6. Can you think of another piece that you are working on that cue words might help you with?

Figure 3.55. “On Cue,” used with “Distant Chimes” (mm. 1-16), by Jon George. From *Students’ Choice: Recreational Solos for The Music Tree Part Three*, selected and edited by Frances Clark, Louise Goss, and Sam Holland. Copyright © 2002 by Summy-Birchard Music. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Alfred Music Publishing Co., Inc. Cue words added by the author.

Dreamily Jon George

pp "Thumbs ringing ringing, ringing. Thumbs ringing ringing today."

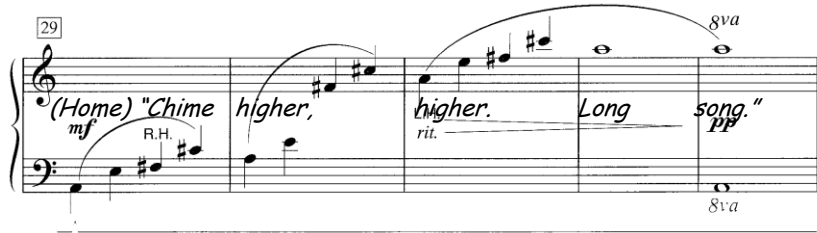
¹ damper pedal as marked
soft pedal throughout

5
(Home) "Ding dong." (down) (Home) "Ding dong." (down)

9
mf (D) "Round gong." (down) (D) "Round gong." (down)

13
Every Day - "A Major Scale now cross and one more..."
mf R.H. L.H. *p*

Figure 3.56. “On Cue,” used with “Distant Chimes” (mm. 29-33), by Jon George. From *Students’ Choice: Recreational Solos for The Music Tree Part Three*, selected and edited by Frances Clark, Louise Goss, and Sam Holland. Copyright © 2002 by Summy-Birchard Music. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Alfred Music Publishing Co., Inc. Cue words added by the author.



Concentration Activities

Concentration Activity 1: “Let’s Make a List”

As a performer, you are really special and important. Without you, the music would not come to life!

When you play, you are connected to the music in a lot of different ways. Your fingers are touching the keys to create the music. Your eyes are reading the music, or keeping track of your hands on the keyboard. Your ears are listening to the sounds that you are creating.

When you perform, it is a good idea to try to focus on the music. This way, you can stay really connected to the music, instead of thinking about other things that don’t really matter at that moment.

About This Activity

One way of focusing is to concentrate on one specific part of the music while you play. For example, you might choose to focus on how your dynamics

sound. Or, you might choose to focus on hearing the words to the music in your head. In “Let’s Make a List,” you will brainstorm different ideas about good things to focus on while you perform.

In Your Lesson

Your teacher will help you complete the following steps in your lesson:

1. Using the space in figure 3.57, make a list of good things that you can focus on while performing. Some examples have already been filled in to help you get started.

At Home

At home, review the steps you completed with your teacher in your lesson.

Then, complete the following steps:

1. Keep adding to your list in figure 3.57 as you have more ideas.
Remember to add only good things that have to do with the music!
2. Read the questions in the “What Do You Think?” section and think about your answers.

What Do You Think?

After you have finished doing “Let’s Make a List,” read the following questions and think about your answers. Your teacher will ask you about some of your answers at your next lesson:

1. Were you able to come up with some good things for your list?

2. Why do you think it is important to focus on a specific part of the music while you perform?
3. Can you think of a time when you did not focus on the music during performance? How did this affect your performance?
4. Which item on your list do you think will be the easiest to focus on?
5. Do you think certain items might work better for certain pieces, and not as well for other pieces? Why?
6. Do you think it might work to focus on one item from your list for part of a piece, and then focus on another item from your list for a different part of a piece?

<i>The sound of the melody</i>
<i>The words to the music</i>
<i>The feel of my fingertips on the keys</i>
<i>The sound of my dynamics</i>
<i>A story that I created for the piece</i>

Figure 3.57. Blank list for “Let’s Make a List.”

Concentration Activity 2: “Concentration Station” Part One

In “Let’s Make a List,” you made a list of good things to focus on while you perform. Now, you will put that list to work!

About This Activity

In this activity, you will practice concentrating on one specific part of the music – chosen from your own list of ideas – while you play a piece. This will help you to focus on the music while you perform.

In Your Lesson

Your teacher will help you complete the following steps in your lesson:

1. Choose a piece of music that you can play well.
2. Choose a short section of the piece, such as one line of the music.
3. Choose one item from the list you made in “Let’s Make a List.”
4. Play the section of your piece while focusing on your chosen item from your list. For example, you might think about how your dynamics sound, or something else that you chose. Even if you make mistakes, do not stop playing until you get to the end of the section.
5. Ask yourself how your focusing went. Were you able to focus on the item from your list as you played the section, without thinking about anything else, or not?
6. If you weren’t able to focus for the whole section, aren’t sure, or don’t remember, try step 4 again with a shorter section of the piece.
7. When you are able to focus on one item from your list for an entire section (for example, two measures or one line), congratulate yourself!

You really focused well!

At Home

At home, review the steps you completed with your teacher in your lesson.

Then, complete the following steps:

1. Play “Concentration Station” at least once each day that you practice this week.
2. Play “Concentration Station” with different pieces, different sections, and different items from your list.
3. Read the questions in the “What Do You Think?” section and think about your answers.

What Do You Think?

After you have finished doing “Concentration Station” Part One, read the following questions and think about your answers. Your teacher will ask you about some of your answers at your next lesson:

1. Were you able to focus on your chosen item while you played your section of the music?
2. After you finished playing, were you able to tell whether or not you had focused the whole time?
3. Which item from the list was the easiest for you to focus on? Why?
4. How did focusing on an item from the list change your performance of the piece or section, compared to if you did not focus on an item from the list?

5. Why do you think it is important to focus on something about the music as you play?
6. Can you imagine focusing on an item from your list as you play in a real recital? How might this be different from what you normally think about when you play in a recital?

Concentration Activity 3: “Concentration Station” Part Two

In the first part of “Concentration Station,” you practiced focusing on one feature of the music while you played a short section of a piece. In this version of the activity, you will practice doing this several times in a row as you play an entire piece!

About This Activity

In this activity, you will choose different features to focus on for different sections of a piece. Then, you will practice focusing on these features as you play.

An example of a piece that you might study in piano, and use with this activity, is “Model T” by Jon George. Two different examples of using “Concentration Station” Part Two with “Model T” are shown in figures 3.58 and 3.59. Each of these examples includes two features to focus on. In figure 3.58, the two features are the feel of the fingertips and a breathing routine. In figure 3.59, the two features are the sound of the dynamics and a counting routine. But, you can really use “Concentration Station” Part Two with any piece that you can play well, with any sections that feel comfortable, and with any chosen features.

In Your Lesson

Your teacher will help you complete the following steps in your lesson:

1. Choose a piece that you can play well.
2. Play your piece all the way through without stopping.
3. With your teacher, decide how you will divide your piece into sections.

For example, you may divide the piece into sections that are one line long, or two lines long.
4. Mark the sections you chose with your teacher in your music. You may use phrase marks, letters, or other markings suggested by your teacher.
5. Choose one item from the list you made in “Let’s Make a List.”
6. Using a pencil, write the name of your chosen item (for example, “the feel of my fingertips”) in the first section of your piece.
7. Play the first section of your piece while focusing on your chosen item.

Even if you make mistakes, do not stop playing until you get to the end of the section.
8. Repeat step 7 until you are able to focus on your chosen item for the entire first section.
9. Repeat steps 5 through 8 for the second section of your piece, with a different item from “Let’s Make a List.”
10. Play the first two sections of your piece. As you play the first section, focus on the first item you chose. When you get to the second section, shift your focus to your second item.

At Home

At home, review the steps you completed with your teacher in your lesson.

Then, complete the following steps:

1. If you did not finish choosing features to focus on for all sections of your piece during your lesson, choose these features now.
2. Using a pencil, write the names of these features in the remaining sections of your music.
3. Practice focusing on these features, one at a time, in each section of your piece.
4. Play your piece all the way through, while focusing on the features you chose in each section. Shift your focus as you get to each new section. Do this step at least once each day that you practice for the rest of this week.
5. Play “Concentration Station” with different items from your list, instead of the ones you chose during your lesson, at least twice this week.
6. Perform your piece for an audience member such as a parent, relative, or friend while focusing on your favorite feature in each section of the piece. Shift your focus as you get to each new section. If you lose focus, try to bring your attention back to the music without stopping.
7. Read the questions in the “What Do You Think?” section and think about your answers.

What Do You Think?

After you have finished doing “Concentration Station” Part Two, read the following questions and think about your answers. Your teacher will ask you about some of your answers at your next lesson:

1. Were you able to focus on your chosen items while you played each section of your piece?
2. Were you able to shift focus as you moved from section to section?
3. How do you think focusing on a different feature in each section might change your performance?
4. Why do you think it is important to be able to shift focus during a performance?

Figure 3.58. Example of “Concentration Station” Part Two, used with “Model T” by Jon George. Copyright © MCMLXXIII by Alfred Publishing Co., Inc. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Alfred Music Publishing Co., Inc. Words added by the author.

The musical score consists of four systems of piano accompaniment in 4/4 time, marked "Sturdily".

- System 1:** Treble clef, starting with a first finger fingering (1) above the first note. The lyrics are "The feel of my fingertips". A forte dynamic (*f*) is indicated. The bass line has a triplet of eighth notes (3) under the first three notes.
- System 2:** Treble clef, ending with a fermata on the final note. The lyrics are "(Fingertips)". The piece concludes with a double bar line and the word "Fine".
- System 3:** Treble clef, with lyrics "in" and "out". The notes are beamed together. A triplet of eighth notes (3) is indicated above the second measure.
- System 4:** Treble clef, with lyrics "in" and "out". The notes are beamed together. A fifth finger fingering (5) is indicated above the first note of the second measure. The piece concludes with a double bar line and the instruction "D. C. al Fine".

Figure 3.59. Alternate example of “Concentration Station” Part Two, used with “Model T” by Jon George. Copyright © MCMLXXIII by Alfred Publishing Co., Inc. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Alfred Music Publishing Co., Inc. Words added by the author.

The musical score consists of four systems of piano and bass staves. The first system is marked "Sturdily" and includes the instruction "*f* Dynamics - loud!". It features a treble clef with a first finger fingering (1) and a bass clef with a triplet fingering (3). The second system is marked "Dynamics - softer!" and ends with a "Fine" instruction. The third system contains four measures with fingerings 1, 2, 3, and 4. The fourth system contains four measures with fingerings 5, 6, 7, and 8, and is marked "D. C. al Fine".

Concentration Activity 4: “Action Distraction” Part One

You probably already know that when you perform, it is a good idea to focus on the music – and you practiced doing exactly that in both versions of “Concentration Station.”

When you perform an entire piece, you will almost always shift your focus – or focus on something different – at least once during your performance. This is

because an entire piece is too long for your mind to stay focused on the same exact thing the whole time. You may also become distracted during a performance, and this might cause you to shift focus. It is really important to practice shifting focus on a regular basis, at least a few times every week, so that when you need to do it in a real performance it feels familiar!

About This Activity

In “Action Distraction,” you will practice shifting focus while you play a piece. You will do this with the help of a teacher or other partner.

In Your Lesson

Your teacher will help you complete the following steps in your lesson:

1. Brainstorm some ideas of thoughts that might distract you during a performance. A distracting thought is anything that takes your mind away from the music.
2. Write your ideas of distracting thoughts in the list in figure 3.60. Some examples have already been filled in to help you get started.
3. Choose a piece, or a section of a piece such as the A section, that you can play well.
4. Choose one item from the list you made in the activity “Let’s Make a List.”
5. Listen for your teacher, or another partner, to call “Action!” When he or she does, play your piece or section while focusing on your chosen item

from your list. For example, you might think about how your dynamics sound, or something else that you chose. Even if you make mistakes, do not stop playing until you get to the end of the section.

6. When your teacher or partner calls “Distraction,” shift your focus to a distracting thought from your list in figure 3.60, or any other distracting thought. Even if you make mistakes, do not stop playing.
7. When your teacher calls “Action” again, return your focus to one item from “Let’s Make a List.” It could be the original item you chose, or a different item. (If you would like, you may keep a copy of your list on the piano where it is easy to see.) Even if you make mistakes, do not stop playing.
8. Shift your focus whenever your teacher or partner calls “Action” or “Distraction.” Try not to think about your previous thoughts, since they don’t matter anymore. Just focus on your current thought right now.

At Home

At home, review the steps you completed with your teacher in your lesson.

Then, complete the following steps:

1. Find a partner, such as a parent or relative, who can help you complete the activity at home by calling “Action” and “Distraction” out loud.
2. Play “Action Distraction” at least three times this week.
3. Play “Action Distraction” with different pieces, different sections, and different items from your list.

4. Read the questions in the “What Do You Think?” section and think about your answers.

What Do You Think?

After you have finished doing “Action Distraction” Part One, read the following questions and think about your answers. Your teacher will ask you about some of your answers at your next lesson:

1. After focusing on your distracting thought, when your teacher or partner called “Action,” were you able to refocus on a positive item from your list? Did this feel easy, or difficult? Why?
2. Were you able to leave your distracting thought in the past, and focus only on your present thought? How did it feel to try to do this?
3. After focusing on your distracting thought, when your teacher or partner called “Action,” did you return to your original item from the list or a different item?
4. Why do you think it is important to be able to refocus after a distracting thought?
5. Did your playing feel different when you were focusing on a distracting thought, compared to when you were focusing on an item from the list? How?

Concentration Activity 5: “Action Distraction” Part Two

Now that you have gotten really good at shifting focus while you perform, you will take this challenge to the next level!

About This Activity

This version of “Action Distraction” allows you to complete the activity by yourself, without your teacher or a partner. Instead of having someone else tell you when to shift focus, you will tell yourself when to shift focus!

In Your Lesson

Your teacher will help you complete the following steps in your lesson:

1. Choose a piece, or a section of a piece such as the A section, that you can play well.
2. Choose one item from the list you made in the activity “Let’s Make a List.”
3. Begin to play your piece or section while focusing on your chosen item from your list.
4. Call “Distraction” and “Action” to yourself, either out loud or in your head, while you play. Whenever you call these words, shift your focus. Try not to think about your previous thoughts, since they don’t matter anymore. Just focus on your current thought right now.

At Home

At home, review the steps you completed with your teacher in your lesson.

Then, complete the following steps:

1. Play “Action Distraction” at least three times this week.
2. Play “Action Distraction” with different pieces, different sections, and different items from your list.
3. Play “Action Distraction” with different timing. For example, you might start out by calling “Action” and “Distraction” only at section changes. Later, you can challenge yourself by calling “Action” and “Distraction” more randomly, even in the middle of a line.
4. In your other practice this week, even when you are not actually playing “Action Distraction,” try calling “Action” to yourself to bring your focus back to the music when you realize your thoughts have drifted.
5. Read the questions in the “What Do You Think?” section and think about your answers.

What Do You Think?

After you have finished doing “Action Distraction” Part Two, read the following questions and think about your answers. Your teacher will ask you about some of your answers at your next lesson:

1. How did it feel different to cue yourself to shift focus, compared to when your teacher or partner did this for you?

2. Did you find that you told yourself to shift focus at “obvious” places in the music, such as at section changes, or was your timing more random? Which type of timing do you think is easier? Do you think one type of timing might be more helpful to you?
3. Were you able to leave your distracting thought in the past, and focus only on your present thought? How did it feel to try to do this?
4. After focusing on your distracting thought and then calling “Action!” to yourself, did you usually return to your original item from the list, or a different item?
5. Why do you think it is important to be able to refocus after a distracting thought?
6. Can you imagine calling “Action!” to yourself to help you refocus when you realize your thoughts have drifted during a performance?

Concentration Activity 6: “A Lyrical Performance”

Pieces of music often have words for singing along. These words are called lyrics. You can probably think of a lot of different pieces that have lyrics. Sometimes, though, pieces don’t have lyrics. For these pieces, you can make up your own lyrics!

About This Activity

In this activity, you will make up your own lyrics for a piano piece. Then you will practice singing along with these lyrics, first out loud and then in your

head. You may find that singing the lyrics in your head while playing helps you to focus on the music.

Two pieces that you might study in piano, and use with this activity, are “Hot Dogs!” and “Pop Corn!” by Jon George. The music for “Hot Dogs,” including an example of lyrics made up for the piece, is shown in figure 3.61. An excerpt from “Pop Corn!” is shown in figure 3.62.

In Your Lesson

Your teacher will help you complete the following steps in your lesson:

1. Play the piece “Hot Dogs!”
2. Look at the lyrics shown in figure 3.61. Now, play “Hot Dogs!” again while singing these lyrics out loud with your teacher.
3. Sing the lyrics for “Hot Dogs” out loud by yourself as you play.
4. Sing the lyrics for “Hot Dogs” silently in your head as you play.
5. Play the first two lines of the piece “Pop Corn!” shown in figure 3.62.
6. Make up lyrics for the first two lines of “Pop Corn!” Try to match your lyrics to the idea in the title of the piece. And, try to match your lyrics to the rhythm of the music.
7. Write your lyrics in figure 3.62.
8. Play the first two lines of “Pop Corn” while singing your lyrics. Do your lyrics fit well with the music? Make changes to your lyrics if you would like.

9. Choose a piece that you can play all the way through without stopping.
You may choose the whole piece, “Pop Corn!” or any other piece.

At Home

At home, review the steps you completed with your teacher in your lesson.

Then, complete the following steps:

1. Play the piece that you chose in the last step during your lesson, all the way through.
2. Make up lyrics for your piece. (Or, if you chose “Pop Corn!” make up lyrics for the rest of the piece.) Remember to match your lyrics to the idea in the title of the piece, and the rhythm of the music.
3. Write your lyrics in your music.
4. Test out your lyrics by singing them while you play. Do your lyrics fit well with the music? Make changes to your lyrics if you would like.
5. Sing your lyrics out loud while you play the piece.
6. Sing your lyrics silently in your head while you play the piece.
7. Sing your lyrics silently in your head while you perform the piece for an audience member such as a parent, relative, or friend.
8. Sing your lyrics away from the piano, and try to imagine what it feels like to play your piece.
9. Read the questions in the “What Do You Think?” section and think about your answers.

What Do You Think?

After you have finished doing “A Lyrical Performance,” read the following questions and think about your answers. Your teacher will ask you about some of your answers at your next lesson:

1. Were you able to play and sing your lyrics at the same time?
2. Were you able to sing your lyrics in your head while you played?
3. How do you think singing the lyrics in your head might change your performance of a piece, compared to if you were not singing the lyrics?
4. Can you imagine singing the lyrics to a piece in your head while performing it in a recital?
5. Can you come up with some lyrics for other pieces you are learning?

Figure 3.61. "A Lyrical Performance," used with "Hot Dogs!" by Jon George. From *Jon George's Festival of Favorites*. Copyright © 1996 Warner Bros. Publications. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Alfred Music Publishing Co., Inc. Lyrics added by the author.

Brightly

3
*f*Hot dogs! Hot dogs! Hot dogs - yum yum! We are sell-ing

1 2

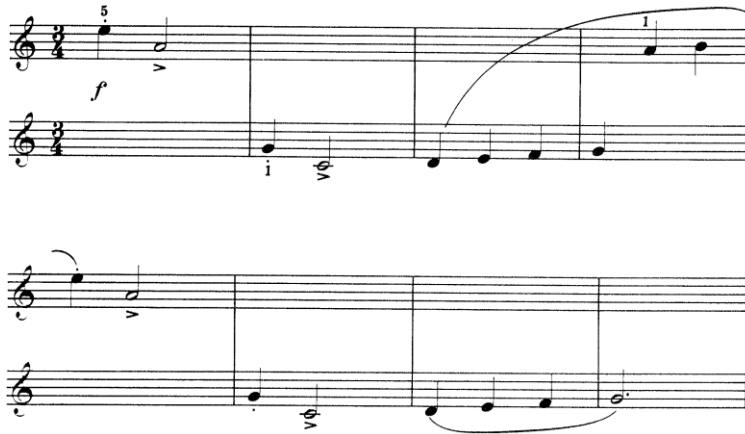
2
hot dogs! Hot dogs! Hot dogs with buns!" *Fine*

2 4
mf "Ketch- up! Come and get your ketch-up now."

1

"Must- ard! Come and get your must- ard..." *D.C. al Fine*

Figure 3.62. “Pop Corn!” (mm. 1-8) by Jon George. From *Jon George’s Festival of Favorites*. Copyright © 1996 Warner Bros. Publications. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Alfred Music Publishing Co., Inc.



Concentration Activity 7: “Count Me In!”

You probably already know that when you perform, it is a good idea to try to focus on the music. When you focus on the music, you can stay really connected to the music, instead of thinking about other things that don’t really matter at that moment. After all, when you are performing, the only thing that really matters at that moment is the music!

About This Activity

One way of focusing on the music is to concentrate on one specific part of the music while you play. In this activity, you will count measures in your mind to help you focus on the music.

An example of a piece that you might study in piano, and use with this activity, is “Buckin’ Bronco!” by Jon George. Two different examples of using “Count Me In!” with “Buckin’ Bronco!” are shown in figures 3.63 and 3.64.

In Your Lesson

Your teacher will help you complete the following steps in your lesson:

1. Listen to your teacher play “Buckin’ Bronco!” while you count the numbers shown in figure 3.63. Your teacher will count with you.
2. Play “Buckin’ Bronco!” without stopping, while counting the numbers shown in figure 3.63 out loud with your teacher. (You might find it helpful to play the piece at a slightly slower tempo than usual the first time.) Repeat this step until you feel comfortable counting out loud this way while you play.
3. Play “Buckin’ Bronco!” without stopping, while counting the numbers shown in figure 3.63 out loud by yourself. Repeat this step until it feels comfortable.
4. Play “Buckin’ Bronco!” without stopping, while counting the numbers shown in figure 3.63 in your head. Repeat this step until it feels comfortable.
5. Repeat steps 1 through 3 with the counting routine shown in figure 3.64.

At Home

At home, review the steps you completed with your teacher in your lesson.

Then, complete the following steps:

1. Play “Buckin’ Bronco!” at least twice, comparing how the two counting routines shown in figures 3.63 and 3.64 feel different.
2. Choose your favorite counting routine.

3. Write the numbers for your favorite counting routine in your music.
4. Practice “Buckin’ Bronco!” with your favorite counting routine at least once each day that you practice for the rest of this week.
5. Perform “Buckin’ Bronco!” for an audience member such as a parent, relative, or friend while doing your favorite counting routine in your head at least twice this week.
6. Practice your counting routine away from the piano, and try to imagine what “Buckin’ Bronco!” sounds like.
7. Practice your counting routine away from the piano, and try to imagine what it feels like to play “Buckin’ Bronco!” You might even be able to imagine what is happening in the music, and in your hands, as you count certain numbers.
8. Read the questions in the “What Do You Think?” section and think about your answers.

What Do You Think?

After you have finished doing “Count Me In,” read the following questions and think about your answers. Your teacher will ask you about some of your answers at your next lesson:

1. Were you able to do a counting routine while you played “Buckin’ Bronco?”
2. Were you able to keep track of a counting routine in your head, even when you were not saying the numbers out loud?

3. Which counting routine was your favorite – the one in figure 3.63, or the one in figure 3.64? Why?
4. How did your playing feel different when you counted shorter groups of measures, compared to longer groups of measures?
5. How do you imagine that your body might look different when counting shorter groups of measures, compared to longer groups of measures?
6. Did you notice any changes in your breathing when you counted shorter groups of measures, compared to longer groups of measures?
7. How do you think doing a counting routine might change what you are thinking about while performing, compared to if you were not doing a counting routine?
8. Why do you think it might be a good idea to do a counting routine while performing “Buckin’ Bronco?”
9. Can you think of another piece you are working on that might work well with a counting routine?

Figure 3.63. "Count Me In," used with "Buckin' Bronco!" by Jon George. From *Kaleidoscope Solos Book Three*. Copyright © MCMLXXIV by Alfred Publishing Co., Inc. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Alfred Music Publishing Co., Inc. Counting routine added by the author.

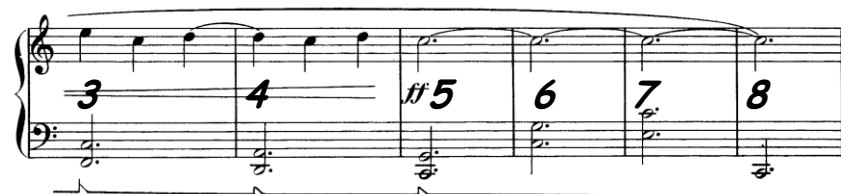
The first system of musical notation is in 3/4 time and begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The right hand starts with a whole note chord, followed by a half note chord, and then a quarter note triplet. The left hand provides a steady accompaniment with quarter notes. The first four measures are numbered 1 through 4.

The second system continues the piece, with the right hand playing a series of quarter notes. The left hand continues with quarter notes. The first five measures are numbered 1 through 5.

The third system shows the right hand playing a sequence of quarter notes, with a triplet of eighth notes in the final measure. The left hand continues with quarter notes. The first five measures are numbered 6 through 10.

The fourth system concludes the piece with the right hand playing a sequence of quarter notes. The left hand continues with quarter notes. The final eight measures are numbered 11 through 18.

Figure 3.64. Alternate version of “Count Me In,” used with “Buckin’ Bronco!” by Jon George. From *Kaleidoscope Solos Book Three*. Copyright © MCMLXXIV by Alfred Publishing Co., Inc. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission of Alfred Music Publishing Co., Inc. Counting routine added by the author.



CHAPTER FOUR

TEACHER MANUAL FOR MENTAL SKILLS ACTIVITIES

Introduction

Chapter Three, “Student Workbook for Mental Skills Activities,” presented 31 mental skills activities – featuring the four important skills of positive attitude, relaxation, imagery, and concentration – in a workbook format designed for six- to 12-year-old piano students. Activities were grouped according to the primary mental skill which they addressed: four addressed positive attitude, five addressed relaxation, 15 addressed imagery, and seven addressed concentration. The current chapter presents all 31 activities, in the same order, in a teacher manual format with detailed teaching steps and suggestions for incorporating the activities into a student’s curriculum.

The activities are designed to be introduced by teachers during piano lessons – often using only 10 minutes of introductory lesson time – and subsequently reinforced by students during regular practice at home. The activities may be taught singly or in combination, and should ideally be used regularly as a continuous part of the student’s curriculum (i.e., one activity per week, two activities per month, one activity per month, five activities per semester, etc.). The concepts contained within the activities can, and should, be repeated and reinforced – including with different repertoire – over a period of weeks, months, or even years.

Some activities involve repertoire, and others do not. For activities that involve repertoire, some were designed for use with specific pieces while others

were designed for use with any piece selected by the student and/or teacher. All repertoire-specific activities utilize the music of educational composer Jon George, since George's music has continued to be used by piano teachers for more than three decades. However, repertoire-specific activities feature concepts that can also be used with other pieces.

Teachers should communicate to parents that these activities, when assigned, are an important part of the student's weekly practice assignment even though they do not always involve actual playing. In each activity entry in the current chapter, the introduction section summarizes relevant research from the field of youth performance psychology. If desired, teachers may share this information with parents to help explain their rationale for using an activity. In addition, teachers should let parents know when they can assist their children by serving as partners in the "At Home" practice steps in the student workbook (i.e., by reading a relaxation script, by serving as an audience member for a performance, etc.).

Order of Study

While the activities are grouped according to the specific mental skill which they primarily address, it is not necessary to teach the activities in these groupings. In fact, the activities should ideally be interspersed, for variety as well as for cross-reinforcement of concepts. An order of study should, at the very least, take two factors into consideration: (1) sequencing of concepts, including prerequisite activities, and (2) developmental considerations.

The suggested age range for the entire set of activities spans from six to 12. Nearly half of the activities are appropriate for a student who is at least six years old; however, a handful of activities are appropriate only when a student has reached the age of 11 or 12. As a result, a student starting the activities at age six or seven may take several years to complete all of the activities, while an older student may finish them in as little as two or three semesters.

Figure 4.1 presents a suggested order of study for the activities. Figure 4.2 lists the activities in the same order, but groups them into six optional units. This gives the teacher the option of incorporating a preplanned unit of five or six activities into a student's curriculum. For example, a teacher may choose to include one unit, or two units, in a semester. In figures 4.1 and 4.2, the relaxation activities are spread throughout the order of study; this encourages the student to engage in relaxation and imagery concurrently or in close proximity, since research in the field of youth performance psychology has shown that the two skills of relaxation and imagery work well in combination.⁴¹¹

At the end of the current chapter, a section titled "Additional Organizational Information" presents three tables that may further assist teachers with incorporating the activities into their students' curricula: table 4.33 presents an index of activities by suggested student age, repertoire level, and level of preparation; table 4.34

⁴¹¹ Craig A. Wrisberg and Mark H. Anshel, "The Effect of Cognitive Strategies on the Free Throw Shooting Performance of Young Athletes," *The Sport Psychologist* 3, no. 2 (June 1989): 100-101; Beverly Galyean, "The Effects of a Guided Imagery Activity on Various Behaviors of Low Achieving Students," *Journal of Suggestive-Accelerative Learning and Teaching* 5, no. 2 (1980): 87-97; Linda B. and Leonard D. Zaichkowsky, "The Effects of a School-Based Relaxation Training Program on Fourth Grade Children," *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology* 13, no. 1 (Spring 1984): 81-85; Li-Wei Zhang et al., "The Effect of Mental-Imagery Training on Performance Enhancement with 7-10-Year-Old Children," *The Sport Psychologist* 6, no. 3 (September 1992): 230-241.

presents an alphabetical list of activities; table 4.35 presents an alphabetical list of included Jon George compositions.

<p>“Who, Me?” “I Gave You Three Gifts” “Tree Spine” “Let’s Make a List” “Concentration Station” Part One “Warming Up” “A Colorful Performance” Part One “A Lyrical Performance” “Sending a Postcard” “My Own Script” “Here, I Feel Calm” “Picture This” “In Character,” Version A or B “Let’s Write a Story” “Take Three” “Arm-agination” “I’m in the Band (or Orchestra)” Part One “Comic Strip” “It’s All in My Head” “Count Me In” “Swimmer Breathing” “Let’s Give an Imaginary Performance” Part One “Concentration Station” Part Two “Let’s Give an Imaginary Performance” Part Two “Action Distraction” Part One “A Colorful Performance” Part Two “I’m in the Band (or Orchestra)” Part Two “Action Distraction” Part Two “Let’s Watch an Imaginary Performance” “On Cue” “A Dynamic and Colorful Performance”</p>

Figure 4.1. Suggested order of study.

Unit 1

“Who, Me?”
“I Gave You Three Gifts”
“Tree Spine”
“Let’s Make a List”
“Concentration Station” Part One

Unit 2

“Warming Up”
“A Colorful Performance” Part One
“A Lyrical Performance”
“Sending a Postcard”
“My Own Script”

Unit 3

“Here, I Feel Calm”
“Picture This”
“In Character,” Version A or B
“Let’s Write a Story”
“Take Three”

Unit 4

“Arm-agination”
“I’m in the Band (or Orchestra)” Part One
“Comic Strip”
“It’s All in My Head”
“Count Me In”

Unit 5

“Swimmer Breathing”
“Let’s Give an Imaginary Performance” Part One
“Concentration Station” Part Two
“Let’s Give an Imaginary Performance” Part Two
“Action Distraction” Part One

Unit 6

“A Colorful Performance” Part Two
“I’m in the Band (or Orchestra)” Part Two
“Action Distraction” Part Two
“Let’s Watch an Imaginary Performance”
“On Cue”
“A Dynamic and Colorful Performance”

Figure 4.2. Suggested order of study, including optional units.

Guide to Teacher Manual Activity Entries

Each activity entry in the current chapter begins with a teacher planning guide that presents practical information about the activity. Table 4.1 shows a sample of one of these teacher planning guides.

Table 4.1. Sample teacher planning guide for teacher manual activity entries.

Student Workbook Page Number	171
Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed	8-10 minutes
Repertoire Required	Yes
Repertoire-Specific	Yes
Example Repertoire	“Lotus Blossom,” by Jon George <i>(Jon George’s Festival of Favorites, p. 3)</i>
Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level	3-4
Other Required Materials	None
Partner Required	Yes
Prerequisite Activities	None
Related Activities	“I’m in the Band (or Orchestra)” Part One; “A Colorful Performance” Part Two
Suggested Age(s)	6-12

In each teacher planning guide in Chapter Four, the “Student Workbook Page Number” entry lists the corresponding page number for the activity in Chapter Three, “Student Workbook for Mental Skills Activities.” The “Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed” entry states the approximate number of minutes likely required to introduce the activity during a lesson. The “Repertoire Required”

entry states whether the activity requires the student to play a piece of music, or whether the activity is intended for use without a piece of music.

The “Repertoire-Specific” entry states whether the activity requires the student to play a specific piece of music, which would be listed in the “Example Repertoire” entry. The “Example Repertoire” entry lists featured repertoire for both repertoire-specific and non-repertoire specific activities. In a repertoire-specific activity, the example repertoire is the actual piece that should be used with the activity – although a teacher may choose to use concepts from repertoire-specific activities with other pieces as well. In non-repertoire-specific activities, featured pieces simply serve as examples for the teacher and student.

Each “Example Repertoire” entry includes the following information: the title of the piece, the name of the collection the piece comes from, and the page numbers in the collection. All repertoire examples come from the output of educational composer Jon George, since George’s music has remained in print for more than three decades and is widely respected by teachers. Featured collections include *Kaleidoscope Solos*, *A Day in the Jungle*, *Jon George’s Festival of Favorites*, *Artistry at the Piano*, and the *Students’ Choice* books from the *Music Tree* series.

The “Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level” entry suggests an appropriate level of preparation, on the part of the student, for repertoire to be used with the activity. Some activities are designed for use with pieces that are relatively new to the student, while others are designed for use with pieces that have already been polished. Levels of preparation are ranked from 1 through 5, using the following

guidelines: (1) The student has played through the piece at least once; (2) The student is still actively working on the piece, but can play it somewhat fluently with some stopping; (3) The student can play the piece fluently, but not from memory; (4) The student has polished and memorized the piece; (5) The student has polished and memorized the piece, and is preparing to play it in an upcoming performance.

The “Other Required Materials” entry lists materials, in addition to musical scores, that are required to complete the activity. The “Partner Required” entry states whether the student needs a partner – such as a parent, relative, or friend – to complete steps in the “At Home” section of the student workbook. Examples of tasks that a partner might complete include reading a relaxation script to the student, or serving as an audience member for an at-home performance. When the teacher assigns an activity that requires a partner, he or she should let the parent know so that the parent will be ready to assist the student.

The “Prerequisite Activities” entry lists other activities that should be completed prior to starting the activity. These prerequisite activities provide experiences that serve as necessary building blocks for the activity. The “Related Activities” entry lists other activities that are similar, or otherwise related, to the current activity. These activities often reinforce related mental skills or concepts, and may be taught in close proximity if desired.

The “Suggested Age(s)” entry suggests an age range during which a typical piano student would likely be able to complete the activity. This age range takes into account cognitive and developmental challenges included in the activity.

In each activity entry, after the teacher planning guide, five sections – separated with subheadings – provide the teacher with additional information: (1) Introduction; (2) Description; (3) Objectives; (4) In the First Lesson; (5) Supplemental Teacher Notes.

Introduction

In each activity entry in the current chapter, the introduction briefly introduces the specific mental skills and concepts addressed in the activity. Noteworthy related research from the field of youth performance psychology is cited in footnotes. If desired, teachers may use this information to justify the importance of the activities to parents.

Description

The description section for each activity describes the purpose of the activity and summarizes the steps by which the student will complete the activity.

Objectives

Next, the objectives section includes a bulleted list of intended goals for the activity, specifically regarding the development of mental skills. These goals can also be viewed as potential benefits of the activity.

In the First Lesson

The “In the First Lesson” section for each activity includes a bulleted list of steps that should ideally be completed in the introductory lesson on the activity. This list, when used side-by-side with the student workbook during a lesson, can serve as a lesson plan for the teacher. It also provides teachers with an overview of what should be accomplished during the first lesson in order to prepare the student to work on the activity at home. Teaching steps in the “In the First Lesson” section reference the numbered steps in the “In Your Lesson” and “At Home” sections in the student workbook.

Supplemental Teacher Notes

At the end of each activity entry, the supplemental teacher notes include additional information, specific to the current activity, for the teacher. This information may include practical concerns, developmental issues, alternative versions of the activity, or even hints for specific measures in repertoire-specific activities.

Positive Attitude Activities

Positive Attitude Activity 1: “Who, Me?”

Table 4.2. Teacher planning guide for “Who, Me?”

Student Workbook Page Number	85
Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed	8-10 minutes
Repertoire Required	No
Repertoire-Specific	No
Example Repertoire	None
Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level	None
Other Required Materials	Pencil
Partner Required	No
Prerequisite Activities	None
Related Activities	“I Gave You Three Gifts”
Suggested Age(s)	6-12

Introduction

Self-esteem can be defined as “the feeling of personal worth.”⁴¹² Positive self-esteem is fundamental to performance in children for two primary reasons. First, a child’s self-esteem influences his or her assessment of his or her ability to succeed in an activity.⁴¹³ Second, poor self-esteem has been shown to be a leading cause of performance anxiety in children.⁴¹⁴

⁴¹² Stanley Coopersmith, “Studies in Self-Esteem,” *Scientific American* 218, no. 2 (February 1968): 96.

⁴¹³ Susan Harter, “Effectance Motivation Reconsidered: Toward a Developmental Model,” *Human Development* 21, no. 1 (1978): 37.

⁴¹⁴ Tara K. Scanlan and Michael W. Passer, “Factors Related to Competitive Stress Among Male Youth Sport Participants,” *Medicine and Science in Sports* 10, no. 2 (1978): 103; Tara K. Scanlan and Michael W. Passer, “Sources of Competitive Stress in Young Female Athletes,” *Journal of Sport*

Terry Orlick, a prominent scholar in the field of mental skills training for children, states that self-esteem and positive attitude – the latter being achieved by looking for positive “highlights” in everyday situations – are inextricably linked: “Our research has clearly shown that when you teach children to look for highlights, they find more good things in each day, and as they find more good things, they begin to feel better and better about themselves.”⁴¹⁵ Affirmations, which can be described as “positive declarations about one’s self or about one’s performance of an activity,”⁴¹⁶ are another way of fostering positive attitude in children. Like highlights, affirmations can help to improve self-esteem in children.⁴¹⁷

Description

In “Who, Me?” the student will affirm himself or herself as a pianist. The student will brainstorm a list of positive attributes that make him or her special as a pianist, and write them down in a list in figure 3.1. The student can continue to add to the list as he or she thinks of more features that make him or her special as a pianist.

Psychology 1 (1979): 152; Charlene Ryan, “Exploring Musical Performance Anxiety in Children,” *Medical Problems of Performing Artists* 13 (September 1998): 87; Maria Terese Maroon, “Potential Contributors to Performance Anxiety Among Middle School Students Performing at Solo and Ensemble Contest” (PhD diss., Kent State University, 2002, in ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <http://proquest.umi.com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/pqdweb?index=0&did=765250771&SrchMode=1&sid=2&Fmt=6&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1285718894&clientId=41954>, accessed February 8, 2010), 41.

⁴¹⁵ Terry Orlick, *Feeling Great: Teaching Children to Excel at Living* (Carp, Canada: Creative Bound, 1996), 18.

⁴¹⁶ William and Constance Starr, *To Learn with Love: A Companion for Suzuki Parents* (Miami: Summy Birchard, 1983), 85.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*

Objectives

This activity addresses the following objectives:

- building self-esteem through personal affirmations
- finding highlights⁴¹⁸ in oneself as a pianist
- viewing oneself in a positive, rather than a negative, way
- emphasizing piano study and performance in one's self-concept
- affirming one specific part of the self that is often prone to criticism

In the First Lesson

The following steps should ideally be completed in the lesson during which this activity is introduced:

- The teacher or the student should read the introductory paragraphs, as well as the “About this Activity” section, from the student workbook. These may be read aloud or silently, at the discretion of the teacher.
- For a young student (i.e., a six- or seven-year-old), the teacher may choose to pause after the first introductory paragraph and prompt the student to list a few good things about himself or herself as a whole person. These statements may address multiple areas of the student's life, since elementary school children have been shown to include cognitive, social, physical, and general self-worth factors when appraising their own competency.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁸ Orlick, *Feeling Great*, 17-24.

⁴¹⁹ Susan Harter, “The Perceived Competence Scale for Children,” *Child Development* 53, no. 1 (February 1982): 88.

- The student should complete both steps in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook.
- The teacher should assign the student to complete all steps in the “At Home” section of the student workbook at home this week.

Supplemental Teacher Notes

The teacher should encourage the student to phrase his or her affirmations as complete sentences in the first person. For example, the sentence “I am good at tapping rhythms” is a complete affirmation, while the word “Rhythm” is not. In addition, the teacher should ensure that the student phrases his or her affirmations positively, rather than negatively.⁴²⁰ For example, “I am really good at keeping a steady tempo” is a better choice than “I don’t slow down or rush.” In addition, affirmations should be honest and realistic, and should de-emphasize perfectionism. For example, “I am good at bringing my attention back to the music when I lose focus” is a better choice than “I never lose focus.” Or, “I play most of the notes right” is a better choice than “I play all of the notes right.”

⁴²⁰ Malva Susanne Freymuth, *Mental Practice and Imagery for Musicians: A Practical Guide for Optimizing Practice Time, Enhancing Performance, and Preventing Injury* (Boulder, CO: Integrated Musician’s Press, 1999), 95.

Positive Attitude Activity 2: “I Gave You Three Gifts”

Table 4.3. Teacher planning guide for “I Gave You Three Gifts.”

Student Workbook Page Number	88
Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed	8-10 minutes
Repertoire Required	Yes
Repertoire-Specific	No
Example Repertoire	None
Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level	3-5
Other Required Materials	Pencil; paper or notebook
Partner Required	Yes
Prerequisite Activities	“Who, Me?”
Related Activities	“Who, Me?”
Suggested Age(s)	6-12

Introduction

Most piano teachers are aware of the importance of positive attitude in learning and performance. Many teachers may even emphasize positive attitude to students on a regular basis. Regardless, almost all teachers have come across students – even those with usually cheerful dispositions – who seem to notice only the negative aspects of their own playing or performances.

The ability to maintain a positive attitude – including in the assessment of one’s own performance – is a fundamental goal of many performance psychology interventions. According to Bill Moore, an authority on mental skill development

for performers, “Learning to evaluate your performances in a way that keeps you positive and energized is a skill that must be practiced.”⁴²¹

Engaging in positive post-performance reflection – or evaluating a recent performance in a positive way – is somewhat similar to creating personal affirmations. Both types of assessments address the self or an aspect of the self, and are phrased in an entirely positive way. However, affirmations usually feature the present or future tense (i.e., “I am really good at playing my dynamics” or “I am going to focus on my dynamics really well in this performance”), while post-performance reflection most often features the past tense (i.e., “I played the *forte* in m. 9 really well”).

In “Who, Me?” the student affirmed himself or herself as a pianist. In “I Gave You Three Gifts,” the student will affirm an even more specific role in his or her life: being a performer, and playing one particular piece on the piano.

Description

“I Gave You Three Gifts” introduces the concept of positive post-performance reflection. In this activity, positive elements of a performance are viewed as “small gifts” that are shared with an audience.

First, the student will choose a piece that he or she can play well, and perform it – including walking up to the piano, bowing, and any other elements of his or her performance routine – for a partner. After performing the piece, the student asks the partner to wait for one to two minutes while the student identifies

⁴²¹ Bill Moore, *Trust-It Music: Getting Out What Is In You* (Workbook used in graduate performance psychology course, University of Oklahoma, Fall 2008), 35.

three “gifts” that he or she feels he or she gave during the performance. Examples of these gifts include effectively playing dynamics, successfully focusing on a particular musical feature while playing, trying hard, or any other gifts that the student thinks of. (The student will have brainstormed ideas of small gifts ahead of time.) After thinking of these gifts, the student verbally tells the partner which three gifts he or she gave during the performance.

Objectives

This activity addresses the following objectives:

- engaging in positive post-performance reflection, or assessing a recent performance in a positive way
- developing the ability to maintain a positive attitude toward performance
- building confidence through recognizing the gifts in one’s own performance
- verbally communicating, to another person, how one feels about one’s own performance

In the First Lesson

The following steps should ideally be completed in the lesson during which this activity is introduced:

- The teacher or the student should read the introductory paragraphs, as well as the “About this Activity” section, from the student workbook. These may be read aloud or silently, at the discretion of the teacher.

- The teacher and the student should discuss the concept of “large gifts” given in performance (i.e., sharing the music with others).
- The teacher and the student should discuss the concept of “small gifts” given in performance (i.e., effective dynamics, successful focusing, strong effort, etc.). The difference between audible gifts (i.e., dynamics) and inaudible gifts (i.e., effort) may also be discussed if desired.
- The student should brainstorm at least three “small gifts” and write them in the blank spaces in figure 3.2.
- The student should complete all steps in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook, with the teacher or another person serving as the partner.
- The teacher should assign the student to complete all steps in the “At Home” section of the student workbook at home this week.

Supplemental Teacher Notes

It is important for the teacher to encourage the student to strive for mindfulness in completing this activity. Some students, especially those who are uncomfortable with verbally sharing positive aspects of their performance, may try to complete the activity without really thinking about it. Specifically, the student may give generic responses that could apply to any performance, and not just to the specific performance being addressed. For example, “I tried really hard” – although a valid assessment when given mindfully – can easily become a generic and even meaningless statement when it is not given mindfully.

Encouraging the student to choose the best, most special, and most strongly applicable gifts for each particular performance can help to prevent the use of generic responses. In addition, as the student’s self-esteem and mindfulness continue to develop through regular practice of the other activities in this volume, he or she will likely feel increasingly comfortable giving more specific, genuine, and heartfelt responses.

Positive Attitude Activity 3: “Sending a Postcard”

Table 4.4. Teacher planning guide for “Sending a Postcard.”

Student Workbook Page Number	91
Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed	8-10 minutes
Repertoire Required	No
Repertoire-Specific	No
Example Repertoire	None
Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level	None
Other Required Materials	Pencil; colored pencils, crayons, or markers
Partner Required	No
Prerequisite Activities	None
Related Activities	“My Own Script”
Suggested Age(s)	6-12

Introduction

Affirmations are useful tools for developing positive attitude in students. One definition of affirmations describes them as “positive declarations about one’s

self or about one's performance of an activity."⁴²² The student used this type of affirmation in the activities "Who, Me?" and "I Gave You Three Gifts."

Another definition of affirmations describes them as "positive statements that affirm or declare a desired objective as if it were already achieved."⁴²³ This type of affirmation emphasizes the future and can be considered similar to creative visualization, a form of imagery in which a desired future outcome is imagined.⁴²⁴

In this activity, the student will visualize himself or herself after a best-ever performance. Specifically, the student will create an imaginary postcard that depicts this "desired objective"⁴²⁵ through pictures and words.

Description

In "Sending a Postcard," the student will create a snapshot of an ideal post-performance experience by creating an imaginary postcard that depicts that moment. The student will begin by imagining that he or she has just completed a best-ever performance. The student will then reflect upon several factors, including what made the performance great and how he or she felt afterward. The student may simply think about these factors, or jot down brief responses on a separate sheet of paper.

Next, the student will create a postcard that depicts the afterglow of this best-ever performance. First, the student will draw a picture on the front of the

⁴²² Starr and Starr, *To Learn with Love*, 85.

⁴²³ Jack Canfield and Frank Siccone, *The Power to Succeed in School and Beyond*, vol. 2 of *101 Ways to Develop Student Self-Esteem and Responsibility* (Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 1992), 87.

⁴²⁴ Shakti Gawain, *Creative Visualization: Use the Power of Your Imagination to Create What You Want in Your Life*, 25th anniversary edition (Novato, CA: New World Library, 2002); Jennifer Day, *Creative Visualization With Children: A Practical Guide* (Boston: Element Books, 1994).

⁴²⁵ Canfield and Siccone, *The Power to Succeed in School and Beyond*, 87.

postcard – in figure 3.3 – that depicts him or her in a positive way immediately after the performance (i.e., bowing proudly, smiling, etc.). Next, the student will write a message on the back of the postcard – in figure 3.4 – that describes how good he or she feels after the ideal performance. Finally, the student will address the postcard to a loved one such as a family member, friend, or even himself or herself.

Objectives

This activity addresses the following objectives:

- creative visualization⁴²⁶ of an ideal post-performance experience
- imagining what one would feel like, and look like, after an ideal performance
- clearly describing what an ideal post-performance experience would be like
- preparing to share the joy and pride of one’s ideal performance with another person

In the First Lesson

The following steps should ideally be completed in the lesson during which this activity is introduced:

- The teacher or the student should read the introductory paragraphs, as well as the “About this Activity” section, from the student workbook.

These may be read aloud or silently, at the discretion of the teacher.

⁴²⁶ Gawain, *Creative Visualization*; Day, *Creative Visualization with Children*.

- The student should complete step 1 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook by imagining his or her best performance ever. The teacher and the student should discuss what entails an ideal performance. In other words, what would need to happen in a performance for the student to feel satisfied, proud, and happy? (See the second paragraph in the supplemental teacher notes for this activity for additional guidance.)
- The student should complete step 2 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook. The teacher and the student should discuss what the student would feel like after an ideal performance, with the student listing at least three adjectives (i.e., happy, proud, excited, etc.).
- The teacher and the student should discuss what the student would look like after an ideal performance, with the student describing at least two physical features expressing this feeling (i.e., large smile, standing tall, shoulders back, etc.).
- The teacher and the student should discuss who – in the student’s family or social support system – would feel proud or happy for the student after such an ideal performance.
- The teacher should assign the student to complete all steps in the “At Home” section of the student workbook this week.

Supplemental Teacher Notes

The postcard in this activity is not an actual postcard to be sent in the mail. However, creating this imaginary postcard helps the student to visualize what he or she would feel like after an ideal performance – including who would be proud of him or her for achieving that ideal performance. Visualizing an ideal performance can be a good first step toward achieving an ideal performance.

Discussing what makes a performance great, although not the main focus of this activity, is actually just as important as creating the postcard. This valuable step should not be omitted. The teacher should guide the student toward positive, realistic expectations of what comprises an ideal performance (i.e., achieving one's goals,⁴²⁷ breathing well, refocusing after distraction, etc.) rather than perfection-oriented, unrealistic expectations (i.e., not making any mistakes, playing all of the notes right, etc.).

When the student is coached to understand that perfection is not an option, he or she will be able to create more realistic performance goals. When the student attains these realistic performance goals, he or she will feel deservedly satisfied, happy, and proud – as depicted in his or her postcard.

⁴²⁷ Linda M. Petchlikoff, "Self-Regulation Skills for Children and Adolescents," in *Developmental Sport and Exercise Psychology: A Lifespan Perspective*, ed. Maureen R. Weiss (Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology, Inc., 2004), 270.

Positive Attitude Activity 4: “My Own Script”

Table 4.5. Teacher planning guide for “My Own Script.”

Student Workbook Page Number	95
Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed	10-12 minutes
Repertoire Required	No
Repertoire-Specific	No
Example Repertoire	None
Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level	None
Other Required Materials	Pencil
Partner Required	No
Prerequisite Activities	“Sending a Postcard”
Related Activities	“Sending a Postcard”
Suggested Age(s)	8-12

Introduction

In “Sending a Postcard,” the student created a specific type of affirmation in which “positive statements...affirm or declare a desired objective as if it were already achieved.”⁴²⁸ Creating this type of affirmation, which centers upon visualizing a desired outcome, is similar and perhaps even identical to the process of creative visualization.⁴²⁹

A visualization script – also known as a performance script – is essentially a thorough, in-depth, expanded version of this type of affirmation. In a visualization

⁴²⁸ Canfield and Siccone, *The Power to Succeed in School and Beyond*, 87.

⁴²⁹ Gawain, *Creative Visualization*; Day, *Creative Visualization With Children*.

script, a performer describes his or her ideal performance in detail.⁴³⁰ The performer then uses this script as a guide in visualizing an ideal performance when preparing for a real performance. By repeatedly visualizing this completely positive version of a performance ahead of time, one can begin to view performing in a more positive way.⁴³¹

Description

In this activity, the student will write a visualization script, with the option of using the script to prepare for an actual upcoming performance. The student will create his or her own personalized script by filling in blank spaces in a series of templates, shown in figures 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, and 3.9. These templates, when used in combination, address a broad timetable surrounding a performance: the morning of a performance; warming up; right before a performance; during a performance; right after a performance.

Objectives

This activity addresses the following objectives:

- creating a visualization script or performance script
- verbally describing an ideal performance in detail
- visualizing an ideal performance
- setting realistic performance goals through the use of a visualization script

⁴³⁰ Bill Moore, *Playing Your Best When It Counts: Mental Skills for Musicians* (Norman, OK: Moore Performance Consulting, 2010), 19.

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*, 25.

- considering a broad timetable with regard to a performance (i.e., the morning of, warming up, right before, etc.) ahead of time
- developing a pre-performance routine
- fostering a positive attitude toward performing

In the First Lesson

The following steps should ideally be completed in the lesson during which this activity is introduced:

- The teacher or the student should read the introductory paragraphs, as well as the “About this Activity” section, from the student workbook. These may be read aloud or silently, at the discretion of the teacher.
- The teacher and the student should discuss what entails an ideal performance. In other words, what would need to happen in a performance for the student to feel satisfied, proud, and happy? (See the second paragraph in the supplemental teacher notes for the activity “Sending a Postcard” for additional guidance.)
- The teacher and the student should discuss what types of things might be done earlier in the day of a performance to lay the foundation for the type of ideal performance described by the student (i.e., eating breakfast, not hurrying to get ready for the recital, etc.).
- The teacher and the student should discuss an ideal warm-up routine for the day of a performance. If desired, the teacher and the student may discuss the importance of not over-practicing on the day of a

performance. The visualization script template in figure 3.6 may be used to guide this discussion.

- With the teacher’s guidance, the student should complete steps 1 and 2 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook, for at least one of the templates from figures 3.5 through 3.9. The teacher should emphasize the importance of choosing only positive words to fill in the blanks.
- The teacher should assign the student to complete either one, two, three, or all four of the remaining visualization script templates this week.
- The teacher should assign the student to complete step 5 in the “At Home” section of the student workbook, addressing the “What Do You Think?” questions.

Supplemental Teacher Notes

While most of the activities in this volume can be initially completed in one week and reinforced over a period of weeks or even months, “My Own Script” may take more than one week to initially complete. The teacher may use his or her discretion in determining how many of the templates he or she feels the student is capable of completing in one week.

As a general rule, only positive words should be used in a visualization script. Using positive words fosters a positive attitude and improves confidence.⁴³² However, there are two notable exceptions, in figure 3.7, in which the student may

⁴³² Moore, *Playing Your Best When It Counts*, 25.

choose to use neutral or even somewhat negative words: “I am sitting in a chair at the recital. It feels _____” and “I notice that my _____ are _____.” Completing these two statements honestly and descriptively (i.e., “It feels cold” and “I notice that my hands are shaking”) allows the student to genuinely acknowledge feelings that will likely happen before a performance, and therefore prepare for them ahead of time. In other words, while the student will likely be nervous no matter what, at least he or she will have developed strategies for dealing with these nerves. (The statement that immediately follows in this template is “I do my favorite activity to calm myself...”)

One of the most detailed templates, shown in figure 3.6, addresses the student’s warm-up routine on the day of a performance. This template suggests a routine in which the student practices relatively little – albeit in a highly targeted way – on the day of a performance. This template was created with the rationale that since the student has already done hours and hours of hard work ahead of time to learn the piece “backward and forward,”⁴³³ he or she only needs to warm up on the day of a performance. It is the experience of the author that over-practicing on the day of a performance can cause the best performance to be given in the practice room, rather than on the stage. However, as most teachers are aware, a warm-up routine is – and should be – a personalized experience. Some students may feel the need to do entire run-throughs on the day of a performance, while others may require less practice. If the student already has a successful warm-up routine in place, then the template in figure 3.6 may be modified to reflect this routine.

⁴³³ Jessica Baron Turner, *Your Musical Child: Inspiring Kids to Play and Sing for Keeps* (New York: String Letter Publishing, 2004), 175.

The teacher may also help the student modify more of the templates shown in figure 3.5 through 3.9 over a period of months or even years. As many teachers are aware, successful performance routines often change over time through the process of experimentation – that is, by discovering over time what feels best, works best, and results in the most successful performance.

Relaxation Activities

Relaxation Activity 1: “Tree Spine”

Table 4.6. Teacher planning guide for “Tree Spine.”

Student Workbook Page Number	101
Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed	10-12 minutes
Repertoire Required	Yes
Repertoire-Specific	No
Example Repertoire	None
Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level	3-4
Other Required Materials	None
Partner Required	Yes
Prerequisite Activities	None
Related Activities	“Warming Up;” “Here, I Feel Calm;” “Arm-agination”
Suggested Age(s)	6-12

Introduction

It is universally agreed upon in several spheres of research – including performance anxiety, mental skills training, and mindfulness – that the use of mental

skills involves the integration of the mind and the body.⁴³⁴ The specific skill of relaxation involves strategies that exemplify mind-body integration. Cognitively, relaxation involves clearing the mind.⁴³⁵ Physically, relaxation involves reducing one's heart rate, breathing rate, and muscular tension.⁴³⁶ Often, these cognitive and physical relaxation strategies are used in combination.

However, incorporating relaxation strategies into a task that requires mental and physical alertness – such as playing the piano – can pose challenges. A pianist cannot and should not fully relax, neither mentally nor physically, while performing. Even the simple act of sitting upright on the piano bench requires some physical tension. To address this issue, many teachers discuss the difference between “good tension” and “bad tension.” Good tension involves strength or firmness in the body that is necessary, and beneficial, for one's playing. Bad tension involves excess stress or tightness in the body that is harmful, and possibly even injurious, to one's playing. The activity “Tree Spine” encourages the student to imagine good tension radiating from the core of the body – which in itself has physical and mental implications.

⁴³⁴ Lydia Fehm and Katja Schmidt, “Performance Anxiety in Gifted Adolescent Musicians,” *Journal of Anxiety Disorders* 20 (2006): 98-99; Steven Robert Lorenz, “Performance Anxiety within the Secondary Choral Classroom: Effects of the Alexander Technique on Tension in Performance” (M.Mus. thesis, Michigan State University, 2002, in ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <http://proquest.umi.com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/pqdweb?index=0&did=766199051&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=6&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1286287449&clientId=41954>, accessed February 8, 2010), 11; Terry Orlick and Nadeane McCaffrey, “Mental Training with Children for Sport and Life,” *The Sport Psychologist* 5, no. 4 (December 1991): 323-324; Hanh, *Under the Rose Apple Tree*, 19.

⁴³⁵ Daniel Gould and Nicole Damarjian, “Imagery Training for Peak Performance,” in *Exploring Sport and Exercise Psychology*, ed. Judy L. Van Raalte and Britton W. Brewer (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 1996), 37.

⁴³⁶ Zaichkowsky and Zaichkowsky, “The Effects of a School-Based Relaxation Training Program on Fourth Grade Children,” 83; Orlick, *Feeling Great*, 73-77.

Description

In this activity, the student will practice sitting and playing the piano while imagining that his or her spine is a strong, healthy, living, and constantly growing tree. First, the student will sit in a relaxed position on the bench and imagine his or her “tree spine.” Next, the student will imagine his or her tree spine growing. This can help to improve posture from the base of the spine to the top of the head, and can also enhance the imagery in the activity. Finally, the student will use the energy from his or her tree spine to lift his or her hands to the keyboard and play an exercise or piece at a moderate, easy tempo. While playing, the student is encouraged to focus on the energy that he or she imagines that his or her tree spine is providing.

Objectives

This activity addresses the following objectives:

- using the image of a tree to draw attention to one’s spine
- focusing on an energy source inside the core of the body
- improving mindfulness of the feelings of the body
- improving posture through relaxation and imagery

In the First Lesson

The following steps should ideally be completed in the lesson during which this activity is introduced:

- The teacher or the student should read the introductory paragraphs, as well as the “About this Activity” section, from the student workbook. These may be read aloud or silently, at the discretion of the teacher.
- The student and the teacher should complete step 1 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook by selecting a piece or an exercise (i.e., D Major five-finger pattern, C Major scale, etc.) that the student can play well.
- The teacher should read steps 2 through 8 of the activity aloud, as a script, while the student engages in the activity. The teacher should read using a calm voice, with a slightly slower than usual pace of speaking, pausing as necessary to accommodate the pace of the student.⁴³⁷ (See the supplemental teacher notes for this activity for more information on reading visualization scripts aloud.)
- The teacher and the student should discuss the “What Do You Think” questions from the student activity.
- The teacher should assign the student to complete all steps in the “At Home” section of the student workbook this week.

Supplemental Teacher Notes

Jennifer Day, an authority on visualization activities for children, describes an effective way of reading visualization scripts aloud for children: “Keep your voice soft but audible and speak slowly, with frequent pauses. You do not need to

⁴³⁷ Day, *Creative Visualization with Children*, 53.

follow the script word for word – improvise over it, use your own imagination and apply your knowledge of your child’s individual needs.”⁴³⁸

As with so many of the activities in this volume, mindfulness is essential to “Tree Spine.” The teacher should try to ensure that the student is in fact mindfully engaging in the relaxation and imagery indicated in each step of the activity. One way of assessing the student’s mindfulness is to monitor the appearance of his or her body movements, since thinking differently about one’s body movements almost always causes these movements to look differently than they normally would. Another way of encouraging mindfulness is through discussion, as prompted by the “What Do You Think” questions in the student activity.

The last step of “Tree Spine” suggests practicing the activity for only one to two minutes each day, since intensely focusing on mind-body integration can be mentally exhausting – especially for a student who is new to this type of practice. However, it is the experience of the author that even one to two mindful minutes of engaging in a mind-body activity such as “Tree Spine” can be highly beneficial to students; the old adage “quality over quantity” is appropriate in this situation.

⁴³⁸ Ibid.

Relaxation Activity 2: “Warming Up”

Table 4.7. Teacher planning guide for “Warming Up.”

Student Workbook Page Number	104
Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed	10-12 minutes
Repertoire Required	No
Repertoire-Specific	No
Example Repertoire	None
Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level	None
Other Required Materials	None
Partner Required	Yes
Prerequisite Activities	None
Related Activities	“Tree Spine;” “Here, I Feel Calm”
Suggested Age(s)	6-12

Introduction

Relaxation can involve numerous physical strategies. The specific strategies of breathing deeply, breathing slowly, reducing heart rate, and reducing muscular tension appear regularly in relaxation programs for children.⁴³⁹ Progressive muscle relaxation, or the systematic relaxation of various muscle groups throughout the body, is a more methodical physical relaxation exercise and has also been used successfully with children.⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁹ Zaichkowsky and Zaichkowsky, “The Effects of a School-Based Relaxation Training Program on Fourth Grade Children,” 83; Orlick, *Feeling Great*, 73-77.

⁴⁴⁰ Zaichkowsky and Zaichkowsky, “The Effects of a School-Based Relaxation Training Program on Fourth Grade Children,” 83; Orlick and McCaffrey, “Mental Training with Children for Sport and Life,” 325; Maureen R. Weiss, “Psychological Skill Development in Children and Adolescents,” *The Sport Psychologist* 5, no. 4 (December 1991): 349; Orlick, *Feeling Great*, 70-72.

Imagining the feeling of warmth spreading throughout the body is another physical relaxation strategy that has been used successfully with children; this strategy also involves imagery.⁴⁴¹ Imagining the feeling of warmth, particularly in the hands and fingers, can be a useful tool for pianists.

Description

In this activity, the student will incorporate the feeling of warmth into a progressive muscle relaxation exercise. The student will systematically imagine warmth in various parts of the body, beginning with the hands and fingers and progressing to the arms, shoulders, back, legs, and feet. After “warming up” the entire body, the student will double-check to ensure that his or her hands and fingers are still warm. The student is encouraged to try the activity in various settings, including on the piano bench, standing up, and anywhere else he or she chooses.

Objectives

This activity addresses the following objectives:

- incorporating the feeling of warmth into a progressive muscle relaxation routine
- using imagery to enhance relaxation
- imagining the feeling of warmth to achieve physical relaxation in the body

⁴⁴¹ Orlick, *Feeling Great*, 70; Galyean, “The Effects of a Guided Imagery Activity on Various Behaviors of Low Achieving Students,” 89; Zaichkowsky and Zaichkowsky, “The Effects of a School-Based Relaxation Training Program on Fourth Grade Children,” 84; Zhang et al., “The Effect of Mental-Imagery Training on Performance Enhancement with 7-10-Year-Old Children,” 232.

In the First Lesson

The following steps should ideally be completed in the lesson during which this activity is introduced:

- The teacher or the student should read the introductory paragraphs, as well as the “About this Activity” section, from the student workbook. These may be read aloud or silently, at the discretion of the teacher.
- The teacher and the student should discuss the difference between good warmth (i.e., feeling warm, relaxed, cozy, toasty, etc.) and bad warmth (i.e., sunburn, walking on hot sand, hot potato, etc.).⁴⁴²
- The teacher and the student should briefly discuss how good warmth can make one feel, including the body and the mind.
- The teacher should read steps 1 through 6 of the activity aloud, as a script, while the student engages in the activity. The teacher should read using a calm voice, with a slightly slower than usual pace of speaking, pausing as necessary to accommodate the pace of the student.⁴⁴³ (See the supplemental teacher notes for the activity “Tree Spine” for more information.)
- The teacher should assign the student to complete all steps in the “At Home” section of the student workbook this week.

⁴⁴² Galyean, “The Effects of a Guided Imagery Activity on Various Behaviors of Low Achieving Students,” 89.

⁴⁴³ Day, *Creative Visualization with Children*, 53.

Supplemental Teacher Notes

It is important for the student to practice relaxing in a variety of settings, rather than in just one setting, so that he or she becomes capable of incorporating relaxation into different activities in his or her life in a practical way.⁴⁴⁴

Scholars have advocated different procedures in progressive muscle relaxation routines. Edmund Jacobson, who published the first progressive muscle relaxation exercise in 1929, suggested targeting the muscle groups in the following order: arms and hands, legs, abdominal muscles, respiratory muscles, chest and back, shoulders, and face.⁴⁴⁵ Terry Orlick, in his progressive muscle relaxation exercise “Spaghetti Toes,” advocates a different order: toes, feet, legs, fingers, arms, and finally the entire body.⁴⁴⁶ Malva Susanne Freymuth, in her book *Mental Practice and Imagery for Musicians*, advocates the following order: feet and toes, ankles, calves and lower legs, knee joints, “and so on through your entire body, ending with your head. Don’t forget about your spine, scalp, and facial muscles.”⁴⁴⁷

“Warming Up” begins with the hands simply because this facilitates truncating the activity into an abbreviated version (i.e., warming up only the hands) that can be quickly utilized immediately before a performance. However, the student may begin with any other part of the body if he or she wishes. The teacher may even encourage the student to begin the routine by warming up a part of the body that is especially prone to tension in that particular student.

⁴⁴⁴ Orlick, *Feeling Great*, 83.

⁴⁴⁵ Edmund Jacobson, *Progressive Relaxation* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1929), 42-43.

⁴⁴⁶ Orlick, *Feeling Great*, 70-71.

⁴⁴⁷ Freymuth, *Mental Practice and Imagery for Musicians*, 44.

Relaxation Activity 3: “Here, I Feel Calm”

Table 4.8. Teacher planning guide for “Here, I Feel Calm.”

Student Workbook Page Number	107
Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed	12-15 minutes
Repertoire Required	No
Repertoire-Specific	No
Example Repertoire	None
Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level	None
Other Required Materials	None
Partner Required	Yes
Prerequisite Activities	None
Related Activities	“Tree Spine;” “Warming Up”
Suggested Age(s)	8-12

Introduction

Imagining a favorite place is an effective way of relaxing quickly or even instantaneously. Many adults can likely relate to the idea of mentally transporting oneself to a favorite location – such as the beach, the woods, or the mountains – to relieve daily stress. Children are also capable of mentally transporting themselves to a favorite location to promote relaxation. In his book, *Feeling Great: Teaching Children to Excel at Living*, Terry Orlick includes an activity called “Special Place Relaxation,” which guides children in imagining a special place that makes them “find peace and calm.”⁴⁴⁸ Jennifer Day, in her book *Creative Visualization with*

⁴⁴⁸ Orlick, *Feeling Great*, 82.

Children, centers several activities around visualizing “a path in nature...by a stream or by the sea, in a meadow or a forest – whatever you like...”⁴⁴⁹

In “Here, I Feel Calm” the student will engage in a favorite place relaxation routine specifically designed for use in conjunction with playing a piece on the piano.

Description

In this activity, the student will mentally transport himself or herself to a favorite place – a place that makes him or her feel calm. First, the student will imagine a variety of favorite calm places and select one for this activity. Next, the student will imagine this favorite place just before playing a piece. The student will close his or her eyes, visualize the favorite place, and then wait for a piano to appear within the image of the favorite place. The student will imagine himself or herself approaching the piano and sitting on its bench with a positive attitude and desire to play it. Finally, the student will open his or her eyes, see the real piano in front of him or her, and play a piece.

Objectives

This activity addresses the following objectives:

- imagining a favorite place to promote relaxation
- incorporating a positive attitude toward performing into an imagery exercise

⁴⁴⁹ Day, *Creative Visualization with Children*, 55.

- combining relaxation and imagery

In the First Lesson

The following steps should ideally be completed in the lesson during which this activity is introduced:

- The teacher or the student should read the introductory paragraphs, as well as the “About this Activity” section, from the student workbook. These may be read aloud or silently, at the discretion of the teacher.
- The student and the teacher should complete step 1 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook by selecting a piece that the student can play well.
- The student should select a place that makes him or her feel calm to use with this activity.
- The teacher should read steps 2 through 7 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook aloud, as a script, while the student engages in the activity. The teacher should read using a calm voice, with a slightly slower than usual pace of speaking, pausing as necessary to accommodate the pace of the student.⁴⁵⁰ (See the supplemental teacher notes for the activity “Tree Spine” for more information on reading visualization scripts aloud.)
- The teacher and the student should briefly discuss how it felt to imagine the favorite place and then play the piece.

⁴⁵⁰ Day, *Creative Visualization with Children*, 53.

- The teacher should assign the student to complete all steps in the “At Home” section of the student workbook this week.

Supplemental Teacher Notes

Engaging in deep relaxation just before playing may not be a helpful or practical performance strategy. As most teachers are aware, a performer cannot and should not fully relax before a performance, since a performance requires energy and alertness. Because of this, “Here, I Feel Calm” is not specifically intended for use immediately before a performance. Rather, it is intended for use during regular practice. The activity allows the student to engage in a relaxation and imagery exercise that encourages a positive perspective with regard to playing the piano.

However, some teachers and students may wish to adapt “Here, I Feel Calm” for use immediately before performing. If desired, the teacher and the student can work together in creating a condensed version of the activity that can be quickly conducted in a performance setting – either as a student waits for his or her turn to perform, or in ten seconds or so on the bench immediately before playing.

Before the adapted activity is used in an actual performance setting, the student should achieve multiple successful rehearsals – preferably on more than one piano – in which he or she completes the activity immediately prior to performing the recital piece for another person. This way, experiencing “Here, I Feel Calm” just before performing will feel normal, natural, and comfortable.

Relaxation Activity 4: “Arm-agination”

Table 4.9. Teacher planning guide for “Arm-agination.”

Student Workbook Page Number	110
Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed	10-12 minutes
Repertoire Required	Yes
Repertoire-Specific	Yes
Example Repertoire	“Elephant Walking,” by Jon George (<i>A Day in the Jungle</i> , p. 5)
Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level	3-4
Other Required Materials	None
Partner Required	Yes
Prerequisite Activities	None
Related Activities	“Tree Spine;” “Take Three”
Suggested Age(s)	8-12

Introduction

Research in the field of youth performance psychology has shown that the two skills of relaxation and imagery work well in combination. One study found that while 10-12-year-old basketball players who received only relaxation training actually experienced a slight decrease in the quality of their performance, players who received both relaxation and imagery training improved more than any other players.⁴⁵¹ In many studies involving mental skills training programs for children,

⁴⁵¹ Wrisberg and Anshel, “The Effect of Cognitive Strategies on the Free Throw Shooting Performance of Young Athletes,” 100-101.

relaxation and imagery are so intertwined that they are practically inseparable.⁴⁵²

The benefits of combining relaxation and imagery have also been discussed in non-empirical books that address mental skills training for children. For example, Jennifer Day, author of *Creative Visualization with Children*, suggests beginning each creative visualization session with a muscle relaxation routine.⁴⁵³ In “Arm-agination,” as in many mental skills activities for children, relaxation and imagery are combined for the benefit of the student.

Description

In this activity, the student will practice relaxing the muscles of the arm with three specific imagery routines. All three routines relate to the piece “Elephant Walking,” by Jon George. Before playing the piece, the student will experience the physical feeling of heavy arms by imagining that his or her arms are cartons filled with milk. (The student may be familiar with the feeling of heavy arms from the activity “Heavy Wet Ropes” in Nancy and Randall Faber’s method series, *Piano Adventures*;⁴⁵⁴ the teacher may be familiar with imagining liquid-filled arms from the section entitled “How to Focus on Sensations” in Madeline Bruser’s book, *The Art of Practicing*.⁴⁵⁵) Then, the student will engage in three different imagery routines – one at a time – while playing “Elephant Walking.” All three imagery

⁴⁵² Galyean, “The Effects of a Guided Imagery Activity on Various Behaviors of Low Achieving Students,” 87-97; Zaichkowsky and Zaichkowsky, “The Effects of a School-Based Relaxation Training Program on Fourth Grade Children,” 81-85; Zhang et al., “The Effect of Mental-Imagery Training on Performance Enhancement with 7-10-Year-Old Children,” 230-241.

⁴⁵³ Day, *Creative Visualization with Children*, 18.

⁴⁵⁴ Nancy and Randall Faber, *Piano Adventures Technique and Artistry Book: Primer Level* (Fort Lauderdale, FL: FJH, 1995), 5.

⁴⁵⁵ Madeline Bruser, *The Art of Practicing: A Guide to Making Music From the Heart* (New York: Bell Tower, 1997), 203.

routines involve imagining that one's arms are different heavy yet relaxed objects: full milk cartons; elephant trunks; cargo bags.

Objectives

This activity addresses the following objectives:

- achieving muscle relaxation through imagery
- developing the skill of visual imagery (i.e, visually imagining milk cartons, elephant trunks, cargo bags, etc.)
- developing the skill of kinesthetic or physical imagery (i.e., making the arms feel heavy by imagining that they are different heavy objects)
- integrating visual and kinesthetic imagery
- verbally describing what heavy, relaxed arms feel like

In the First Lesson

The following steps should ideally be completed in the lesson during which this activity is introduced:

- The teacher or the student should read the introductory paragraphs, as well as the “About this Activity” section, from the student workbook. These may be read aloud or silently, at the discretion of the teacher.
- The teacher and the student should briefly discuss what full milk cartons feel like. The teacher and the student should briefly imagine that their arms are full milk cartons, with milk swooshing around inside, and discuss what this feels like.

- The teacher should read steps 1 through 5 from the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook aloud, as a script, while the student engages in the activity. The teacher should read using a calm voice, with a slightly slower than usual pace of speaking, pausing as necessary to accommodate the pace of the student.⁴⁵⁶ (See the supplemental teacher notes for the activity “Tree Spine” for more information on reading visualization scripts aloud.)
- The student and the teacher should briefly discuss how each of the two types of imagery practiced in the lesson felt different.
- The teacher should assign the student to complete all steps in the “At Home” section of the student workbook this week.

Supplemental Teacher Notes

Imagery can be especially beneficial when it relates to the musical intent expressed in the title of a piece. However, the image of full milk cartons – while unrelated to the musical intent of “Elephant Walking” – can still be useful as a general reference point or reminder for the feeling of heavy arms. The teacher can use the words “milk cartons,” at any time or in any piece, when he or she wishes to prompt the student to make his or her arms feel heavy. In this activity, imagining “milk carton” arms not only provides an introduction to the feeling of heavy arms, but also serves as a stepping stone toward more repertoire-specific imagery. The student should be encouraged to create additional images for heavy, relaxed arms,

⁴⁵⁶ Day, *Creative Visualization with Children*, 53.

since children may sometimes value their own ideas more readily than ideas imposed by others.

As with all of the activities in this volume, it is essential for the teacher to experience “Arm-agination” herself rather than just assigning the activity to the student. While the activities in this volume have been developmentally designed for elementary school children, teachers can and should still personally experience the concepts contained within them before attempting to teach them. The teacher should become familiar with the activities in this volume just as he or she would become familiar with repertoire pieces before assigning them to students.

Relaxation Activity 5: “Swimmer Breathing”

Table 4.10. Teacher planning guide for “Swimmer Breathing.”

Student Workbook Page Number	114
Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed	8-10 minutes
Repertoire Required	Yes
Repertoire-Specific	No
Example Repertoire	“Lotus Blossom,” by Jon George <i>(Jon George’s Festival of Favorites, p. 3)</i> ; “Autumn Leaves,” by Jon George <i>(Kaleidoscope Solos Book Five, pp. 4-5)</i>
Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level	3-4
Other Required Materials	Pencil
Partner Required	Yes
Prerequisite Activities	None
Related Activities	“Count Me In;” “Let’s Make a List;” “Concentration Station” Part One; “Concentration Station” Part Two; “A Dynamic and Colorful Performance”
Suggested Age(s)	9-12

Introduction

Relaxation is an important mental skill because, by definition, it eliminates “unnecessary activity and tension”⁴⁵⁷ – both of which can inhibit performance. In addition, relaxation training in children has been shown to effectively unlock the benefits of two other mental skills: positive attitude⁴⁵⁸ and imagery.⁴⁵⁹

Mindfully following one’s breaths is a hallmark of meditation training.⁴⁶⁰ As an added benefit, guiding children to become aware of their breaths often causes them to breathe more deeply. And, deep breathing – along with heart rate reduction and muscular tension reduction – is a hallmark of relaxation training in the children’s mental skills literature.⁴⁶¹ In this activity, relaxation and mindfulness – two important skills for performance enhancement – share a symbiotic relationship.

Description

In “Swimmer Breathing,” the student will practice breathing like a swimmer – a reference that is not only practical, but also acknowledges the sport-based roots of performance psychology research. The student will practice breathing regularly – as part of a choreographed “breathing routine” – while playing. Six suggested

⁴⁵⁷ Aaron Williamson, *Musical Excellence: Strategies and Techniques to Enhance Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 222.

⁴⁵⁸ Galyean, “The Effects of a Guided Imagery Activity on Various Behaviors of Low Achieving Students,” 87.

⁴⁵⁹ Wrisberg and Anshel, “The Effect of Cognitive Strategies on the Free Throw Shooting Performance of Young Athletes,” 100; Zhang et al., “The Effect of Mental-Imagery Training on Performance Enhancement with 7-10-Year-Old Children,” 236-237.

⁴⁶⁰ Thich Nhat Hanh, *Under the Rose Apple Tree* (Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press, 2002), 19.

⁴⁶¹ Galyean, “The Effects of a Guided Imagery Activity on Various Behaviors of Low Achieving Students,” 89-90; Zaichkowsky and Zaichkowsky, “The Effects of a School-Based Relaxation Training Program on Fourth Grade Children,” 83-84; Orlick, *Feeling Great*, 70-76.

breathing routines, shown in figure 3.11, provide options with which the student can experiment.

The student is encouraged to select his or her favorite breathing routine – the one that feels the most comfortable – and pencil the words “in” and “out” in his or her music to correspond with the chosen routine. Figures 3.12 and 3.13 show examples of penciling “ins” and “outs” in two different scores.

Objectives

This activity addresses the following objectives:

- encouraging regular breathing
- avoiding breath-holding
- encouraging deep breathing
- developing mindfulness of one’s own breaths
- focusing on one’s breathing during a performance to help maintain focus on the music

In the First Lesson

The following steps should ideally be completed in the lesson during which this activity is introduced:

- The teacher or the student should read the introductory paragraphs, as well as the “About this Activity” section, from the student workbook. These may be read aloud or silently, at the discretion of the teacher.

- The student should complete all steps in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook.
- For step 2, the teacher should help the student decide whether certain breathing routines (i.e., one-measure breathing or four-measure breathing) are feasible for the piece at the student’s tempo (see the supplemental teacher notes for this activity for more information).
- For step 6, the student should verbally compare how the two breathing routines felt different.
- The teacher should assign the student to complete all steps in the “At Home” section of the student workbook this week. If certain breathing routines are inappropriate due to the student’s performance tempo (see the supplemental teacher notes), the teacher should advise the student to skip these breathing routines for that piece.

Supplemental Teacher Notes

The two example pieces in this activity, “Lotus Blossom” and “Autumn Leaves,” were selected not only because they represent two different levels of difficulty but also because they represent two likely different paces of breathing. Breathing in and out in every measure would likely work well for a slower piece like “Lotus Blossom.” However, it would likely not work as well for a piece like “Autumn Leaves,” which is faster-paced due to being felt in larger pulses.

The student may need assistance in choosing whether his or her piece will work with one-measure breathing or whether he or she should start with two-

measure breathing. To help the student in this decision, the teacher should play the piece at the student’s performance tempo – ahead of time – while trying out the different breathing routines. If one-measure breathing (as in the first and second routines) seems to promote hyperventilation, then it is best to encourage the student to begin with two-measure breathing. Breathing at even a slightly faster pace than is comfortable is counterproductive to the purpose of “Swimmer Breathing.”

Imagery Activities

Imagery Activity 1: “Picture This”

Table 4.11. Teacher planning guide for “Picture This.”

Student Workbook Page Number	118
Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed	12-15 minutes
Repertoire Required	Yes
Repertoire-Specific	Yes
Example Repertoire	“Orchid Blooming,” by Jon George (<i>A Day in the Jungle</i> , p. 13)
Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level	1-3
Other Required Materials	Pencil; colored pencils, crayons, or markers
Partner Required	No
Prerequisite Activities	None
Related Activities	“Comic Strip”
Suggested Age(s)	8-12

Introduction

Imagery occurs when an individual imagines realistic experiences or things in his or her mind.⁴⁶² Imagery almost always involves at least one of the five senses. Visualization is a specific type of imagery that involves the visual sense. When an individual undergoes visualization, he or she imagines visual images such as pictures or scenes. Visualization – at least in elite performers – is often thought to be most effective when the imagined images are vivid.⁴⁶³

One study found that second graders were able to enhance their memory of information through the use of pictures that depicted the information.⁴⁶⁴ Significantly, the researchers found that the children’s memory was enhanced equally whether they used actual pictures or simply imagined the pictures in their minds.⁴⁶⁵ This finding shows that children as young as seven years old can effectively use visual imagery, or visualization, to enhance their performance of a task – in this case, memory. This research most certainly has implications for piano teachers and students.

Description

In this activity, the student will use visual images – in the form of pictures that he or she draws – to help learn the piece “Orchid Blooming,” by Jon George. The student is asked to draw pictures of orchids, in a blank grid of squares in figure

⁴⁶² Alison White and Lew Hardy, “An In-Depth Analysis of the Uses of Imagery by High-Level Slalom Canoeists and Artistic Gymnasts,” *The Sport Psychologist* 12, no. 4 (December 1998): 389.

⁴⁶³ Anne R. Isaac, “Mental Practice – Does it Work in the Field?” *The Sport Psychologist* 6, no. 2 (June 1992): 193, 197.

⁴⁶⁴ Warren Purkel and Marc H. Bornstein, “Pictures and Imagery Both Enhance Children’s Short-Term and Long-Term Recall,” *Developmental Psychology* 16, no. 2 (1980): 153-154.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 153.

3.15, that illustrate the changing intervals in each measure in the left hand part of the piece. In a measure with a smaller interval, the student draws an orchid with petals that are more closed. In a measure with a larger interval, the student draws an orchid with petals that are more open. These pictures visually illustrate the fluctuating intervals in the left hand part of “Orchid Blooming.”

Once the student completes the pictures, he or she is asked to color them in order to enhance the vividness of the images. The student then practices the piece while using the colorful pictures as a visual aid – first while actually looking at the pictures, and then while simply imagining the pictures. Finally, the student is encouraged to focus on these orchid pictures – preferably by imagining them – while performing “Orchid Blooming.”

Objectives

This activity addresses the following objectives:

- enhancing score study and analysis through pictures
- using pictures to develop the skill of visual imagery
- using pictures and visual imagery to encourage awareness of kinesthetic and aural musical features (i.e., how the hand feels different and how the music sounds different when the pictures are different)
- using imagery to aid in learning
- using imagery to aid in memorization
- focusing on visual images during a performance, to help maintain focus on the music

In the First Lesson

The following steps should ideally be completed in the lesson during which this activity is introduced:

- The teacher or the student should read the introductory paragraphs, as well as the “About this Activity” section, from the student workbook. These may be read aloud or silently, at the discretion of the teacher.
- The student should complete step 1 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook by playing and naming the left hand intervals for at least mm. 1-10 of “Orchid Blooming.”
- The teacher should point out the pre-drawn pictures in the picture grid for mm. 1-3, noting that this is what the orchid’s petals look like for the interval of a third.
- The teacher should point out the pre-drawn picture in the box for m. 4, noting that the orchid’s petals are more open in this box because the interval has “opened up” from a third to a fourth.
- The teacher should help the student to sketch orchids for the boxes for mm. 5-6, ensuring that the student draws petals that increase in “openness” in each box to illustrate a fifth, then a sixth.
- The student should play mm. 1-6 while looking at his or her orchid pictures.
- The teacher and the student should briefly discuss how it felt to play while looking at the orchid pictures. The teacher should prompt the

student to state, in his or her own words, how the orchid pictures were connected to the left hand part.

- The teacher should ask the student what the orchids should look like for mm. 7-9 (intervals of a sixth), and should tell the student to draw these at home.
- The teacher should guide the student in drawing orchids for the box for m. 10 (interval of a fifth, matching the orchid for m. 5), then m. 11 (interval of a third, matching the orchid for m. 3).
- The teacher should tell the student that he or she will be finishing these orchid pictures at home this week.
- The teacher should assign the student to complete all steps in the “At Home” section of the student workbook this week.

Supplemental Teacher Notes

While the student may play the left hand alone in the first step of the activity, it is advisable to play both hands together as soon as possible for the remaining steps. This allows the student to integrate the imagery into the complete piece – the way it will sound and feel in performance – from an early stage.

An alternate version of this activity is having the student draw orchids with increasing numbers of petals as the intervals grow larger. For example, the orchids for mm. 1-3 could have three petals (as shown in the pre-drawn pictures). Then, the orchid for m. 4 (interval of a fourth) could have four petals, and so on. The pre-drawn orchid for m. 4 could be easily modified to simply add one extra petal when

completing the activity this way. For some students, seeing a greater number of petals may provide a more effective visual image than seeing petals that are simply more “open.”

Imagery Activity 2: “Comic Strip”

Table 4.12. Teacher planning guide for “Comic Strip.”

Student Workbook Page Number	124
Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed	12-15 minutes
Repertoire Required	Yes
Repertoire-Specific	Yes
Example Repertoire	“Stagecoach Comin’!” by Jon George (<i>Kaleidoscope Solos Book One</i> , p. 3)
Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level	3-4
Other Required Materials	Pencil; colored pencils, crayons, or markers
Partner Required	Yes
Prerequisite Activities	None
Related Activities	“Picture This;” “Let’s Write a Story;” “Take Three”
Suggested Age(s)	8-12

Introduction

Most teachers are aware that pictures can enhance learning in young students. Textbooks and reading books for young children contain colorful illustrations that make material more accessible and visually appealing. Modern piano methods contain colorful illustrations for the same reasons. In addition to

making information more accessible and appealing, pictures can also create a story. A series of pictures goes beyond the scope of a single illustration to create a detailed storyline with multiple characters and events.

When a piano student creates a series of pictures to accompany a piece that he or she is learning and performing, he or she effectively creates a storyline that can both enhance musical interpretation and also provide concrete imagery upon which to focus during performance. In addition, it is possible that picturing visual images from a story may benefit students with regard to memorization. One study found that second graders were able to enhance their memory of information through the use of pictures – whether they actually looked at the pictures, or simply imagined the pictures.⁴⁶⁶

Description

In this activity, the student will draw a series of pictures to create a comic strip for the piece “Stagecoach Comin’!” by Jon George. The student will sketch four scenes, one scene for each line of the piece, in the squares in figure 3.20. The student will then color these sketches using colored pencils, crayons, or markers in order to enhance the vividness of the imagery.

Next, the student will practice several imagery applications involving “Stagecoach Comin’!” and his or her comic strip: playing the piece while picturing the comic strip in his or her head; looking at the comic strip away from the piano and imagining how the piece sounds; looking at the comic strip away from the piano

⁴⁶⁶ Purkel and Bornstein, “Pictures and Imagery Both Enhance Children’s Short-Term and Long-Term Recall,” 153-154.

and imagining how it feels to play the piece; performing the piece for an audience while picturing the comic strip.

Objectives

This activity addresses the following objectives:

- enhancing score study and analysis through pictures
- using pictures to develop the skill of visual imagery
- using pictures and visual imagery to encourage awareness of kinesthetic and aural musical features (i.e., how the hand feels different and how the music sounds different when the pictures are different)
- using imagery to aid in learning
- using imagery to aid in memorization
- storytelling through music
- making a piece “one’s own” through a personalized, self-created comic strip
- focusing on a comic strip during a performance to help keep the mind on the music

In the First Lesson

The following steps should ideally be completed in the lesson during which this activity is introduced:

- The teacher or the student should read the introductory paragraphs, as well as the “About this Activity” section, from the student workbook. These may be read aloud or silently, at the discretion of the teacher.
- The student should complete all four steps in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook. For step 2, see the supplemental teacher notes for this activity for more information.
- If there is time during the lesson, the student may create a brief sketch in the second square in figure 3.20 for the second line of the music. If there is not time, the teacher should jot down a two to three word reminder of the storyline for the second square to assist the student in remembering the storyline at home.
- The teacher should jot down a two to three word reminder of the storyline for the third and fourth squares to assist the student in remembering the storyline at home.
- The teacher should assign the student to complete some or all of the steps in the “At Home” section of the student workbook this week, depending on the age and maturity level of the student (see the last paragraph of the supplemental teacher notes for this activity for more information).
- The teacher should assign the student to complete step 12 in the “At Home” section of the student workbook, addressing the “What Do You Think?” questions.

Supplemental Teacher Notes

While independence is an important objective for piano students, the teacher should supervise the creation of the comic strip for two primary reasons. First, it is important that the story match the musical intent expressed in the title of the piece. In other words, the comic strip for “Stagecoach Comin’!” should include a stagecoach, and possibly a pioneer-themed plot. Matching the story to the title of the piece ensures that the student honors the ideas of the composer – a concept that will remain important throughout the student’s performing career.

Second, it is important that the story generally match the musical structure of the piece. Specifically, the illustrations for the first two lines of “Stagecoach Comin’!” should be similar, with only a slight difference; the illustration for the third line should depict a new idea, and the illustration for the fourth line should bring the story to a close. Matching the story to the musical structure of the piece will make the story fit the music more clearly. It will also serve to enhance the student’s understanding and performance of the piece.

When completing this activity with a student at the lower end of the suggested age range, the teacher may wish to supervise the student even further by having him or her complete the comic strip almost entirely during lessons rather than at home. For example, the student may complete all sketches in two or three lessons, and then simply color the comic strip at home. The teacher may use his or her discretion, based on the maturity of the student, in making this decision.

Imagery Activities 3a and 3b: “In Character” Versions A and B

Table 4.13. Teacher planning guide for “In Character” Versions A and B.

Student Workbook Page Number	130; 134
Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed	8-10 minutes
Repertoire Required	Yes
Repertoire-Specific	Yes
Example Repertoire	Version A – “The Little Princess,” by Jon George (<i>Kaleidoscope Solos Book One</i> , p. 14); Version B – “The King’s Guard,” by Jon George (<i>Jon George’s Festival of Favorites</i> , p. 16)
Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level	3-4
Other Required Materials	Pencil
Partner Required	Yes
Prerequisite Activities	None
Related Activities	“Let’s Write a Story;” “Take Three”
Suggested Age(s)	6-12

Introduction

Those who work with children are aware that children have vibrant imaginations. Children enjoy imagining that they are different characters – by playing dress up, by playing house, or in a multitude of other activities. Being “in character” is a natural part of life for many children. According to Jennifer Day,

“Children have both a natural need and an ability for creative and imaginative play that makes the consciously applied use of imagery almost effortless for them.”⁴⁶⁷

In addition to being a natural activity for many children, the act of being in character can also serve as a useful tool for performance enhancement. Imagining that one is a character depicted in a piece, which is a form of visualization, serves two purposes. First, it enhances the student’s interpretation of the meaning within a piece. Second, it provides a concrete, positive, music-related feature – the character – upon which the student can focus during learning and performance of a piece.

Description

In this activity, the student will imagine that he or she is the main character depicted in the title of a piece. In the first version of the activity, this character is a princess. In the second version, this character is a royal guard.

First, the student will look at a list of six questions, shown in figure 3.22 or 3.26, that deal with character development. Next, after listening to or playing the piece, the student will think of answers to the six questions and write them down in figure 3.23 or 3.27. After these initial steps, the student will get in character by walking and talking like the character, imagining himself or herself in full costume, and picturing different events that occur with the character at different points in the piece.

Finally, the student will practice performing the piece while in character – first by himself or herself, and then for an audience member such as a parent, relative, or friend.

⁴⁶⁷ Day, *Creative Visualization With Children*, xi.

Objectives

This activity addresses the following objectives:

- enhancing musicality in performance
- using one’s imagination to enhance one’s performance
- using visual imagery by imagining oneself as a character depicted in a piece
- personalizing a performance experience
- enhancing one’s interpretation of the meaning within a piece
- focusing on visual images of oneself as a character during a performance, to help maintain focus on the music

In the First Lesson

The following steps should ideally be completed in the lesson during which this activity is introduced:

- The teacher or the student should read the introductory paragraphs, as well as the “About this Activity” section, from the student workbook. These may be read aloud or silently, at the discretion of the teacher.
- The teacher and the student should discuss what it means to be in character. Experiences from the student’s life (i.e., playing dress up, playing house, acting in a school play, etc.) can enhance this discussion.
- The student should complete all three steps in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook.

- The teacher should assign the student to complete all steps in the “At Home” section of the student workbook this week.

Supplemental Teacher Notes

Imagining oneself as the main character in a story depicted in a piece is an excellent tool for enhancing musicality in performance. While this is a valuable objective in itself, “In Character” also aims to use this imagery to develop the student’s mindfulness as a performer. In other words, while it is relatively easy to develop an imaginary character, it is an entirely different challenge to focus on the image of oneself as that character throughout one’s performance of a piece.

The two pieces in the two versions of “In Character” were selected because they represent two different styles and sounds. The pieces are similar in their levels of difficulty. Likewise, both versions of the activity are equal in difficulty, and neither version is a prerequisite for the other. The student may choose to complete only version A, only version B, or both versions. If the student has already completed one version of the activity and moves on to the other version, he or she may begin with the section labeled “Instructions for ‘In Character.’”

Imagery Activity 4: “Let’s Write a Story”

Table 4.14. Teacher planning guide for “Let’s Write a Story.”

Student Workbook Page Number	139
Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed	8-10 minutes
Repertoire Required	Yes
Repertoire-Specific	Yes
Example Repertoire	“Snake Charmer,” by Jon George (<i>Kaleidoscope Solos Book One</i> , p. 11)
Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level	3-4
Other Required Materials	Pencil
Partner Required	No
Prerequisite Activities	None
Related Activities	“In Character,” “Take Three,” “Comic Strip”
Suggested Age(s)	6-12

Introduction

Stories are a large part of children’s lives. Parents read or tell stories to their children from the time they are born. Older children read stories to themselves. There are even special genres of childhood stories, including bedtime, campfire, and ghost stories. Many children enjoy creating their own stories.

Telling stories through music is a natural extension of what children do in other parts of their lives. Malva Susanne Freymuth suggests incorporating “childlike stories and dramas that can be expressed through the music” into imagery

training for young musicians.⁴⁶⁸ When used effectively, story-based imagery can encourage the student to connect more deeply with a piece of music, and can also help the student to maintain focus while performing.

Description

In this activity, the student will write a story for the piece “Snake Charmer,” by Jon George. After playing or listening to “Snake Charmer,” the student will set the scene for a story for the piece. The student will decide upon the “Five Ws” for the story (i.e., who, what, when, where, and why) and then write this information in the blank spaces in figure 3.33. Next, the student will play or listen to “Snake Charmer” again, one line at a time, and brainstorm specific events that might occur in each line of the music. Finally, the student will write his or her story in the blank spaces in figure 3.34.

Objectives

This activity addresses the following objectives:

- storytelling through music
- using a story to connect more deeply with a piece of music
- creating specific imagery upon which one can focus during performance of a piece
- encouraging creativity and originality in musical interpretation and performance

⁴⁶⁸ Freymuth, *Mental Practice and Imagery for Musicians*, 87.

- fostering independence in musical decision-making
- valuing the student’s ideas, which can boost self-esteem

In the First Lesson

The following steps should ideally be completed in the lesson during which this activity is introduced:

- The teacher or the student should read the introductory paragraphs, as well as the “About this Activity” section, from the student workbook. These may be read aloud or silently, at the discretion of the teacher.
- The student should complete all four steps in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook.
- The teacher should assign the student to complete all steps in the “At Home” section of the student workbook this week.

Supplemental Teacher Notes

The piece “Snake Charmer” was selected for this activity for several reasons. First, a programmatic piece such as “Snake Charmer” is ideal for a student’s first attempt at musical storytelling, since it may inspire a story more easily than an abstract piece. (Some students may already be familiar with the concept of writing a story for a programmatic piece of music from activities such as the one in “Legend of the Buffalo” in Nancy and Randall Faber’s method series, *Piano Adventures*. In this activity, the student writes the last sentence of a story for the piece in a blank

line in the final two measures of the score.⁴⁶⁹) However, storytelling can and absolutely should be used with abstract pieces (i.e., sonatinas, etudes, waltzes, etc.) as well.

Second, “Snake Charmer” was selected because it works well with the concept of creating one event for each line of the music. Not all pieces will work as neatly with this concept, although many elementary pieces will. For pieces in which musical phrases do not correspond with lines in the score, the teacher may create a modified version of figure 3.34.

“Snake Charmer” is also featured in the subsequent activity “Take Three.”

⁴⁶⁹ Nancy and Randall Faber, *Piano Adventures Technique and Artistry Book: Level 1* (Fort Lauderdale, FL: FJH, 1994), 21.

Imagery Activity 5: “Take Three”

Table 4.15. Teacher planning guide for “Take Three.”

Student Workbook Page Number	144
Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed	10-12 minutes
Repertoire Required	Yes
Repertoire-Specific	No
Example Repertoire	“Snake Charmer,” by Jon George (<i>Kaleidoscope Solos Book One</i> , p. 11)
Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level	3-4
Other Required Materials	Pencil
Partner Required	No
Prerequisite Activities	“In Character;” “Let’s Write a Story”
Related Activities	“In Character;” “Let’s Write a Story;” “Comic Strip;” “On Cue;” “I’m in the Band (or Orchestra)” Part One
Suggested Age(s)	8-12

Introduction

In “Let’s Write a Story,” the student wrote a story for the piece “Snake Charmer.” The act of writing a story for a piece, in itself, can enhance musicianship and musical interpretation. However, a story can become an even more powerful tool for performance enhancement when the student consciously focuses upon imagery from a story while performing a piece.

Research has shown that children as young as seven years old regularly use several types of imagery to enhance their sport performance.⁴⁷⁰ While little research has been conducted with regard to imagery use in young musicians, it is likely that young musicians are just as capable as young athletes of utilizing imagery for performance enhancement. The activity “Take Three” suggests three ways for the student to engage in story-based imagery while performing.

Description

In “Take Three,” the student will complete three different imagery activities, all of which involve the story that he or she created in the activity “Let’s Write a Story.” These three activities are described as three separate “takes” – Take One, Take Two, and Take Three.

In Take One, the student will use cue words to coach himself or herself on his or her story while performing the piece “Snake Charmer,” by Jon George. (The activities “On Cue” and “I’m in the Band (or Orchestra)” Part One also involve cue words.) In Take One, saying the cue words may cause the student to visualize scenes from the story. However, the verbal imagery of the cue words – rather than any visual imagery that they trigger – is the primary focus of Take One.

In Take Two, the student will consciously focus upon visual images – and ideally even multi-sensory images – associated with his or her story. The student is encouraged to incorporate as many vivid details as possible, including scenery,

⁴⁷⁰ Krista J. Munroe-Chandler et al., “Where, When, and Why Young Athletes Use Imagery: An Examination of Developmental Differences,” *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport* 78, no. 2 (2007): 114; Craig R. Hall et al., “The Sport Imagery Questionnaire for Children (SIQ-C),” *Measurement in Physical Education and Exercise Science* 13 (2009): 105.

colors, smells, and even imagining specific events at specific places in the music. Vividness, at least in elite performers, has been shown to increase the effectiveness of imagery.⁴⁷¹

In Take Three, the student will experience the imagery of the story through the eyes of a specific character that he or she chooses to play. (See the imagery activity “In Character” for an introduction to being in character.) In Take Three, the student is encouraged to imagine what his or her specific character is doing, seeing, hearing, feeling, and smelling at different places in the music.

Objectives

This activity addresses the following objectives:

- using a story to encourage imagery
- using multi-sensory imagery for performance enhancement
- using the same story in multiple ways for performance enhancement
- increasing vividness in one’s imagery
- focusing on a story during performance to maintain focus

In the First Lesson

The following steps should ideally be completed in the lesson during which this activity is introduced:

⁴⁷¹ Isaac, “Mental Practice – Does it Work in the Field,” 193, 197.

- The teacher or the student should read the introductory paragraphs, as well as the “About this Activity” section, from the student workbook. These may be read aloud or silently, at the discretion of the teacher.
- The student should start Take One by doing the first four steps in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook.
- The teacher and the student should briefly discuss how doing Take One felt, including if the cue words caused the student to imagine the story.
- The student should verbally describe as many multi-sensory details (i.e., sight, sound, smell, etc.) from the story as possible for the first two lines of the music.
- The student should start Take Two by completing step 5 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook. The student should do this step twice during the lesson, with the goal of increasing the vividness of the imagery during the second play-through.
- The student should verbally describe how doing Take One and Take Two felt different.
- The teacher should assign the student to complete all three “takes” this week by doing all steps in the “At Home” section of the student workbook.

Supplemental Teacher Notes

As seen in the activity “Let’s Write a Story,” storytelling can enhance one’s interpretation of a piece of music. As seen in “Take Three,” storytelling can also

serve as a stepping stone for the student to engage in various types of imagery while playing.

The teacher should encourage the student to notice, and verbally describe, how each of the three “takes” feels different. This will not only encourage the student to be more mindful, but it can also help the teacher to understand which type of imagery might be most beneficial for this particular student.

Imagery Activity 6: “It’s All in My Head”

Table 4.16. Teacher planning guide for “It’s All in My Head.”

Student Workbook Page Number	147
Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed	8-10 minutes
Repertoire Required	Yes
Repertoire-Specific	No
Example Repertoire	None
Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level	3-4
Other Required Materials	None
Partner Required	No
Prerequisite Activities	None
Related Activities	“Let’s Give an Imaginary Performance” Part One; “Let’s Give an Imaginary Performance” Part Two; “Let’s Watch an Imaginary Performance”
Suggested Age(s)	9-12

Introduction

Mental practice, or mental rehearsal, is the act of rehearsing a skill or task in one's head, "without any associated overt actions."⁴⁷² For example, a tennis player may mentally rehearse the physical technique, and associated physical sensations, of a specific type of swing such as forehand or backhand. A pianist may mentally rehearse the physical actions – including those of the fingers, hand, wrist, arm, or whole body – required to perform a specific exercise, passage, or piece. Malva Susanne Freymuth, a scholar in the field of mental skills training for musicians, advocates game-like mental practice for young students, as exemplified in the following statement: "Let's pretend that you're magical and can play your instrument just by thinking about it."⁴⁷³

Because mental rehearsal involves imagining a specific skill in the mind, it is considered a form of cognitive specific imagery.⁴⁷⁴ Since mental rehearsal can contribute to skill development, researchers often advocate its use during relatively early stages of learning.⁴⁷⁵ For example, mental rehearsal might be used when the student is learning a new piece. Others believe that "mental practice is useful during all stages of learning."⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷² Gould and Damarjian, "Imagery Training for Peak Performance," 28.

⁴⁷³ Freymuth, *Mental Practice and Imagery for Musicians*, 87.

⁴⁷⁴ A. Paivio, "Cognitive and Motivational Functions of Imagery in Human Performance," *Canadian Journal of Applied Sport Sciences* 10, no. 4 (1985): 23S; Gould and Damarjian, "Imagery Training for Peak Performance," 28.

⁴⁷⁵ Lesley Ann Sisterhen, "The Use of Imagery, Mental Practice, and Relaxation Techniques for Musical Performance Enhancement" (DMA diss., University of Oklahoma, 2005, in ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <http://proquest.umi.com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/pqdweb?index=0&did=921044431&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=6&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1287173132&clientId=41954>, accessed February 7, 2010), xii.

⁴⁷⁶ Freymuth, *Mental Practice and Imagery for Musicians*, 67.

In addition to benefiting skill development, mental rehearsal can also serve as a stepping stone to other types of imagery. For example, after the student has developed the ability to experience the physical sensations and the sound of playing a piece away from the piano, he or she can then engage in even more complex imagery activities such as giving and watching imaginary performances.

Description

In this activity, the student will engage in mental rehearsal of a piece that he or she is capable of playing well. All steps of the activity will be completed away from the piano. First, the student will read the music and sing, hum, or whistle the tune out loud – first with the help of a teacher, and then by himself or herself. Next, the student will read the music and “hear” the sound of the music in his or her head. Then, the student will read and “hear” the music while pretending to play the piece on a surface such as a table or his or her leg. (Malva Susanne Freymuth refers to the process of pretending to play as “miming.”⁴⁷⁷) Finally, the student will read and “hear” the music while pretending to play the piece in his or her imagination.

Objectives

This activity addresses the following objectives:

- developing the ability to engage in mental practice, or mental rehearsal
- using mental rehearsal to aid in learning a piece

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid., 48.

- developing the ability to use aural imagery (i.e., imagining how the music sounds)
- developing the ability to use kinesthetic imagery (i.e., imagining how the hand feels)
- incorporating aural and kinesthetic imagery (i.e., imagining how the music sounds and the hand feels)

In the First Lesson

The following steps should ideally be completed in the lesson during which this activity is introduced:

- The teacher or the student should read the introductory paragraphs, as well as the “About this Activity” section, from the student workbook. These may be read aloud or silently, at the discretion of the teacher.
- The student and the teacher should complete steps 1 through 5 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook with a passage from the student’s piece (i.e., one line, two lines, the A section, etc.) that is appropriate for the amount of time available in the lesson.
- For step 6, the teacher should create a modified version of the step that can likely be completed successfully during the lesson (i.e., trying one hand alone, trying only two technically easier measures, etc.). The student may use this modification to complete step 6 during the lesson if needed. This step may need to be repeated until the student succeeds.

- The teacher should assign the student to complete all steps in the “At Home” section of the student workbook this week, with a section of the piece determined to be an appropriate length for one week of mental practice.

Supplemental Teacher Notes

While many sport psychology researchers suggest that mental practice is particularly helpful during early stages of learning a skill,⁴⁷⁸ in this activity the student will engage in mental practice with a piece that he or she is already capable of playing well. The author feels that this is ideal for the student’s first attempt at mental practice, since imagining the physical actions of playing a piece that one has already learned is easier than imagining the physical actions of playing a piece that still feels difficult. Once the student has developed the ability to use mental practice with a piece that feels comfortable, he or she can begin to use mental practice during earlier stages of learning other pieces.

In step 6 of the activity, the student may begin hands separately if the teacher feels that it is necessary. Another alternative for modifying step 6 is pretending to play a shorter, technically easier passage with both hands (i.e., two measures of straightforward hand-to-hand coordination). However, the student and the teacher should understand that the ultimate goal is to be able to mentally practice entire passages and pieces with hands together. Engaging in mental practice with hands together encourages the student to imagine what it actually feels like to

⁴⁷⁸ Sisterhen, “The Use of Imagery, Mental Practice, and Relaxation Techniques for Musical Performance Enhancement,” xii.

perform the piece, a valuable objective. That being said, engaging in mental practice with one hand alone, just like engaging in real practice with one hand alone, can serve a distinct purpose in certain situations – for example, when attempting to master particularly tricky passages (i.e., scale runs, passagework, etc.).

Imagery Activity 7: “Let’s Give an Imaginary Performance” Part One

Table 4.17. Teacher planning guide for “Let’s Give an Imaginary Performance” Part One.

Student Workbook Page Number	150
Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed	8-10 minutes
Repertoire Required	Yes
Repertoire-Specific	No
Example Repertoire	None
Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level	4
Other Required Materials	None
Partner Required	No
Prerequisite Activities	“It’s All in My Head”
Related Activities	“Let’s Give an Imaginary Performance” Part Two; “Let’s Watch an Imaginary Performance”
Suggested Age(s)	10-12

Introduction

In sport, imagery involves imagining “attitudes and actions mentally in ways that have not yet been encountered in real performance.”⁴⁷⁹ In other words, imagery

⁴⁷⁹ Jeff Simons, “Doing Imagery in the Field,” in *Doing Sport Psychology*, ed. Mark B. Andersen (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 2000), 92.

involves imagining oneself undertaking realistic, lifelike activities involving one's sport or performance skill. Imagery can be multi-sensory, which means that it can involve more than one of the five senses.⁴⁸⁰ In addition, imagery can be conducted from two different perspectives: "Some athletes imagine themselves from the perspective that they are inside their body actually experiencing the imagined sensations, whereas others imagine themselves from the perspective of a spectator watching the performance."⁴⁸¹ The first of these perspectives is known as internal perspective imagery, and the second is known as external perspective imagery. Each perspective can also be combined with one or more sense, such as visual, kinesthetic, or aural.

"Let's Give an Imaginary Performance" involves internal perspective imagery. In this activity, the student will become more deeply aware of what he or she – as the performer – sees, hears, or physically feels during a performance.

Description

In this activity, the student will engage in internal perspective imagery by imagining the sensations that he or she experiences while performing a specific piece. First, the student will choose a piece that he or she is capable of playing well, and play the piece once. Next, the student will select one of three senses: seeing, hearing, or feeling with the body. The student will then play the piece again while focusing specifically on what he or she experiences with this sense while

⁴⁸⁰ Craig R. Hall, "Imagery in Sport and Exercise," in *Handbook of Sport Psychology*, 2nd ed., ed. Robert N. Singer, Heather A. Hausenblas, and Christopher M. Janelle (New York: Wiley, 2001), 537.

⁴⁸¹ Gould and Damarjian, "Imagery Training for Peak Performance," 31.

performing, including as many vivid details as possible. Finally, the student will move away from the piano and give an “imaginary performance” of the piece, while specifically focusing on imagining the sensory details that he or she noticed while actually playing. The student will repeat the activity – perhaps over a period of a week or more – until he or she has practiced experiencing all three of the senses.

Objectives

This activity addresses the following objectives:

- engaging in internal perspective imagery
- preparing oneself for multi-sensory imagery by paying attention to various sensory experiences (i.e., seeing, hearing, or feeling with the body)
- increasing self-awareness of what one experiences as a performer
- improving mindfulness in performing

In the First Lesson

The following steps should ideally be completed in the lesson during which this activity is introduced:

- The teacher or the student should read the introductory paragraphs, as well as the “About this Activity” section, from the student workbook. These may be read aloud or silently, at the discretion of the teacher.

- The student should complete steps 1 through 5 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook for one of the following senses: seeing, hearing, or feeling with the body.
- The student should verbally discuss what he or she experienced with the chosen sense while playing. The questions in figures 3.35, 3.36, and 3.37 may be used to guide this discussion.
- The teacher and the student should complete step 6 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook.
- The teacher and the student should discuss how it felt for the student to imagine the sensory details of the chosen sense while hearing the teacher play the piece.
- The teacher should tell the student that at home this week, he or she will complete the activity while imagining the sound of the music, rather than actually hearing the music played by the teacher.
- The teacher should assign the student to complete all steps in the “At Home” section of the student workbook this week.

Supplemental Teacher Notes

This version of “Let’s Give an Imaginary Performance” introduces the concept of multi-sensory imagery. Even when the student actively focuses upon seeing or feeling, he or she will likely also imagine the sound of the music. In other words, the student will likely incorporate aural imagery even when he or she primarily engages in visual or kinesthetic imagery.

This phenomenon illuminates one of several factors which distinguish music performance from sport performance: the importance of sound. While sound is often a secondary feature in sport imagery (i.e., the sound of one's racket hitting the ball, the sound of one's feet landing on the ground, etc.), it is inextricably a primary feature in music imagery. Because of this, musicians who engage in imagery almost always utilize multi-sensory imagery,⁴⁸² with aural imagery being a constant that cannot easily be eliminated.

⁴⁸² Freymuth, *Mental Practice and Imagery for Musicians*, 37.

Imagery Activity 8: “Let’s Give an Imaginary Performance” Part Two

Table 4.18. Teacher planning guide for “Let’s Give an Imaginary Performance” Part Two.

Student Workbook Page Number	154
Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed	8-10 minutes
Repertoire Required	Yes
Repertoire-Specific	No
Example Repertoire	None
Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level	4-5
Other Required Materials	None
Partner Required	Yes
Prerequisite Activities	“Let’s Give an Imaginary Performance” Part One
Related Activities	“Let’s Give an Imaginary Performance” Part One; “Let’s Watch an Imaginary Performance;” “My Own Script”
Suggested Age(s)	10-12

Introduction

In the first version of this activity, the student gave an “imaginary performance” of a piece while focusing on the sensory details that he or she would experience while actually playing the piece. In other words, the student engaged in internal perspective imagery. The first version of the activity introduced multi-sensory imagery, since the student imagined multiple types of sensory details.

However, as many teachers are aware, recital-specific sensory details (i.e., the look of the shiny grand piano, the sound of programs rustling in the audience,

the feel of one's feet in performance shoes, etc.) are often the very details that can unnerve even the most secure student during a performance. According to Philip Johnston in his book *The Practice Revolution*, simulating recital pressure in recital preparation is an important tool for young performers.⁴⁸³ This version of "Let's Give an Imaginary Performance" specifically emphasizes sensory details that the student will likely experience in an upcoming performance. Incorporating these details into performance preparation can help the student to address at least one source of performance stress ahead of time.

Description

In this activity, the student will engage in multi-sensory imagery to prepare for an upcoming recital performance. First, the student will play his or her recital piece. Next, the student will select one of three senses: seeing, hearing, or feeling with the body. The student will then play the piece again while imagining what he or she would likely experience with this sense during an actual recital performance, including as many vivid details as possible. The student is encouraged to emphasize recital-specific details (i.e., the look of the shiny grand piano, the sound of programs rustling in the audience, the feel of one's feet in performance shoes, etc.). Finally, the student will perform the piece while engaging in the recital-specific sensory imagery – first alone, and then for an audience member such as a parent, relative, or friend.

⁴⁸³ Philip Johnston, *The Practice Revolution: Getting Great Results from the Six Days Between Music Lessons* (Pearce, Australia: PracticeSpot Press, 2007), 150-151.

Objectives

This activity addresses the following objectives:

- using multi-sensory internal perspective imagery to prepare for an upcoming performance
- incorporating recital-specific sensory details into an imagery routine
- engaging in internal perspective imagery while playing
- raising self-awareness of what one experiences as a performer, specifically during a recital
- acknowledging performance stress ahead of time
- improving mindfulness in dress rehearsals and recital preparation

In the First Lesson

The following steps should ideally be completed in the lesson during which this activity is introduced:

- The teacher or the student should read the introductory paragraphs, as well as the “About this Activity” section, from the student workbook. These may be read aloud or silently, at the discretion of the teacher.
- The student should complete all five steps in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook.
- The student should verbally discuss what he or she experienced with the chosen sense while playing. If necessary, the teacher can use responses from the student’s list in figure 3.38, 3.39, or 3.40 to guide this discussion.

- The teacher should assign the student to complete all steps in the “At Home” section of the student workbook this week.

Supplemental Teacher Notes

This version of “Let’s Give an Imaginary Performance” emphasizes actual playing, rather than imaginary playing, since actual rehearsals are especially beneficial as a performance draws near. In this activity, it is especially important for the student to imagine the details in his or her imagery routine as vividly as possible. Vividly imagining recital-specific sensory details prior to a performance can help to familiarize the student with these details, helping them to seem less intimidating during an actual performance.

Imagery Activity 9: “Let’s Watch an Imaginary Performance”

Table 4.19. Teacher planning guide for “Let’s Watch an Imaginary Performance.”

Student Workbook Page Number	159
Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed	10-12 minutes
Repertoire Required	Yes
Repertoire-Specific	No
Example Repertoire	None
Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level	4-5
Other Required Materials	None
Partner Required	No
Prerequisite Activities	“It’s All in My Head”
Related Activities	“Let’s Give an Imaginary Performance” Part One; “Let’s Give an Imaginary Performance” Part Two; “My Own Script;” “Sending a Postcard”
Suggested Age(s)	12

Introduction

Many teachers are likely aware that imagery is a varied, versatile, and multi-faceted skill. Imagery can be multi-sensory,⁴⁸⁴ and can also be conducted from an internal perspective or an external perspective.⁴⁸⁵ When using internal perspective imagery, performers “imagine themselves performing as if they were looking at themselves through their own eyes (i.e., they imagine what they would see if they

⁴⁸⁴ Hall, “Imagery in Sport and Exercise,” 537.

⁴⁸⁵ Gould and Damarjian, “Imagery Training for Peak Performance,” 31; Hall, “Imagery in Sport and Exercise,” 536.

were physically executing the skill).⁴⁸⁶ When using external perspective imagery, performers “imagine themselves performing as if they were looking at themselves on a video.”⁴⁸⁷

One study found that adolescent figure skaters utilized an external visual perspective more frequently than any other imagery perspective.⁴⁸⁸ While it is not clear if this is the case with young musicians, Malva Susanne Freymuth suggests that “the external viewpoint may be beneficial during performance preparations. So much time is spent in perfecting musical matters that the impact of stage presence on overall performance often is overlooked.”⁴⁸⁹

Description

In this activity, the student will engage in external perspective imagery by watching an imaginary “video”⁴⁹⁰ of himself or herself performing a piece. First, the student will choose a piece that he or she is capable of playing well. Next, the student will play the piece while specifically paying attention to performance features – such as physical gestures or dramatic sounds – that might stand out to an audience member. Finally, the student will move away from the piano and watch an imaginary “video” of himself or herself performing the piece. The student will imagine what he or she looks like while performing the piece, and will also try to “hear” the music during the imaginary performance. The student is encouraged to

⁴⁸⁶ Hall, “Imagery in Sport and Exercise,” 536.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁸ Wendy Rodgers, Craig Hall, and Eric Buckolz, “The Effect of an Imagery Training Program on Imagery Ability, Imagery Use, and Figure Skating Performance,” *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology* 3, no. 2 (1991): 116.

⁴⁸⁹ Freymuth, *Mental Practice and Imagery for Musicians*, 70.

⁴⁹⁰ Hall, “Imagery in Sport and Exercise,” 536.

specifically imagine the performance features highlighted in the first part of the activity.

Objectives

This activity addresses the following objectives:

- experiencing external visual perspective imagery (i.e., watching a “video” of oneself performing⁴⁹¹)
- experiencing external aural perspective imagery (i.e., imagining what the music would sound like to an audience member)
- combining external visual imagery and external aural imagery; engaging in multi-sensory imagery
- building self-awareness by imagining what one looks and sounds like while performing
- noticing the connection between physical gestures and sound
- emphasizing performing in one’s self-concept

In the First Lesson

The following steps should ideally be completed in the lesson during which this activity is introduced:

- The teacher or the student should read the introductory paragraphs, as well as the “About this Activity” section, from the student workbook. These may be read aloud or silently, at the discretion of the teacher.

⁴⁹¹ Hall, “Imagery in Sport and Exercise,” 536.

- The student should complete steps 1 and 2 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook. In step 2, the teacher may ask the student to play certain passages more than once if desired.
- The student and the teacher should discuss the connection between striking musical features and body movements (i.e., making an exciting, energetic physical gesture in a dramatic opening section, leaning in closer to the keys in a soft passage, etc.).
- The student should complete step 3 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook.
- The student and the teacher should complete step 4 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook.
- The teacher and the student should discuss how it felt for the student to visualize himself or herself performing the piece while the teacher played.
- The teacher should tell the student that at home this week, he or she will complete the activity while imagining the sound of the music, rather than actually hearing the music played by the teacher.
- The teacher should assign the student to complete all steps in the “At Home” section of the student workbook this week.

Supplemental Teacher Notes

“Let’s Watch an Imaginary Performance” can be especially helpful when a student is preparing for a recital. However, the activity should ideally be introduced

well in advance of a recital, in between recitals, or even when there is not a recital on the calendar. In other words, the student should initially experience this activity with a regular piece rather than a recital piece – although the student should be able to play the piece well and perhaps even by memory.

Introducing “Let’s Watch an Imaginary Performance” on an ordinary piece, when the student is not preparing for an upcoming recital, allows the student to initially experience external perspective imagery in a low-stress situation. When the student is free from the additional stress of preparing for a performance, he or she will likely be able to engage more effectively in the imagery routine in the activity. In addition, when the student has already completed “Let’s Watch an Imaginary Performance” in regular practice, using the activity to prepare for a recital will more likely feel normal and natural rather than foreign and strange.

Imagery Activity 10: “I’m in the Band (or Orchestra)” Part One

Table 4.20. Teacher planning guide for “I’m in the Band (or Orchestra)” Part One.

Student Workbook Page Number	162
Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed	12-15 minutes
Repertoire Required	Yes
Repertoire-Specific	Yes
Example Repertoire	“The Sad Gypsy,” by Jon George (<i>Kaleidoscope Solos Book Two</i> , p. 12)
Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level	3-4
Other Required Materials	None
Partner Required	Yes
Prerequisite Activities	None
Related Activities	“On Cue;” “Take Three;” “Let’s Make a List;” “Concentration Station” Part One; “Concentration Station” Part Two
Suggested Age(s)	9-12

Introduction

Many teachers are likely aware that paying attention to one specific feature of the music at a time (i.e., the sound of the dynamics, a story, lyrics, etc.) is one way of maintaining focus while performing. As an added benefit, many of the features that the student may choose to focus on – and may have already listed in the activity “Let’s Make a List” – also enhance musicality and interpretation.

Buddhist scholar Thich Nhat Hanh defines mindfulness as “remembering to come back to the present moment.”⁴⁹² Given this definition, one might consider focusing during performance – or paying attention to a feature of the music that helps to keep the mind in the “present moment”⁴⁹³ of the performance – a practice in mindfulness. It is significant to note, however, that Hanh’s definition encourages the student to “come back”⁴⁹⁴ to the present moment, rather than to try to “stay in” the present moment without interruption. This language illuminates a fundamental truth: that most children – and many adults – find it difficult or even impossible to maintain focus on one exclusive feature of the music during an entire performance. Because of this, the act of shifting focus or refocusing, as exemplified in Hanh’s reminder to “come back to the present moment,”⁴⁹⁵ should be considered an essential performance skill and practiced regularly.

The “Action Distraction” activities coach the skill of shifting focus after distraction. The “I’m In the Band (or Orchestra)” activities involve another approach to shifting focus. In this version of the activity, the student will purposely and constructively shift focus as a preventative measure, ideally before focus is even lost in the first place. As an added benefit, shifting focus in this way can also enhance the musicality of the student’s performance.

⁴⁹² Hanh, *Under the Rose Apple Tree*, 10.

⁴⁹³ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid.

Description

In this activity, the student will play “The Sad Gypsy,” by Jon George, while imagining that he or she is actually creating and hearing the sounds of a non-piano instrument. The student will select one appropriate instrument to imagine for the melody in the first half of the piece, and a different instrument to imagine for the melody in the second half of the piece. The student will rehearse each of these sections while imagining the sounds of the two distinct instruments. While playing, the student will also visualize the physical technique (i.e., bowing a stringed instrument, blowing into a brass instrument, etc.) required to play each instrument. Finally, the student will play the entire piece while imagining the two different instruments, including shifting focus between the second and third lines. The student will also have the option of using cue words, shown in figures 3.43, 3.44, and 3.45, as a way to remain mindful of the instrumental imagery during his or her performance.

Objectives

This activity addresses the following objectives:

- experiencing aural imagery by imagining that one is creating the sounds of different instruments
- experiencing visual imagery by visualizing the physical technique of playing a different instrument
- engaging in multi-sensory imagery by incorporating aural, visual, and possibly kinesthetic imagery

- mindfully shifting focus, as a preventative measure, during a performance
- using cue words to coach focal shifts

In the First Lesson

The following steps should ideally be completed in the lesson during which this activity is introduced:

- The teacher or the student should read the introductory paragraphs, as well as the “About this Activity” section, from the student workbook. These may be read aloud or silently, at the discretion of the teacher.
- The student, with the help and guidance of the teacher, should complete steps 1 through 7 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook.
- The student and the teacher should address the cue words shown in figures 3.43, 3.44, and 3.45 by completing steps 8 and 9 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook.
- The teacher should assign the student to complete all steps in the “At Home” section of the student workbook this week.

Supplemental Teacher Notes

While the student may begin by playing the left hand alone in steps 3 and 6 of the activity, it is advisable to play both hands together as soon as possible. This

allows the student to integrate the imagery into the complete piece – the way it will sound and feel in performance – from an early stage.

Aural imagery, achieved by imagining the sounds of the different instruments, is the primary focus of this activity. However, incorporating visual imagery, by picturing the long bow strokes or deep breaths required to play the different instruments, can enhance the effectiveness of the activity. It is also good for the student to incorporate kinesthetic imagery by imagining the physical feeling of moving the bow or breathing deeply.

For some students, the cue words in figures 3.43 and 3.44 or 3.45 can be a useful additional tool in maintaining mindfulness. The teacher may use his or her judgment in determining the extent to which these should be used with each student. The teacher and the student may also modify these cue words if desired.

Imagery Activity 11: “I’m in the Band (or Orchestra)” Part Two

Table 4.21. Teacher planning guide for “I’m in the Band (or Orchestra)” Part Two.

Student Workbook Page Number	167
Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed	7-8 minutes
Repertoire Required	Yes
Repertoire-Specific	Yes
Example Repertoire	“Capriccio,” by Jon George <i>(Artistry at the Piano Repertoire Book 4, p. 15)</i>
Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level	3-4
Other Required Materials	Pencil
Partner Required	Yes
Prerequisite Activities	“I’m in the Band (or Orchestra)” Part One
Related Activities	“I’m in the Band (or Orchestra)” Part One; “A Colorful Performance” Part One; “A Colorful Performance” Part Two
Suggested Age(s)	11-12

Introduction

Many instructors who have coached children in the use of mental skills believe that mental skills training should begin relatively early in the study of a task (i.e., playing a sport or instrument). Malva Susanne Freymuth, a scholar in the field of mental skills training for musicians, suggests that teachers “plant the seeds of

mental practice and imagery skills early and foster them over time.”⁴⁹⁶ One study showed that even preschool and kindergarten students were capable of implementing positive living skills into their daily lives.⁴⁹⁷ Other studies have shown that children as young as seven years old are capable of using various types of imagery.⁴⁹⁸

While it is ideal to begin mental skills training early in a child’s study of a sport or instrument, it is equally important to maintain this training as a regular part of the curriculum so that a child can continue to use mental skills as his or her playing level progresses. According to Terry Orlick, an expert in the field of mental skills training for children, “The ongoing integration of mental and physical skills with children is the key to mental skill refinement and personal excellence.”⁴⁹⁹

The first version of “I’m in the Band (or Orchestra)” introduced multi-sensory imagery of a non-piano instrument in an elementary level piece. The second version of the activity continues this concept in an intermediate level piece. Just as in the first part of the activity, the imagery in this part of the activity serves a double purpose: enhancing musicality and interpretation, as well as helping to maintain focus on the music during performance.

Description

In this activity, the student will imagine the sounds of various instruments while playing the piece “Capriccio,” by Jon George. First, the student will listen to

⁴⁹⁶ Freymuth, *Mental Practice and Imagery for Musicians*, 86.

⁴⁹⁷ Orlick and McCaffrey, “Mental Training with Children for Sport and Life,” 323-324.

⁴⁹⁸ Munroe-Chandler et al., “Where, When, and Why Young Athletes Use Imagery,” 114; Hall et al., “The Sport Imagery Questionnaire for Children (SIQ-C),” 105.

⁴⁹⁹ Orlick and McCaffrey, “Mental Training with Children for Sport and Life,” 327.

or play the piece while looking at the score. Next, the student will select different instruments, including solo instruments and/or ensembles, that seem appropriate for the six distinct passages highlighted in figure 3.46. The student will write the names of these instruments (i.e., violin, brass quartet, harpsichord, etc.) in the blank spaces in figure 3.46. Finally, the student will play the piece – first alone, and then for others – while actively focusing on the sounds and images of these instruments.

Objectives

This activity addresses the following objectives:

- experiencing aural imagery by imagining that one is creating the sounds of different instruments
- experiencing visual imagery by visualizing the physical technique of playing a different instrument
- engaging in multi-sensory imagery while performing
- mindfully shifting focus throughout a performance
- making personalized performance decisions ahead of time

In the First Lesson

The following steps should ideally be completed in the lesson during which this activity is introduced:

- The teacher or the student should read the introductory paragraphs, as well as the “About this Activity” section, from the student workbook. These may be read aloud or silently, at the discretion of the teacher.

- The student should complete step 1 of the activity, with either the student or the teacher performing “Capriccio.”
- The student should complete steps 2 through 6 of the activity for at least the first two lines of “Capriccio.”
- The teacher should assign the student to complete all steps in the “At Home” section of the student workbook this week.

Supplemental Teacher Notes

As with many of the activities in this volume, achieving mindfulness is fundamental to this version of “I’m in the Band (or Orchestra).” It is relatively easy for the student to write the names of different instruments in different parts of the score, and this in itself can enhance the student’s interpretation of the piece. However, it is a distinct and challenging task to mindfully focus upon the imagery of each instrument as one performs, including shifting focus as the instrumentation changes. Ensuring that the student is mindful of the imagery while performing is fundamental to developing his or her ability to focus during performance.

Imagery Activity 12: “A Colorful Performance” Part One

Table 4.22. Teacher planning guide for “A Colorful Performance” Part One.

Student Workbook Page Number	171
Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed	8-10 minutes
Repertoire Required	Yes
Repertoire-Specific	Yes
Example Repertoire	“Lotus Blossom,” by Jon George <i>(Jon George’s Festival of Favorites, p. 3)</i>
Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level	3-4
Other Required Materials	None
Partner Required	Yes
Prerequisite Activities	None
Related Activities	“I’m in the Band (or Orchestra)” Part One; “A Colorful Performance” Part Two
Suggested Age(s)	6-12

Introduction

The ability to hear different colors in music is officially considered a form of a condition known as synesthesia, in which “one type of sensory stimulation creates perception in another sense.”⁵⁰⁰ However, even musicians who do not claim to have synesthesia associate music with color on a regular basis. Many musicians

⁵⁰⁰ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s.v. “synesthesia,” <http://www.britannica.com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/Ebchecked/topic/578457/synesthesia> (accessed June 14, 2011).

refer to “tone color,” or timbre, in music. Others use the term “color change” to describe a moment of contrast in a musical work or performance.

Associating a passage or a piece of music with one or more specific colors can enhance interpretation. In addition, color can serve as a helpful and interesting feature upon which to focus during performance.

Description

In this activity, the student will choose specific colors to associate with specific passages in the piece “Lotus Blossom,” by Jon George. First, the student will select a color that he or she feels would fit well with the first line of the piece. (As the teacher may suspect, there are truly no incorrect answers in this activity.) The student will then play the first line of “Lotus Blossom” while imagining the chosen color in his or her head. Next, the student will select a different color to associate with the second line of the piece. The student will then play the second line while imagining the second color in his or her head. Finally, the student will perform the entire piece – first alone, and then for someone else – while imagining the colors and the color change.

Objectives

This activity addresses the following objectives:

- hearing, imagining, and describing color in music
- focusing on colors that one associates with the music to help maintain focus during performance

- shifting focus, in a constructive way, during performance
- making creative, personalized performance decisions

In the First Lesson

The following steps should ideally be completed in the lesson during which this activity is introduced:

- The teacher or the student should read the introductory paragraphs, as well as the “About this Activity” section, from the student workbook. These may be read aloud or silently, at the discretion of the teacher.
- The student, with the guidance of the teacher as needed, should complete all six steps in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook.
- The student and the teacher should briefly discuss how it felt to imagine the colors, including a possible discussion of what the colors looked like (i.e., watery, sky-like, etc.) in the student’s mind.
- The teacher should assign the student to practice all steps in the “At Home” section of the student workbook this week.

Supplemental Teacher Notes

Focusing on a different color in the second line of the music renews the student’s attention halfway through the piece, when he or she is likely at risk of starting to lose focus. The concept of mindfully shifting focus as a constructive, preventative measure is also featured in the first version of the activity “I’m in the

Band (or Orchestra),” and is described in further detail in the teacher manual entry for that activity.

Some teachers may wonder if encouraging the student to focus on a color, or on any other feature that does not seem to be an inherent part of the music, may be counter-productive to the student’s performance. For example, why should the student think about the color blue instead of thinking about the notes in his or her piece? When considering this question, it is important for the teacher to evaluate the typical quality of the student’s performing experiences, including his or her attitude toward performing. If thinking strictly about the notes elicits one successful performance after another – while also maintaining high levels of attention, musicality, interest, and enthusiasm – then the student may not need to experiment with other performance strategies.

However, if the student repeatedly experiences slips while performing, gives accurate yet cold performances, expresses his or her dislike for performing, or is simply interested in trying new performance strategies, then the teacher should consider introducing an activity such as “A Colorful Performance.” At the very least, incorporating mental skills activities can enhance interpretation and musicality. In addition, when used effectively, mental skills activities can also improve mindfulness during practice and performance.

Imagery Activity 13: “A Colorful Performance” Part Two

Table 4.23. Teacher planning guide for “A Colorful Performance” Part Two.

Student Workbook Page Number	175
Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed	12-15 minutes
Repertoire Required	Yes
Repertoire-Specific	Yes
Example Repertoire	“Reflets dans l’eau,” by Jon George (<i>Artistry at the Piano Repertoire Book 2</i> , pp. 30-31)
Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level	3-4
Other Required Materials	None
Partner Required	Yes
Prerequisite Activities	“A Colorful Performance” Part One
Related Activities	“A Colorful Performance” Part One; “I’m In the Band (or Orchestra)” Part Two; “A Dynamic and Colorful Performance”
Suggested Age(s)	11-12

Introduction

Many teachers are familiar with the benefits of encouraging students to imagine different colors in the music that they learn and perform. Associating a piece of music with one or more colors can enhance musicality and interpretation. In addition, imagining colors can also help the student to maintain focus during performance.

The first version of “A Colorful Performance” introduced the concept of imagining and focusing on specific colors during performance of an elementary level piece. The second version of the activity continues this concept in an intermediate level piece. In addition to featuring a more advanced piece, this version also includes more complex and subtly nuanced color imagery.

Description

In this activity, the student will choose colors, as well as color transitions, to associate with specific passages in the piece “Reflets dans l’eau,” by Jon George. The student will begin by listening to or playing the entire piece, while specifically noticing places in the music that seem to call for “color changes.” Next, the student will play the A section of the piece and select a specific color that seems to fit well with this section. The student will then play the A section again while actively imagining the selected color. After this, the student will repeat these steps – with a different color or a different shade of the same color – for the slightly different A section that begins in m. 19.

Then, the student will play the transitional passage in mm. 15-18 while imagining that the crescendo and decrescendo represent a smooth transition from the first color to the second color. After that, the student will play the ending of the piece, in mm. 31-39, while visualizing a transformation from the second color to a completely new color. The student is encouraged to experiment with several different color transformations, and to choose his or her favorite color transformation, for the ending of the piece. Finally, the student will perform the

entire piece – first alone, and then for someone else – while imagining and focusing on his or her colors and color transitions.

Objectives

This activity addresses the following objectives:

- hearing, imagining, and describing color in music
- focusing on colors that one associates with the music to help maintain focus during performance
- associating colors and color transitions with dynamic and structural events in a piece of music
- shifting focus, in a constructive way, during performance
- making creative, personalized performance decisions
- strengthening independence in performance decisions

In the First Lesson

The following steps should ideally be completed in the lesson during which this activity is introduced:

- The teacher or the student should read the introductory paragraphs, as well as the “About this Activity” section, from the student workbook. These may be read aloud or silently, at the discretion of the teacher.
- The student should complete step 1 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook.

- The student should point out the places that seem to indicate color changes in the music.
- The student should complete steps 2 through 6 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook, addressing the two A sections in the piece.
- The student and the teacher should briefly discuss how it felt to imagine these colors, including a possible discussion of what the colors looked like (i.e., watery, sky-like, etc.) in the student’s mind.
- The student should complete step 7 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook to address the transition between the two A sections. This step may be repeated, with coaching from the teacher, until the student has successfully visualized the color transition.
- The teacher should assign the student to complete all steps in the “At Home” section of the student workbook this week.

Supplemental Teacher Notes

As in the first version of this activity, there are truly no incorrect color choices in this version of “A Colorful Performance.” Encouraging the student to experiment with multiple colors and color transitions can be both fun and beneficial. It also promotes independence in musical decision making, since it places the student in control of his or her own performance decisions.

As in many of the other activities in this volume, achieving mindfulness is fundamental to this version of “A Colorful Performance.” It is relatively easy for

the student to select different colors for different passages – and this in itself can enhance interpretation. However, it is important for the student to mindfully focus upon this color imagery as he or she performs, including shifting focus as the colors change. Ensuring that the student is mindful of the imagery while performing is fundamental to developing his or her ability to maintain focus during performance.

Imagery Activity 14: “A Dynamic and Colorful Performance”

Table 4.24. Teacher planning guide for “A Dynamic and Colorful Performance.”

Student Workbook Page Number	181
Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed	12-15 minutes
Repertoire Required	Yes
Repertoire-Specific	Yes
Example Repertoire	“Waltz,” by Jon George (<i>Artistry at the Piano Repertoire Book 4</i> , pp. 10-11)
Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level	3-4
Other Required Materials	Pencil; colored pencils
Partner Required	Yes
Prerequisite Activities	“A Colorful Performance” Part One; “A Colorful Performance” Part Two; “Swimmer Breathing;” “Concentration Station” Part Two
Related Activities	See prerequisite activities
Suggested Age(s)	12

Introduction

In the two versions of “A Colorful Performance,” the student visualized specific colors for specific passages in pieces that he or she performed. This color imagery served two purposes: enhancing musical interpretation, and providing a focal point upon which to concentrate during performance. In “A Dynamic and Colorful Performance,” the student will utilize color imagery for a more specific and advanced purpose: to enhance his or her performance of the dynamics in a piece of music as part of a larger, multi-part performance strategy.

Description

In this activity, the student will choose colors to associate with the dynamic indications in the piece “Waltz,” by Jon George, and then incorporate the visualization of these colors into a multi-part performance strategy for the piece. First, the student will select a color family for loud dynamic indications and a color family for soft dynamic indications, and add these colors to the color key in figure 3.51. Next, the student will add these colors to the score using colored pencils, crayons, or markers. After adding these colors to the score, the student will play “Waltz” while reading from the score. As the student plays the piece, he or she will try to memorize the look and associated sound of each dynamic color in the score.

Next, the student will address the B section of “Waltz.” Rather than continuing the color imagery, the student will select a “breathing routine” to use in this section. (See the activity “Swimmer Breathing” for a detailed example of using breathing routines.)

Finally, the student will perform “Waltz” in its entirety – first alone, and then for someone else – while executing the three-part strategy. While the student performs the A section, he or she will focus on the dynamic and color imagery. When the student reaches the B section, he or she will shift focus to the chosen breathing routine. When the student returns to the second A section, he or she will refocus on the dynamic and color imagery.

Objectives

This activity addresses the following objectives:

- using color imagery to enhance one’s performance of the dynamics in a piece
- using color imagery to help maintain focus on the music during performance
- purposely and mindfully shifting focus at preplanned places during a performance
- creating a multi-part performance strategy for a piece

In the First Lesson

The following steps should ideally be completed in the lesson during which this activity is introduced:

- The teacher or the student should read the introductory paragraphs, as well as the “About this Activity” section, from the student workbook. These may be read aloud or silently, at the discretion of the teacher.

- The student should complete step 1 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook by playing “Waltz” all the way through.
- The student should complete steps 2 through 9 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook. For steps that involve circling dynamic indications in the score, the student need only complete these steps for the first two lines of the piece during the lesson.
- The student should complete step 10 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook.
- If there is time in the lesson, the student may play the B section of “Waltz” and select an appropriate breathing routine, penciling the “ins” and “outs” for the routine in the score. If there is not time in the lesson, this step is already included in the “At Home” section of the student workbook.
- The teacher and the student should discuss the ultimate three part performance strategy for “Waltz” – focusing on the dynamic and color imagery in the A sections, and focusing on the breathing routine in the B section.
- The teacher should assign the student to complete all steps in the “At Home” section of the student workbook this week. If the student has not yet memorized “Waltz,” and is not planning on memorizing it this week, step 8 – playing from memory – may be skipped for now.

Supplemental Teacher Notes

This activity can be especially helpful if the student has recently memorized “Waltz.” When memorizing pieces, many students are so concerned with the notes that they temporarily de-emphasize the importance of the dynamics. At this stage, drawing the student’s attention back to the dynamic indications with colorful visual aids can be particularly useful. According to Malva Susanne Freymuth, “Focusing purely on how the printed music looks is helpful in developing visual memory.”⁵⁰¹

Shifting focus to a breathing routine in the B section renews the student’s attention midway through the piece, when he or she may begin to lose focus. In addition, it ensures that the student breathes through a more technically demanding passage.

The student should be encouraged to create alternate performance strategies for “Waltz,” and for other pieces, as prompted in questions 9 and 10 in the “What Do You Think” section of the activity. For example, the student might prefer to shift focus to an entirely new focal feature, rather than back to the color imagery, in the return of the A section. Or, the student might prefer to focus on the sound of an instrument, rather than a breathing routine, in the B section. Experimenting with different focal features promotes independence in musical decision making, and also gives the student valuable practice in mental skills training.

⁵⁰¹ Freymuth, *Mental Practice and Imagery for Musicians*, 36.

Imagery Activity 15: “On Cue”

Table 4.25. Teacher planning guide for “On Cue.”

Student Workbook Page Number	189
Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed	12-15 minutes
Repertoire Required	Yes
Repertoire-Specific	Yes
Example Repertoire	“Distant Chimes,” by Jon George <i>(Students’ Choice: Recreational Solos for The Music Tree Part 3, pp. 4-5)</i>
Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level	1-3
Other Required Materials	Picture of percussion-type chimes with small, hard mallets; picture of large gong with large, fluffy mallet; teacher demonstration of circular motion required to prepare and strike large gong
Partner Required	No
Prerequisite Activities	None
Related Activities	“Picture This;” “Take Three;” “I’m in the Band (or Orchestra)” Part One
Suggested Age(s)	11-12

Introduction

Cue words are descriptive words – often said internally – that cue, or guide, a person during practice or performance of an activity. Cue words can be simple, such as repeating the words “Deep breaths – shoulders relaxed” to oneself

immediately before beginning a performance. Or, cue words can be more elaborate, such as describing “key elements of a routine” in detail to oneself as one performs.⁵⁰² Because cue words involve addressing aspects of a person’s performance in the mind, rather than solely in actuality, they are sometimes considered a form of mental practice.⁵⁰³ Mental practice is a specific type of imagery in which actions are rehearsed mentally, rather than physically.⁵⁰⁴

Description

In this activity, the student will use cue words to guide him or her through a performance of the piece “Distant Chimes,” by Jon George. These cue words will trigger several types of imagery as the student plays the piece: visual images of two different types of percussion instruments; kinesthetic images of how the hands feel while playing specific parts of the piece; cognitive images that literally describe letter names and keyboard navigation in specific places. Used in combination, these cue words and images can help solidify a student’s performance of “Distant Chimes.”

Objectives

This activity addresses the following objectives:

- using cue words to elicit visual, kinesthetic, and cognitive imagery
- using cue words to mentally coach oneself on upcoming events in a piece

⁵⁰² Rodgers, Hall, and Buckolz, “The Effect of an Imagery Training Program on Imagery Ability, Imagery Use, and Figure Skating Performance,” 114.

⁵⁰³ Ibid., 120.

⁵⁰⁴ Gould and Damarjian, “Imagery Training for Peak Performance,” 28.

- using cue words to enhance musicality in a performance
- using cue words to encourage physical relaxation
- using cue words to aid in memorization
- using cue words during a performance to help maintain focus on the music
- developing the ability to use mental practice away from the piano

In the First Lesson

The following steps should ideally be completed in the lesson during which this activity is introduced:

- The teacher or the student should read the introductory paragraphs, as well as the “About this Activity” section, from the student workbook. These may be read aloud or silently, at the discretion of the teacher.
- The teacher should show the student pictures of narrow chimes and a large gong, including pictures of the mallets used to play each.
- The teacher should point out that the words “Ding dong” in mm. 5-6 correspond to playing on black keys, and explain that the black keys are narrow and hard, just like the narrow chimes.
- The student should play mm. 5-8, imagining the narrow chimes while playing on the black keys.
- The teacher should demonstrate the circular motion required to prepare and strike the large gong, and guide the student to experience this motion through mimicking away from the piano.

- The student should play mm. 9-10 with a circular arm and hand motion, imagining that he or she is preparing and striking the large gong.
- The student and the teacher should complete step 2 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook.
- The teacher and the student should discuss what all of the cue words – besides the percussion-oriented ones that have already been discussed – refer to in the music for mm. 1-16 (see the supplemental teacher notes for this activity for more information).
- The student and the teacher should complete step 3 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook.
- The student should complete step 4 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook for at least mm. 1-12 of “Distant Chimes.”
- The teacher should assign the student to complete all steps in the “At Home” section of the student workbook this week.

Supplemental Teacher Notes

The word “home” refers to the home position of the piece, A Position.

In m. 2, the student should notice how “ringing” eighth notes feels different in the fingers than ringing quarter notes, making sure to play the notes smoothly to match the smoothness of the first syllable of the word “ringing.”

In mm. 5-8, the words “ding dong” cue the image of striking the long, narrow chimes with a hard mallet; this image corresponds to the physical feeling of

the narrow black keys. The words “home” and “down” cue the student in keyboard navigation.

In mm. 9-12, the words “round gong” cue the image of using a circular motion to prepare and strike a large, circular gong; this image corresponds to the circular motion used to play the white to black key patterns. The words “D” and “down” cue the student in keyboard navigation.

In mm. 13-16, the words “**E**very **D**ay” cue the notes E and D. The remaining cue words cue the physical feeling of playing the scale in the passage.

In mm. 17-28, the cue words from mm. 1-12 should be used.

In mm. 29-33, the word “home” cues A Position; the word “chime” cues the narrow, chime-like feeling of the black keys. The word “higher” cues keyboard navigation. The word “long” refers to the long third finger, as well as the long whole note.

Concentration Activities

Concentration Activity 1: “Let’s Make a List”

Table 4.26. Teacher planning guide for “Let’s Make a List.”

Student Workbook Page Number	194
Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed	5-7 minutes
Repertoire Required	No
Repertoire-Specific	No
Example Repertoire	None
Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level	None
Other Required Materials	Pencil
Partner Required	No
Prerequisite Activities	None
Related Activities	“Concentration Station;” Part One; “Concentration Station” Part Two; “Action Distraction” Part One; “Action Distraction” Part Two
Suggested Age(s)	6-12

Introduction

Most teachers have probably realized at some point in their careers that in order to achieve an effective performance, a performer must focus his or her attention on the music that he or she is playing. Allowing one’s attention to drift away from the music can cause painful slips in performance. And even if it does not cause a slip, thinking about unrelated things while playing can result in a cold performance.

However, simply telling the student to “focus on the music” does little good. Exactly what should the student focus on while performing to keep the mind on the music? “Let’s Make a List” provides the student with several concrete, specific options of musical features upon which he or she can focus during performance. As an added benefit, these options are actually brainstormed by the student, making the options even more viable in performance.

Scholars who have studied performance psychology in children have found that positive attitude and concentration (or focus) – which are inextricably linked in this activity – are fundamental to successful performance in children.⁵⁰⁵ While “Let’s Make a List” may seem trivial or obvious, it can ultimately guide the student toward more positive, focused, heartfelt performing experiences.

Description

“Let’s Make a List” is essentially a brainstorming activity. In this activity, the student will make a list – in figure 3.57 – of positive, music-related features upon which he or she can theoretically focus during performance. (The practice of actually focusing on these features is introduced in the “Concentration Station” activities.) The student is encouraged to continue adding to his or her list for as long as he or she would like. There are only two requirements for items added to the list: (1) that they are positive, rather than negative; and (2) that they deal with the music, or the performance, in some way.

⁵⁰⁵ Orlick, *Feeling Great*, 11, 113.

Objectives

This activity addresses the following objectives:

- emphasizing positive attitude
- valuing the importance of a focused performance
- brainstorming practical ideas for a focused performance, as a precursor to realistic goal-setting
- giving the student control of his or her performance attitudes and decisions

In the First Lesson

The following steps should ideally be completed in the lesson during which this activity is introduced:

- The teacher or the student should read the introductory paragraphs, as well as the “About this Activity” section, from the student workbook. These may be read aloud or silently, at the discretion of the teacher.
- The teacher and the student should discuss the difference between positive and negative focus points, including examples of each.
- The teacher and the student should discuss the difference between music- or performance-related features, and non-music- or performance-related features, including examples of each.
- The teacher should ask the student to give an example of a feature that is both positive and music- or performance-related.

- The student should complete step 1 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook by adding at least three positive, music-related features to the list in figure 3.57.
- The teacher should assign the student to complete all steps in the “At Home” section of the student workbook this week.

Supplemental Teacher Notes

The teacher should encourage the student to view the list as a work in progress. The student can add items to the list for a period of weeks or even months. Most items on the list will likely continue to work well even as the student’s playing level progresses.

Concentration Activity 2: “Concentration Station” Part One

Table 4.27. Teacher planning guide for “Concentration Station” Part One.

Student Workbook Page Number	197
Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed	7-8 minutes
Repertoire Required	Yes
Repertoire-Specific	No
Example Repertoire	None
Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level	3-4
Other Required Materials	None
Partner Required	No
Prerequisite Activities	“Let’s Make a List”
Related Activities	“Let’s Make a List;” “Concentration Station” Part Two; “Action Distraction” Part One; “Action Distraction” Part Two
Suggested Age(s)	6-12

Introduction

Concentration is such an important mental skill that one prominent scholar in the field of youth performance psychology has referred to it as “the most important mental skill affecting learning and performance.”⁵⁰⁶

Teachers who work with young students are aware that these students often have difficulty concentrating, especially for prolonged periods of time such as in a recital performance. While teachers should emphasize the importance of focusing during a performance, it is important to set realistic goals for focusing. Successfully

⁵⁰⁶ Orlick, *Feeling Great*, 113.

focusing for short periods of time – even just for a few measures – is a valuable first step toward focused performing in young students. Focusing for short periods of time is also a valid mastery experience in itself that, when viewed as such and praised by teachers, helps build self-esteem in students.

It is important for teachers to remember that the ultimate goal with regard to focus is not to be able to focus without lapse for an entire performance – an unrealistic goal. Rather, the goal is to be able to focus for short periods of time, and to refocus after distraction. The “Concentration Station” activities provide students with regular practice in the first of these two skills. (The “Action Distraction” activities coach the second skill.)

Description

In “Concentration Station” Part One, the student will consciously and mindfully develop the ability to focus on a positive, music-related feature while he or she performs a piece. The student will select one item from his or her list from the activity “Let’s Make a List,” and then select a passage from a piece that he or she can play well in which to practice focusing on the chosen item.

After playing the passage, the student will assess whether he or she successfully focused on the chosen item throughout the entire passage. If the student is sure that he or she successfully focused on the chosen item throughout the passage, then other passages – including longer ones – can be attempted. If the student was not able to focus on the chosen item throughout the passage, or was not

sure if he or she focused throughout the passage, then the activity should be repeated with shorter passages.

The purpose of “Concentration Station” Part One is to coach the student on a very specific task: mindfully focusing on a positive, music-related feature as he or she performs, even if only for a few measures. When the student succeeds in this task, he or she should be congratulated for focusing well!

Objectives

This activity addresses the following objectives:

- developing mindfulness of one’s thoughts during performance
- developing single-mindedness, or the ability to focus on one particular musical feature at a time during performance
- introducing the ability to self-regulate one’s performance (see teacher manual for “Action Distraction” Part Two)
- setting realistic goals
- viewing success as achieving one’s goals, a component of self-regulation⁵⁰⁷
- completing self-assessment of one’s performance
- valuing a seemingly small accomplishment (i.e., focusing for only a few measures) as a mastery experience
- building self-esteem through mastery experiences and the achievement of one’s goals

⁵⁰⁷ Petchlikoff, “Self-Regulation Skills for Children and Adolescents,” 270.

- fostering a positive attitude

In the First Lesson

The following steps should ideally be completed in the lesson during which this activity is introduced:

- The teacher or the student should read the introductory paragraphs, as well as the “About this Activity” section, from the student workbook. These may be read aloud or silently, at the discretion of the teacher.
- The student should complete all steps in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook, achieving at least one successful round of “Concentration Station” during the lesson. A round may be considered successful even if it required a handful of attempts and the ultimate passage length is only a few measures long.
- The student should be heartily congratulated after the successful round.
- The student should be assigned to complete all steps in the “At Home” section of the student workbook this week.

Supplemental Teacher Notes

The goal of “Concentration Station” Part One is not to stay focused throughout an entire performance, since this an unrealistic goal. Rather, the goal is for the student to successfully focus on a positive, music-related feature for a short period of time – and to be mindful that he or she did in fact successfully focus.

After a period of weeks or even months, the student will likely lengthen his or her concentration span; however, this is not the primary focus of the activity.

It is important for the teacher to coach the student to continue playing without stopping even when he or she makes minor mistakes. This simulates what should happen in a real performance.

In step 5 of the student activity, the teacher should hold the student accountable – albeit in a kind-hearted, game-like way – if he or she doubts the student’s sincere awareness of whether he or she focused during the play-through. Repeating the activity until mindful focus is achieved is fundamental to developing the student’s ability to concentrate during performance. It also teaches the student that focusing is a skill that needs to be repeated until it can be done well, just as with other things that he or she practices in piano.

If necessary, the teacher can help guide the student in choosing a focusing item that might apply particularly well to a given piece. While focusing on anything specific, positive, and music-related is the ultimate goal, it is possible that certain features might work particularly well with certain pieces. For example, focusing on the feel of one’s fingertips on the keys might work particularly well in a piece that involves many staccato notes. If this seems to be the case for the student, the teacher may encourage him or her in selecting features that fit well with the content of his or her pieces.

Concentration Activity 3: “Concentration Station” Part Two

Table 4.28. Teacher planning guide for “Concentration Station” Part Two.

Student Workbook Page Number	200
Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed	10-12 minutes
Repertoire Required	Yes
Repertoire-Specific	No
Example Repertoire	“Model T,” by Jon George <i>(Kaleidoscope Solos Book One, p. 5)</i>
Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level	3-4
Other Required Materials	Pencil
Partner Required	Yes
Prerequisite Activities	“Let’s Make a List;” “Concentration Station” Part One
Related Activities	“Let’s Make a List;” “Concentration Station” Part One; “Swimmer Breathing;” “Count Me In;” “Action Distraction” Part One; “Action Distraction” Part Two
Suggested Age(s)	6-12

Introduction

Most teachers are aware of the importance of helping students to set realistic, achievable goals. When coaching young performers on the skill of focusing, the goal is not to stay focused throughout an entire performance, but rather to successfully focus for short periods of time. This concept was introduced in the

first version of “Concentration Station.” In the second version of “Concentration Station,” the student will continue the concept of focusing for short periods of time. However, rather than addressing only one short section of a piece, the student will address a performance of an entire piece as a series of consecutive focusing segments.

Description

In “Concentration Station” Part Two, the student will use several short focusing segments as building blocks for a performance of an entire piece. First, the student will achieve a successful round of “Concentration Station” for the first section of a piece of music that he or she can play well. Next, the student will achieve a successful round of “Concentration Station” for the second section of the piece, with a different focal feature. The student will repeat this process for as many sections as are included in his or her piece. The student may choose a different focal feature in each phrase, or may choose to shift focus back to a feature used earlier in the performance.

Objectives

This activity addresses the following objectives:

- developing the ability to focus on one particular musical feature at a time during performance
- introducing the ability to purposely and mindfully shift focus at preplanned places during a performance

- creating a multi-part performance strategy for a piece
- developing the ability to self-regulate one's performance (see the teacher manual entry for "Action Distraction" Part Two)

In the First Lesson

The following steps should ideally be completed in the lesson during which this activity is introduced:

- The teacher or the student should read the introductory paragraphs, as well as the "About this Activity" section, from the student workbook. These may be read aloud or silently, at the discretion of the teacher.
- The student should complete all steps in the "In Your Lesson" section of the student workbook. (See the supplemental teacher notes for this activity for information regarding step 3).
- The student and the teacher should discuss how it felt to focus on a different feature in each of the two sections, and to shift focus in between these sections.
- The student should be assigned to complete all steps in the "At Home" section of the student workbook this week.

Supplemental Teacher Notes

In step 3 in the "In Your Lesson" section of the student workbook, the teacher should guide the student to choose section lengths based on his or her performance in the first version of "Concentration Station." For example, if the

student can successfully focus on a feature for one line, but struggles to maintain focus for longer than one line, then one line is likely an ideal section length for this activity. If the teacher feels that the student is capable of focusing throughout a longer passage, then he or she may guide the student in dividing the piece into larger sections.

In a piece with a repeated section, such as “Model T,” the student may either shift focus back to the original focal feature at the recurrence or may shift focus to an entirely new focal feature.

Concentration Activity 4: “Action Distraction” Part One

Table 4.29. Teacher planning guide for “Action Distraction” Part One.

Student Workbook Page Number	205
Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed	8-10 minutes
Repertoire Required	Yes
Repertoire-Specific	No
Example Repertoire	None
Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level	3-4
Other Required Materials	None
Partner Required	Yes
Prerequisite Activities	“Let’s Make a List;” “Concentration Station” Part One; “Concentration Station” Part Two
Related Activities	“Let’s Make a List;” “Concentration Station” Part One; “Concentration Station” Part Two; “Action Distraction” Part Two
Suggested Age(s)	10-12

Introduction

Teachers and others who work with children, especially in performance-related tasks, are aware of the importance of concentration (also called focus). However, there is another element of focus that is at least equally important: the ability to refocus, or shift focus, after distraction. A child's level of focus at the beginning of a performance means little if the child loses focus and does not have the ability to regain it. Or, a child may be fully focused upon negative factors.

Terry Orlick, a prominent scholar in the field of youth performance psychology, states that refocusing can take two forms: (1) shifting focus "from negative to positive," or (2) shifting focus "from destructive to constructive."⁵⁰⁸ Both forms are important tools for successful performance.

Description

In this version of "Action Distraction" the student will practice refocusing after distraction with the help of a teacher or other partner.

First, the student will choose a piece that he or she can play well, with minimal stopping. Then, the student will choose an item from his or her list, from the activity "Let's Make a List," upon which to focus for the first part of his or her play-through. Next, the student will begin the play-through, while focusing on the chosen item from the list.

At some point during the play-through, the teacher or other partner will call out "Distraction." At this point, the student should continue playing without

⁵⁰⁸ Orlick, *Feeling Great*, 137.

stopping, but should switch his or her focus from the constructive list item to a non-constructive distraction thought. (The student should have brainstormed examples of distraction thoughts ahead of time using the blank spaces in figure 3.60.) These thoughts can include anything that is unrelated to the music or the performance (i.e., friends, food, homework, something frightening, etc.).

After the student has spent some time playing in distraction mode, the teacher or partner will call out “Action.” At this point, the student will continue to play without stopping, but will shift focus – either refocusing on the chosen item from the list, or shifting focus to a different constructive item from the list. The game can be played at any pace, or for any length of time, chosen by the teacher, partner, or student.

Objectives

This activity addresses the following objectives:

- developing the ability to refocus after distraction
- rehearsing the experience of performing while distracted, without overtly interrupting the performance
- shifting focus from negative to positive thoughts
- leaving distracting thoughts in the past; staying in the present moment during performance
- building the student’s ability to self-regulate his or her own thoughts during performance (see the teacher manual entry for “Action Distraction” Part Two)

In the First Lesson

The following steps should ideally be completed in the lesson during which this activity is introduced:

- The teacher or the student should read the introductory paragraphs, as well as the “About this Activity” section, from the student workbook. These may be read aloud or silently, at the discretion of the teacher.
- The teacher and the student should discuss the difference between constructive (i.e., positive and music-related) and non-constructive (i.e., distracting) performance thoughts.
- The teacher and the student should discuss that it is completely normal – and expected – to have distracting thoughts during performance, and that because of this it is important to practice refocusing after distracting thoughts.
- The student should complete steps 1 and 2 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook by brainstorming and listing at least three distracting thoughts.
- The student and the teacher should complete steps 3 through 8 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook. These steps should be repeated, so that two rounds of “Action Distraction” are played during the lesson.
- The student and the teacher should determine a comfortable pace of play.
- The student should be assigned to complete all steps in the “At Home” section of the student workbook this week.

Supplemental Teacher Notes

“Action Distraction” coaches the student to continue playing through a distraction, and most importantly, to refocus on a constructive thought soon after the distraction. This activity is subtly different from activities in which teachers purposely cough, rustle papers, or drop a book during the student’s play-through. While these activities address only external stimuli, “Action Distraction” coaches the student in dealing with the true cause of most performance distractions: mental distraction. Mental distraction occurs whether the student simply loses focus, has a distracting thought, or is provoked by an external stimulus. (For example, a loud noise in the audience triggers the student to lose focus.)

While it may seem counterintuitive to guide students in playing while purposely distracted, doing so is both realistic and practical. It is virtually impossible for most children – and many adults – to play while fully focused throughout the duration of an entire performance. Thoughts will inevitably drift from the task at hand. It is important to teach students that this is normal, and that they must simply refocus when it happens. Therefore, the act of refocusing – including after playing in distraction mode – should be practiced regularly as a fundamental performance skill.

It is important for the student to play “Action Distraction” with pieces that he or she can already play well. When the student is still working out the notes, rhythms, fingering, flow, or other fundamentals of a piece, additional cognitive challenges need not – and should not – be introduced. Playing a game such as

“Action Distraction” before the student is ready is pointless, as well as potentially harmful to the student’s morale.

One potential problem in playing “Action Distraction” is finding a comfortable, beneficial pace of play. How frequently to call “Action” or “Distraction” depends on the maturity of the student, his or her ease in shifting focus, and the type of piece being played. For example, a 12-year-old student who can shift focus easily, and is playing a technically straightforward piece, may be able to handle frequent shifts of focus. On the other hand, a six-year-old student who is relatively inexperienced at refocusing – and happens to be playing a piece filled with hand crossings or large leaps – may require less frequent shifts of focus. It is a good idea to start with a pace of play that leans toward being too easy, rather than too difficult, to allow the student to succeed; the pace can always be made more challenging in the future if desired. Discussions between the teacher and the student can also help to determine a comfortable pace of play.

Concentration Activity 5: “Action Distraction” Part Two

Table 4.30. Teacher planning guide for “Action Distraction” Part Two.

Student Workbook Page Number	210
Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed	5 minutes
Repertoire Required	Yes
Repertoire-Specific	No
Example Repertoire	None
Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level	3-4
Other Required Materials	None
Partner Required	No
Prerequisite Activities	“Let’s Make a List;” “Concentration Station;” Part One; “Concentration Station” Part Two; “Action Distraction” Part One
Related Activities	See prerequisite activities
Suggested Age(s)	11-12

Introduction

Self-regulation, or the ability to take control of one’s learning and performance in a positive way, is an important skill for young performers.⁵⁰⁹ Self-regulation involves “focus[ing] on self-directed thoughts, feelings, and actions” in order to perform successfully.⁵¹⁰ It also involves defining success as achieving one’s goals and “taking responsibility for learning and developing strategies to accomplish those goals.”⁵¹¹

⁵⁰⁹ Petchlikoff, “Self-Regulation Skills for Children and Adolescents,” 270.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹¹ Ibid.

In the “Concentration Station” activities, the student began to self-regulate his or her performance by choosing to mindfully focus on a specific, positive, music-related feature. In the first version of “Action Distraction” the student practiced even more advanced self-regulation by learning to shift his or her thoughts, thereby learning to refocus, during performance. However, these shifts were guided by a teacher or partner. In the second version of “Action Distraction” the student will take full responsibility for self-regulating his or her performance. In this activity, the student will not only shift his or her thoughts during performance but will also decide when to do so.

Description

In this version of “Action Distraction” the student will take charge of all aspects of the activity. Rather than waiting for a teacher or partner to tell him or her when to shift focus from one thought to another, the student will direct himself or herself in these decisions.

Objectives

This activity addresses the following objectives:

- developing self-regulation
- using internal cues to guide one’s own thoughts and focus
- strengthening the ability to refocus after distraction
- rehearsing the experience of performing while distracted, without overtly interrupting the performance

- shifting focus from negative to positive thoughts
- leaving distracting thoughts in the past; “coming back to the present moment”⁵¹² during performance
- making musical and performance decisions independently

In the First Lesson

The following steps should ideally be completed in the lesson during which this activity is introduced:

- The teacher or the student should read the introductory paragraphs, as well as the “About this Activity” section, from the student workbook. These may be read aloud or silently, at the discretion of the teacher.
- The student should complete steps 1 and 2 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook by choosing a piece or section, as well as a positive item to initially focus on.
- The teacher and the student should prepare a practice round of “Action Distraction” by deciding where the student will shift focus in the chosen piece. The teacher or the student may mark these spots with a star or other symbol in the score if desired.
- The student should complete steps 3 and 4 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook by playing the preplanned practice round of “Action Distraction.”
- The teacher and the student should discuss how the practice round felt.

⁵¹² Hanh, *Under the Rose Apple Tree*, 10.

- The student should repeat steps 3 and 4 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook, but with a self-regulated round of the activity in which the timing of focal shifts is spontaneous rather than preplanned.
- The teacher and the student should discuss how the self-regulated round felt.
- The teacher should assign the student to complete all steps in the “At Home” section of the student workbook this week.

Supplemental Teacher Notes

This activity is not designed for use with very young students, or with students who are not yet developmentally ready for the advanced self-regulation it requires. Playing this version of “Action Distraction” before the student is ready will likely negate any potential benefits of the activity, and also overwhelm the student. The first version of “Action Distraction” is designed to develop self-regulation skills in younger students, and is recommended for students younger than age 10 or 11 in most cases.

Concentration Activity 6: “A Lyrical Performance”

Table 4.31. Teacher planning guide for “A Lyrical Performance.”

Student Workbook Page Number	212
Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed	12-15 minutes
Repertoire Required	Yes
Repertoire-Specific	Yes
Example Repertoire	“Hot Dogs!” by Jon George (<i>Jon George’s Festival of Favorites</i> , p. 8); “Pop Corn!” by Jon George (<i>Jon George’s Festival of Favorites</i> , p. 11)
Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level	3
Other Required Materials	None
Partner Required	Yes
Prerequisite Activities	None
Related Activities	“Let’s Make a List;” “Concentration Station” Part One; “Concentration Station” Part Two
Suggested Age(s)	6-12

Introduction

Mentally coaching oneself with words can be a valuable performance tool. One way of verbally coaching oneself in performance is with cue words, as seen in the activities “Take Three,” “I’m in the Band (or Orchestra)” Part One, and “On Cue.” In these activities, the student mentally articulated brief, descriptive phrases

– created and rehearsed in advance – to guide himself or herself through “key elements of a routine”⁵¹³ of performing a piece.

Fortunately for piano teachers and students, words and music combine easily and naturally. This provides musicians with a variety of unique verbal self-coaching options. In a musical performance, helpful words may be spoken regularly, spoken rhythmically, or even sung. When these words address “key elements”⁵¹⁴ of a performance, they can be called cue words. When these words address the musical intent expressed in the title of a piece, rather than specific performance demands, they can be called lyrics. Both cue words and lyrics can help musicians maintain focus during performance.

Description

In this activity, the student will practice creating and singing lyrics while performing several elementary level pieces. First, the student will practice singing lyrics added to the Jon George piece “Hot Dogs,” shown in figure 3.61. Next, the student will use the lyrics in figure 3.61 as a model to create his or her own lyrics for the first two lines of the Jon George piece “Pop Corn,” shown in figure 3.62. The student will follow five steps in creating his or her own lyrics: making up lyrics that match the musical intent, melody, and rhythm of the piece; singing the lyrics out loud with the teacher while playing; singing the lyrics out loud by himself or herself while playing; singing the lyrics silently in his or her head while playing; singing the lyrics in his or her head while performing the piece for someone else.

⁵¹³ Rodgers, Hall, and Buckolz, “The Effect of an Imagery Training Program on Imagery Ability, Imagery Use, and Figure Skating Performance,” 114.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid.

Finally, the student will create and sing lyrics for a complete piece, either “Pop Corn!” or any other piece.

Objectives

This activity addresses the following objectives:

- verbally coaching oneself with lyrics during a performance
- creating personalized lyrics for a piece
- personalizing a performance
- encouraging creativity in musical decision-making
- focusing on personalized lyrics during a performance to help maintain focus on the music

In the First Lesson

The following steps should ideally be completed in the lesson during which this activity is introduced:

- The teacher or the student should read the introductory paragraphs, as well as the “About this Activity” section, from the student workbook. These may be read aloud or silently, at the discretion of the teacher.
- The student, with the help of the teacher as needed, should complete steps 1 through 4 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook, addressing the piece “Hot Dogs!”
- The student and the teacher should discuss how it felt for the student to sing the lyrics for “Hot Dogs!” in his or her head while playing.

- The student, with the help of the teacher as needed, should complete steps 5 through 8 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook, addressing the piece “Pop Corn!”
- The student should complete step 9 in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook by selecting a piece to use with the activity at home this week. If the piece is not “Pop Corn!” and if there is time in the lesson, the teacher and the student may create lyrics for the first phrase of the piece.
- The teacher should assign the student to complete all steps in the “At Home” section of the student workbook this week.

Supplemental Teacher Notes

For some students, especially those who are verbally oriented, silently singing lyrics can be one of the most successful ways of focusing on the music during performance. For these students, keeping track of lyrics is an effective way of occupying the mind – in a constructive, task-related way – during a performance. Personalized lyrics can be even more effective than previously composed lyrics, since the student may be more likely to remember lyrics that he or she created.

Like many of the activities in this volume, “A Lyrical Performance” exemplifies the connection between various mental skills. “A Lyrical Performance” is classified as a concentration activity because it emphasizes focus. However, it could just as easily be classified as an imagery activity, since it involves engaging in aural imagery by “hearing” lyrics in one’s mind. Similarly, almost all of the

imagery activities in this volume could be classified as concentration activities, since they encourage the student to mindfully focus on various features of the music during performance.

Concentration Activity 7: “Count Me In”

Table 4.32. Teacher planning guide for “Count Me In.”

Student Workbook Page Number	217
Approximate Introductory Lesson Time Needed	7-8 minutes
Repertoire Required	Yes
Repertoire-Specific	Yes
Example Repertoire	“Buckin’ Bronco!” by Jon George <i>(Kaleidoscope Solos Book Three, p. 3)</i>
Suggested Repertoire Preparation Level	3-4
Other Required Materials	None
Partner Required	Yes
Prerequisite Activities	None
Related Activities	“Swimmer Breathing;” “A Lyrical Performance;” “Let’s Make a List;” “Concentration Station” Part Two
Suggested Age(s)	10-12

Introduction

Several activities in this volume involve verbal coaching, with cue words or lyrics, to help maintain focus during performance of a piece. “Count Me In” also involves verbal coaching, but features numbers rather than words.

Description

In this activity, the student will use a “counting routine” to coach himself or herself through a performance of the piece “Buckin’ Bronco!” by Jon George. The student will experiment with two counting routines, shown in figures 3.63 and 3.64, and choose a favorite routine. Finally, the student will practice executing the chosen counting routine while performing “Buckin’ Bronco,” first alone and then for someone else.

Objectives

This activity addresses the following objectives:

- using numbers as cue words to coach oneself during performance
- focusing on a counting routine during performance
- using a counting routine to propel a performance forward
- encouraging a regular pulse and flow during performance; avoiding stops and starts

In the First Lesson

The following steps should ideally be completed in the lesson during which this activity is introduced:

- The teacher or the student should read the introductory paragraphs, as well as the “About this Activity” section, from the student workbook. These may be read aloud or silently, at the discretion of the teacher.

- The student and the teacher should complete all five steps in the “In Your Lesson” section of the student workbook.
- The student should verbally compare how using the two counting routines shown in figures 3.63 and 3.64 felt different.
- The teacher should assign the student to complete all steps in the “At Home” section of the student workbook this week.

Supplemental Teacher Notes

“Buckin’ Bronco!” was selected for this activity for several reasons. First, it has a rambling melody upon which some students may find it difficult to focus during performance. For these students, a counting routine can be particularly helpful. Second, “Buckin’ Bronco!” suggests multiple possible counting routines, rather than simply one obvious counting routine. Experimenting with two or more counting routines encourages the student to create a personalized performance that feels uniquely comfortable. Finally, “Buckin’ Bronco!” has a strong forward drive. This forward drive may make a counting routine, which can help to propel a performance forward, especially appropriate.

Additional Organizational Information

Three tables, included in the current section, are intended to further assist the teacher with lesson planning and organization. Table 4.33 presents an index of activities by suggested student age, repertoire level, and level of preparation. In table 4.33, activities with titles listed in italics are repertoire-specific and involve

specific pieces – at the levels indicated in the table – by Jon George. Activities marked with a dot in the box labeled “Any Level Repertoire” require repertoire, but may be used with any piece at any level. Activities marked with the phrase “N/A” in the box labeled “Any Level Repertoire” do not require repertoire.

Activities with a numbered level indicated in the box labeled “Level of Preparation” work best when a student has reached a specific level of preparation on a repertoire piece (i.e., still actively working, playing fluently, memorized, etc.). To interpret these indicated levels, teachers may follow the guidelines outlined near the beginning of the current chapter, in the section titled “Guide to Teacher Manual Activity Entries.” Activities marked with the phrase “N/A” in the box labeled “Level of Preparation” do not require repertoire.

Table 4.33. Index of activities by suggested student age, repertoire level, and level of preparation.

	Age 6+	Age 7+	Age 8+	Age 9+	Age 10+	Age 11+	Age 12	Any Level Rep.	Early Elem. Rep.	Late Elem. Rep.	Early Int. Rep.	Late Int. Rep.	Level of Prep.
“Who, Me?”	•							N/A					N/A
“I Gave You Three Gifts”	•							•					3-5
“Sending a Postcard”	•							N/A					N/A
“My Own Script”			•					N/A					N/A
“Tree Spine”	•							•					3-4
“Warming Up”	•							N/A					N/A
“Here, I Feel Calm”			•					N/A					N/A
“ <i>Arm- agination</i> ”			•							•			3-4
“Swimmer Breathing”				•				•					3-4
“ <i>Picture This</i> ”			•							•			1-3
“ <i>Comic Strip</i> ”			•						•				3-4
“ <i>In Character</i> ”	•								•				3-4
“ <i>Let’s Write a Story</i> ”	•								•				3-4
“ <i>Take Three</i> ”			•						•				3-4
“It’s All in My Head”				•				•					3-4
“Let’s Give an Imaginary Performance” Part One					•			•					4
“Let’s Give an Imaginary Performance” Part Two					•			•					4-5
“Let’s Watch an Imaginary Performance”							•	•					4-5

Table 4.33 continued

	Age 6+	Age 7+	Age 8+	Age 9+	Age 10+	Age 11+	Age 12	Any Level Rep.	Early Elem. Rep.	Late Elem. Rep.	Early Int. Rep.	Late Int. Rep.	Level of Prep.
<i>"I'm in the Band (or Orchestra)" Part One</i>				•						•			3-4
<i>"I'm in the Band (or Orchestra)" Part Two</i>						•						•	3-4
<i>"A Colorful Performance" Part One</i>	•								•				3-4
<i>"A Colorful Performance" Part Two</i>						•					•		3-4
<i>"A Dynamic and Colorful Performance"</i>							•					•	3-4
<i>"On Cue"</i>						•					•		3-4
<i>"Let's Make a List"</i>	•							N/A				•	N/A
<i>"Concentration Station" Part One</i>	•							•				•	3-4
<i>"Concentration Station" Part Two</i>	•							•					3-4
<i>"Action Distraction" Part One</i>					•			•					3-4
<i>"Action Distraction" Part Two</i>						•		•					3-4
<i>"A Lyrical Performance"</i>	•								•				3
<i>"Count Me In"</i>					•						•		3-4

Table 4.34 presents an alphabetical list of activities, and table 4.35 presents an alphabetical list of included Jon George compositions.

Table 4.34. Alphabetical list of activities.

Name of Activity	Starting Page Number in Chapter Three	Starting Page Number in Chapter Four
“Action Distraction” Part One	205	344
“Action Distraction” Part Two	210	350
“Arm-agination”	110	262
“Colorful Performance, A” Part One	171	316
“Colorful Performance, A” Part Two	175	320
“Comic Strip”	124	275
“Concentration Station” Part One	197	336
“Concentration Station” Part Two	200	341
“Count Me In”	217	358
“Dynamic and Colorful Performance, A”	181	324
“Here, I Feel Calm”	107	258
“I Gave You Three Gifts”	88	236
“I’m in the Band (or Orchestra)” Part One	162	308
“I’m in the Band (or Orchestra)” Part Two	167	312
“In Character” Version A	130	280
“In Character” Version B	134	280
“It’s All in My Head”	147	291
“Let’s Give an Imaginary Performance” Part One	150	296
“Let’s Give an Imaginary Performance” Part Two	154	300
“Let’s Make a List”	194	333
“Let’s Watch an Imaginary Performance”	159	303
“Let’s Write a Story”	139	284
“Lyrical Performance, A”	212	354
“My Own Script”	95	245
“On Cue”	189	328
“Picture This”	118	270
“Sending a Postcard”	91	240
“Swimmer Breathing”	114	266
“Take Three”	144	287
“Tree Spine”	101	250
“Warming Up”	104	254
“Who, Me?”	85	232

Table 4.35. Alphabetical list of included Jon George compositions.

Name of Composition	Collection and Page Number	Name of Correlating Activity
“Autumn Leaves”	<i>Kaleidoscope Solos Book Five</i> , pp. 4-5	“Swimmer Breathing”
“Buckin’ Bronco!”	<i>Kaleidoscope Solos Book Three</i> , p. 3	“Count Me In”
“Capriccio”	<i>Artistry at the Piano Repertoire Book Four</i> , p. 15	“I’m in the Band (or Orchestra)” Part Two
“Distant Chimes”	<i>Students’ Choice: Recreational Solos for The Music Tree Part Three</i> , pp. 4-5	“On Cue”
“Elephant Walking”	<i>A Day in the Jungle</i> , p. 5	“Arm-agination”
“Hot Dogs!”	<i>Jon George’s Festival of Favorites</i> , p. 8	“A Lyrical Performance”
“King’s Guard, The”	<i>Jon George’s Festival of Favorites</i> , p. 16	“In Character” Version B
“Little Princess, The”	<i>Kaleidoscope Solos Book One</i> , p. 14	“In Character” Version A
“Lotus Blossom”	<i>Jon George’s Festival of Favorites</i> , p. 3	“Swimmer Breathing,” “A Colorful Performance” Part One
“Model T”	<i>Kaleidoscope Solos Book One</i> , p. 5	“Concentration Station” Part Two
“Orchid Blooming”	<i>A Day in the Jungle</i> , p. 13	“Picture This”
“Pop Corn!”	<i>Jon George’s Festival of Favorites</i> , p. 11	“A Lyrical Performance”
“Reflets dans l’eau”	<i>Artistry at the Piano Repertoire Book Two</i> , pp. 30-31	“A Colorful Performance” Part Two
“Sad Gypsy, The”	<i>Kaleidoscope Solos Book Two</i> , p. 12	“I’m in the Band (or Orchestra)” Part One
“Snake Charmer”	<i>Kaleidoscope Solos Book One</i> , p. 11	“Let’s Write a Story;” “Take Three”
“Stagecoach Comin’!”	<i>Kaleidoscope Solos Book One</i> , p. 3	“Comic Strip”
“Waltz”	<i>Artistry at the Piano Repertoire Book Four</i> , pp. 10-11	“A Dynamic and Colorful Performance”

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS

FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Summary

In the current study, the author surveyed literature relating to youth performance psychology – including the topics of motivation in youth sport and music study, general anxiety and performance anxiety in children, and mental skills training for children in sport and in the classroom – and applied findings from this literature to create a set of mental skills activities designed to enhance performance in six- to 12-year-old pianists. A review of literature specifically involving mental skills training with children in sport and in the classroom revealed that with regular practice, children can successfully use mental skills to reduce anxiety⁵¹⁵ and improve the quality of their performance.⁵¹⁶ In addition, this literature review illuminated four important mental skills with regard to youth performance psychology: positive attitude, relaxation, imagery, and concentration. These four

⁵¹⁵ Linda B. and Leonard D. Zaichkowsky, “The Effects of a School-Based Relaxation Training Program on Fourth Grade Children,” *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology* 13, no. 1 (Spring 1984): 84; Marnie St. Denis and Terry Orlick, “Positive Perspectives: Intervention with Fourth-Grade Children,” *Elementary School Guidance and Counseling* 31, no. 1 (1996): 52-63, <http://libraries.ou.edu/access.aspx?url=http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=9612083975&site=ehost-live> (accessed June 3, 2010); Jenelle N. Gilbert and Terry Orlick, “Evaluation of a Life Skills Program with Grade Two Children,” *Elementary School Guidance and Counseling* 31, no. 2 (1996), <http://libraries.ou.edu/access.aspx?url=http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=tfh&AN=9703066779&site=ehost-live> (accessed June 3, 2010).

⁵¹⁶ Craig A. Wrisberg and Mark H. Anshel, “The Effect of Cognitive Strategies on the Free Throw Shooting Performance of Young Athletes,” *The Sport Psychologist* 3, no. 2 (June 1989): 100; Li-Wei Zhang et al., “The Effect of Mental-Imagery Training on Performance Enhancement with 7-10-Year-Old Children,” *The Sport Psychologist* 6, no. 3 (September 1992): 236-237.

skills – separately as well as in combination – appeared frequently throughout the youth performance psychology literature.

The author aimed to apply findings from the youth performance psychology literature to young piano students by creating a set of 31 mental skills activities that addressed the four important skills of positive attitude, relaxation, imagery, and concentration. The activities were designed to be introduced by teachers during lessons and reinforced by students during practice and performance; they may be used singly or in combination over a period of one year or longer as a student's playing level and cognitive ability progress. Of the 31 activities, four addressed positive attitude, five addressed relaxation, 15 addressed imagery, and seven addressed concentration.

Positive attitude activities addressed the following topics: affirmations for the whole person as well as for the musician, positive post-performance reflection, visualization of an ideal performance, and completion of a visualization script or performance script. Relaxation activities addressed mindfulness of the spine, imagery of the feeling of warmth throughout the body, imagery of a favorite relaxing place, imagery of heavy arms, and breathing routines.

Imagery activities addressed a greater variety of topics than the other activities, since the youth performance psychology literature provided a greater variety of examples of distinct types of imagery exercises. The imagery activities in the current study included the following topics: the use of pictures to enhance learning, performance, and memorization of a piece; musical storytelling through words and pictures; becoming a character in a performance; mental rehearsal,

including the use of multi-sensory imagery; visual and aural imagery based on instrumental sounds; visual imagery based on colors; the use of cue words; creation and implementation of a multi-part performance strategy. Concentration activities included the following topics: brainstorming ideas for enhancing focus during performance; practicing focusing, refocusing, and shifting focus as distinct skills; creating and using lyrics to promote focus during performance; creating and using counting routines to promote focus during performance.

The activities were presented in two chapters. Chapter Three, “Student Workbook for Mental Skills Activities,” presented the activities in a student workbook format that included step-by-step instructions and follow-up questions. In Chapter Three, activities were written using language that was believed to be appropriate for most six- to 12-year-olds (i.e., most students in this age group would likely be able to read the activities themselves, and all students in this age group would likely be able to understand the activities when read aloud by a teacher or parent). Chapter Four, “Teacher Manual for Mental Skills Activities,” presented the activities in a teacher manual format that included background information and practical details such as teaching steps, objectives, a suggested order of study, and organizational tables. In Chapter Four, activities were written using language that was believed to be appropriate for teachers who are pursuing, or have completed, an undergraduate music degree.

Twenty-five of the activities involved repertoire, while six did not involve repertoire. Of the activities that required repertoire, 14 were repertoire-specific (i.e., the activities were designed for use with specific pieces) and 11 were not (i.e., the

activities were designed for use with any piece selected by the student and/or teacher). All 14 repertoire-specific activities utilized the music of educational composer Jon George, since George's compositions have continued to be used by piano teachers for more than three decades. Seventeen George compositions were included in total. These compositions represented early elementary, elementary, late elementary, early intermediate, and intermediate levels of educational piano literature.

Conclusions

A review of related literature – including the topics of motivation in youth sport and music study, general anxiety and performance anxiety in children, and mental skills training for children in sport and in the classroom – yielded several conclusions.

First, motivation in young performers is a multi-faceted area of study that involves both intrinsic and extrinsic factors and can be interpreted through the use of several different theories with roots in educational psychology, developmental psychology, social psychology, and youth sport psychology. Mastery is a central feature of many youth-oriented motivation theories, including Harter's competence motivation theory⁵¹⁷ and Nicholls and Duda's achievement goal theory.⁵¹⁸ In addition, the desire to have fun is a strong motivating factor for children's

⁵¹⁷ Susan Harter, "Effectance Motivation Reconsidered: Toward a Developmental Model," *Human Development* 21, no. 1 (1978): 34-64.

⁵¹⁸ John G. Nicholls, "Conceptions of Ability and Achievement Motivation," in *Student Motivation*, vol. 1 of *Research on Motivation in Education*, ed. Russell E. Ames and Carole Ames (Orlando, FL: Academic Press, 1984), 39-73; Joan L. Duda, "Motivation in Sport Settings: A Goal Perspective Approach," in *Motivation in Sport and Exercise*, ed. Glyn C. Roberts (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1992), 57-92.

participation in sport.⁵¹⁹ The desire to have fun has not emerged as strongly in music-oriented motivation literature; this may be due in part to a lack of research on the subject. Nonetheless, fun can still be considered a significant motivating factor for children's participation in music study.⁵²⁰

With regard to performance anxiety, research has confirmed what many piano teachers have long known: that children do experience performance anxiety.⁵²¹ A review of literature relating specifically to performance anxiety in young athletes and musicians led the author to conclude that there are five leading causes of performance anxiety in children: poor self-esteem, fear of social evaluation, lack of preparation, fear of playing from memory, and possibly gender, with some research showing that females may be more prone to performance anxiety than males.⁵²² Further, symptoms of performance anxiety in pre-college

⁵¹⁹ Elvera Skubic, "Studies of Little League and Middle League Baseball," *Research Quarterly* no. 27 (1956): 102; Daniel Gould, Deborah Feltz, and Maureen R. Weiss, "Motives for Participating in Competitive Youth Swimming," *International Journal of Sport Psychology* 16, no. 2 (1985): 132, 135; K.A. Klint and Maureen R. Weiss, "Dropping In and Dropping Out: Participation Motives of Current and Former Youth Gymnasts," *Canadian Journal of Applied Sport Sciences* 11, no. 2 (June 1986): 109; Ronald E. Smith, Frank L. Smoll, and Nathan J. Smith, *Parents' Complete Guide to Youth Sports* (Costa Mesa, CA: HDL Publishing, 1989), 12.

⁵²⁰ Ghaziah M. Ghazali and Gary E. McPherson, "Malaysian Children's Attitudes Towards Learning Music," *Music Education Research* 11, no. 2 (June 2009): 205; Jennifer Driscoll, "'If I Play My Sax My Parents Are Nice To Me': Opportunity and Motivation in Musical Instrument and Singing Tuition," *Music Education Research* 11, no. 1 (March 2009): 48.

⁵²¹ Julie A. Simon and Rainer Martens, "Children's Anxiety in Sport and Nonsport Evaluative Activities," *Journal of Sport Psychology* 1, no. 2 (1979): 166-167; Ryan, "A Study of the Differential Responses of Male and Female Children to Musical Performance Anxiety," i; Maria Terese Maroon, "Potential Contributors to Performance Anxiety Among Middle School Students Performing at Solo and Ensemble Contest" (PhD diss., Kent State University, 2002, in ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <http://proquest.umi.com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/pqdweb?index=0&did=765250771&SrchMode=1&sid=2&Fmt=6&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1285718894&clientId=41954>, accessed February 8, 2010), 76; Lydia Fehm and Katja Schmidt, "Performance Anxiety in Gifted Adolescent Musicians" *Journal of Anxiety Disorders* 20 (2006): 107.

⁵²² Alfred LeBlanc et al., "Effect of Audience on Music Performance Anxiety," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 45, no. 3 (Autumn 1997): 495.

music students can be cognitive, behavioral, physiological, or a combination.⁵²³ Finally, anxiety has been shown to affect performance in children. However, these findings are somewhat mixed with regard to exactly how anxiety affects performance. Some findings have suggested an inverted-U relationship between anxiety and performance quality in children (i.e., moderate anxiety levels benefit performance, while extremely low or extremely high anxiety levels hurt performance);⁵²⁴ other findings have suggested an inverse relationship between anxiety and performance quality in children (i.e., as anxiety level increases, performance quality decreases) in both music performance⁵²⁵ and academic test-taking settings.⁵²⁶

A review of literature relating to performance anxiety in children also illuminated numerous strategies for coping with anxiety. On their own, children tend to value distraction strategies as the most helpful coping mechanisms for

⁵²³ Fehm and Schmidt, "Performance Anxiety in Gifted Adolescent Musicians," 98-99; Steven Robert Lorenz, "Performance Anxiety within the Secondary Choral Classroom: Effects of the Alexander Technique on Tension in Performance" (M.Mus. thesis, Michigan State University, 2002, in ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <http://proquest.umi.com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/pqdweb?index=0&did=766199051&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=6&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1286287449&clientId=41954>, accessed February 8, 2010), 11.

⁵²⁴ P. Klavora, "An Attempt to Derive Inverted-U Curves Based on the Relationship Between Anxiety and Athletic Performance," in *Psychology of Motor Behavior and Sport – 1977*, ed. Daniel M. Landers and Robert W. Christina (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1977), 369-377; R. Lowe, "Stress, Arousal, and Task Performance of Little League Baseball Players" (unpublished doctoral diss., University of Illinois, 1973); Smith, Smoll, and Smith, *Parents' Complete Guide to Youth Sports*, 16.

⁵²⁵ Dana John Rothlisberger, "Effects of Video Modeling Preparation on Student Instrumental Audition Performance Achievement and Performance Anxiety" (PhD diss., University of Maryland, 1992, in ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <http://proquest.umi.com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/pqdweb?index=0&did=744418801&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=6&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1286307375&clientId=41954>, accessed August 31, 2010), 78; Maroon, "Potential Contributors to Performance Anxiety Among Middle School Students Performing at Solo and Ensemble Contest," 72, 76.

⁵²⁶ David S. Palermo, Alfred Castaneda, and Boyd R. McCandless, "The Relationship of Anxiety in Children to Performance in a Complex Learning Task," *Child Development* 27, no. 3 (September 1956): 335; Jennifer L. Horn and Stephen J. Dollinger, "Effects of Test Anxiety, Tests, and Sleep on Children's Performance," *Journal of School Psychology* 27, no. 4 (1989): 378.

anxiety-producing events.⁵²⁷ Perhaps an even more valuable finding – one that strongly influenced the current study – is that with training, children can successfully use mental skills such as positive attitude, relaxation, imagery, and concentration not only to reduce anxiety,⁵²⁸ but also to improve the quality of their performance⁵²⁹ and generally enhance their daily lives.⁵³⁰ The frequency with which the specific skills of positive attitude, relaxation, imagery, and concentration appeared throughout the youth performance psychology literature, coupled with the proven benefits of these four skills with regard to performance in children, led the author to conclude that these are the four most important mental skills in the field of youth performance psychology.

The current study aimed to encourage teachers of six- to 12-year-old piano students to explore the possibility of enhancing their students' performing experiences through the use of age-appropriate, piano-specific mental skills activities. Since mental skills training – including the four specific skills of positive attitude, relaxation, imagery, and concentration – has been shown to improve performance in young athletes and other children, the author believes that mental skills training may also have the potential to improve performance in young pianists. Since pre-adolescent pianists form a large population with distinct

⁵²⁷ Jennifer L. Altshuler and Diane N. Ruble, "Developmental Changes in Children's Awareness of Strategies for Coping with Uncontrollable Stress," *Child Development* 60, no. 6 (December 1989): 1337; Jeanne E. Dise-Lewis, "The Life Events and Coping Inventory: An Assessment of Stress in Children," *Psychosomatic Medicine* 50 (1988): 492.

⁵²⁸ Zaichkowsky and Zaichkowsky, "The Effects of a School-Based Relaxation Training Program on Fourth Grade Children," 84; St. Denis and Orlick, "Positive Perspectives: Intervention with Fourth-Grade Children," 52-63; Gilbert and Orlick, "Evaluation of a Life Skills Program with Grade Two Children."

⁵²⁹ Wrisberg and Anshel, "The Effect of Cognitive Strategies on the Free Throw Shooting Performance of Young Athletes," 100; Zhang et al., "The Effect of Mental-Imagery Training on Performance Enhancement with 7-10-Year-Old Children," 236-237.

⁵³⁰ Terry Orlick, *Feeling Great: Teaching Children to Excel at Living* (Carp, Canada: Creative Bound, 1996), 18.

performance difficulties, the author felt that a set of mental skills activities designed specifically with these pianists in mind might be a helpful resource in the field of piano pedagogy.

Suggestions for Further Research

The author makes the following suggestions for further research relating to the topic of the current study:

- Research should be undertaken to systematically assess the effectiveness of the activities in the current study with six- to 12-year-old pianists. Assessment may include use of the activities in individual lessons and/or group settings.
- A study should be conducted in which mental skills activities are created for adolescent pianists between the ages of 12 and 18. The effectiveness of these activities should be systematically assessed in future studies.
- Studies should be conducted in which mental skills activities are created for young musicians who play instruments other than piano, including voice. The effectiveness of these activities should be systematically assessed in future studies.
- Studies should be conducted in which mental skills activities are created for use in group music classes for children, including preschool music and movement classes, general music classes, and children's instrumental and vocal ensembles, including in classroom settings. The

effectiveness of these activities should be systematically assessed in future studies.

- A study should be conducted in which mental skills activities are created for collegiate group piano students. The effectiveness of these activities should be systematically assessed in future studies.
- Research should be undertaken to systematically assess whether children's concurrent participation in sport enhances their ability to utilize mental skills activities in music study and performance.
- In the more distant future, research should be undertaken to assess the long-term effects of mental skills training on individuals' performing experiences. For example, a study could assess how the use of mental skills training as a child influences one's performance as an adult.

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KNIGHT'S TALE

By Jon George

Selected and Edited by Frances Clark, Louise Goss, Sam Holland

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30 September 2011

RE: Doctoral paper by Jyoti M Hench

To Whom it May Concern:

This is to confirm that Jyoti M Hench has my permission to use the following three scores from our publications in her Doctoral paper:

"Capriccio" from Repertoire Book 4 of *Artistry at the Piano* by Jon George & Mary Gae George

"Reflets dans l'eau" from Repertoire Book 2 of *Artistry at the Piano* by Jon George & Mary Gae George

"Waltz" from Repertoire Book 4 of *Artistry at the Piano* by Jon George & Mary Gae George.

I am pleased to have her use these works in support of her chosen topic,

MARY GAE GEORGE

Mary Gae George

Mary Gae George NCTM
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