How to Handle Misfits
Webinar Outline

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What is a "Misfit"?

- Students that don't easily fit into your group piano classes.
- Where do you place them?
- 3 Types of Misfits:
  - Slow and Accelerated Students
  - Behavioral Problems
  - Transfer Students

Accelerated Students

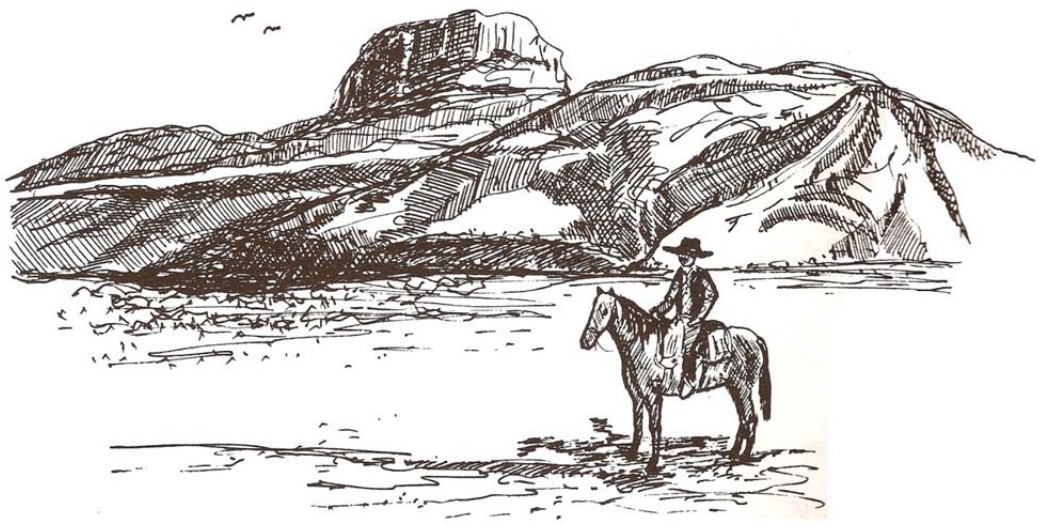
- Teach the class at the pace of the best students
  - The good students will take piano for years.
  - Do not bore good students to accommodate someone who is not practicing.
  - The rest of the class will work to keep up with the best students.
- Try to keep accelerated students in their original class.
  - Teach the class at a pace that will keep the accelerated student challenged.
  - The whole class will become better pianists as a result.
- The average students will work at the pace that you set for the class… either accelerated or slow.

Slow Students

- Two Types of Slow Students:
  1) Don't practice
  2) Developmentally can't keep up
  - Must determine which of these two types of slow student you are dealing with, before you can fix the problem



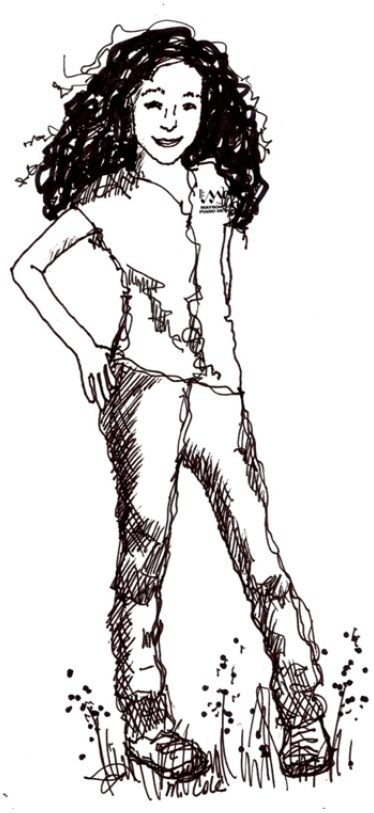
- Doesn't practice
  - Talk to the parent…the parent is responsible for making sure student practices at home.
    - Let parent know that the child has fallen behind because of not practicing.
  - All we can do it teach the information, if the student does not want to learn then he/she won't.
    - Piano is difficult enough for those of us that WANT to learn how to play it.
  - If student still cannot keep up after talking to the parent a few times about not practicing, let the student go.
    - Suggest to the parent that they find a hobby that the student will be eager about.
  - Students that aren't practicing do not want to take piano.
    - You do not want one student with a negative attitude bringing down the positivity of the rest of the class.
    - You are better off letting that student go.
  - Do NOT take a student that does not practice out of a group and put him/her into a private lesson.
    - If the student wasn't working to keep up with a group, then the student will do even less when there is no one to keep up with.
- Developmentally can't keep up
  - Some young students are not developmentally capable of playing the piano, yet
    - Eye-hand coordination, Fine motor skills, Eye tracking, Paying attention, IQ
  - If developmentally slow student has a great attitude and loves coming to piano, then move slow student into a class with younger students.
    - Younger class will move at a slower pace.
  - You can have the slow student come for an additional tutoring session with one of your advanced students.
    - Do not take the slow student out of a group, private tutoring is extra help to keep up with the group.
    - Tutoring sessions are at an extra cost.
      - Pay the advanced student tutor a portion of what you charge for the extra tutoring session.
  - Explain to the parent that the child's brain is ready for piano, but he/she needs another year to develop the "fine motor skills" needed to play the piano. Withdraw the student from lessons for the rest of the school year with the intention of signing up again next year.



Behavioral Problems

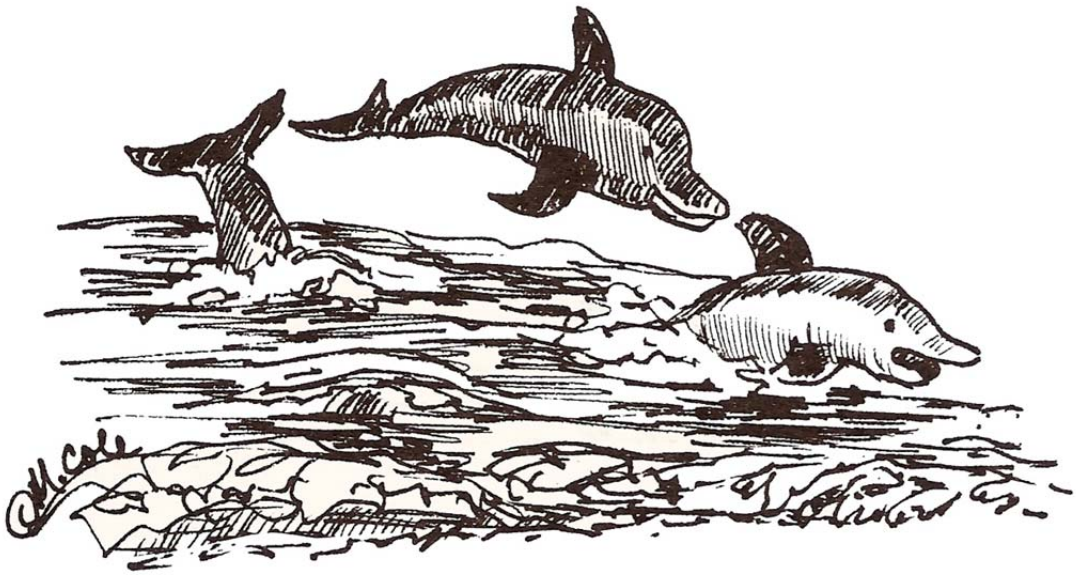
- From the first piano lesson, make it clear that YOU are the one in charge.
  - You train people how to treat you.
- Hyperactive Students
  - Put hyperactive student between two quiet students during game time and at the pianos
  - Put hyperactive student right next to you during game time and at the pianos
  - Play game in teams so there is less down time between turns
  - Our bingo games are wonderful for hyperactive students… all students are involved with every question
- Large Class of Young Students
  - Keep the class active… have students move from one piano to another
  - Work at the pianos first, then go to game time.
    - Have class pick teams out of a bag before class starts. If someone misbehaves during piano time, that team misses a turn during the game.
    - Teammates will make sure others behave.
- Bad Attitude
  - Don't put up with it.
  - Talk to the child, then talk to the parent, thend ismiss the child from your studio
- Rude Parent
  - Try to work out the issue that is making the parent unhappy.
  - If still rude, let the parent know that he/she needs to find another piano teacher because you will no longer be teaching the child.

Transfer Students



- One Option: Don't take transfer students.
  - Too many gaps in learning.
  - They often don't want to do remedial work.
  - Can't keep up with a group.
  - Will say that you are "holding them back."
- Another Option: Take transfer students, but keep them in private lessons
  - Will give you the time to diagnose their learning gaps and teach appropriately
  - Will bog down your schedule with private lessons
- Another Option: Segue transfer students into groups
  - Schedule transfer student right before or after the class that you think transfer student will be segueing into.
  - 15 minute private tutoring + 45 minute group class
  - Charge extra for tutoring session
  - When student is caught up, cancel tutoring session (will create a gap in your schedule)
- Another Option: (if you have a large studio) All transfer students, regardless of skill level, take a private lesson for the fist semester and must quickly complete Older Beginner 1 and Older Beginner 2.
  - You would need a few copies of these books that they "check out" from you.
  - In January, all transfer students start Level 3A in a new class together.
- If you do decide to take transfer students, we offer an Audition Book to assist you in placing students.

NOTES:



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