

Piano Teaching Philosophy

As piano teachers, we strive to cultivate a desire and love for learning in our students. We encourage critical thinking and mastery of skills ranging from the very basics to the best that the students are capable of. We hope to instill in our students a joy of learning and an appreciation of the challenges they encounter. But overall, we hope our students will develop a love for music that will remain even after their time with us.

A general definition of the term *learning* is absorbing new information in a variety of ways to ensure long-term retention. It involves progressing a student from a beginner to helping them master the concept through methodical demonstration and discoveries. Each person learns differently and comprehends the material best through specific learning styles. Using a balance of discovery and rote learning is very important to incorporate in lessons. While rote learning is a crucial part of teaching, discovery learning is especially important in new students and more specifically in younger students. It involves the teacher asking informing questions about the piece and coaching the students through discovering the aspects of the piece.

A large part of teaching requires a high aptitude for differentiation and accommodation. Each student is unique and will have different areas of strengths and weakness that must be recognized and should influence the curriculum of the students and how the information is given. Specific adjustments may be needed in terms of how the teacher interacts with the student. Overall a teacher needs to be a beacon of knowledge and encouragement for the student and teachers should have extensive knowledge of the content and the pedagogy to better facilitate the needs of the student.

There are many resources available to piano teachers and one that is most commonly used are piano method books. They are a useful way of teaching piano because most of the music

is in one place and the curriculum is clearly and comprehensively laid out. With these books, the curriculum is easily used by the teacher and is understandable for the student and parents. This helps the teacher be more transparent and allows the student look ahead and begin preparing for the concepts coming up.

Students will understand the basics of piano playing and music theory and have a solid foundation for more complex or specific musical areas or genres. Students should be able to analyze and identify aspects of a new piece of music and know what they mean and know how they should sound. Put simply, the students should be able to *read* music and recognize how certain features of a piece will sound before they even begin playing it. The goals that the student will obtain as a result of lessons will vary for each student but will often follow the same basic structure. While the teacher and student can work toward a goal set by the student, the teacher may also have some overall goals for their students.

Overall students should have a positive experience during lessons. While they may experience some hardship and challenges during the process, teachers should be kind and respectful to students so they would look forward to their lesson time. Teachers should be reasonably generous with their praise of their students so that they will be able to recognize and appreciate the progress they've made. Students should be able to express their creativity and musicality through the art of playing the piano. As players, we experience that gift and as teachers, we are able to give that gift to others for them to experience as well. As teachers, let us do the best we can to give our students the gift of creativity and personal expression through music and playing piano. One of music's greatest abilities is to show the player's inner beauty to the world.