

Transcriptions:

The following documents are selected transcriptions of private piano lessons. Being sure to ask the permission of all parents, I set up a camera in the corner of my studio. I was also very sensitive to the students' comfort level. If anyone did not want to be taped, the camera was immediately turned off. Of course, I usually first responded with an "Are you sure?"

In order to attain a balanced age range, I chose to transcribe Matthew Zanin (6 yrs. old), Laura Zanin (9 yrs. old), Elizabeth Johnson (9 yrs. old), and Gerry Chase (67 yrs. old). This allowed me to observe differences in teaching style and in student response. With Gerry, I saw that I was able to focus on technical difficulties for a much longer period of time, and was able to go into more detail without fear of her getting disinterested. In Matthew's case, I think I should try to make the note-learning aspect more fun. When analyzing these transcriptions in class, Andreea suggested that for scales, have the student play them according to different scenarios (i.e. happy child skipping, lonely person crying, giant stomping, etc.). I found that I struck a wonderful balance with Laura. After color-coding the transcriptions, I saw that there was a tremendous variation of color. What I was most pleased about with her was the teacher/student equality- she spoke nearly as much as I did and was extremely involved. I greatly encouraged her to experiment when I saw this curiosity.

Some notable moments that I found especially interesting include when Matthew discovered a canon on his own, Elizabeth's take on the painting/lake analogy, and Laura's misunderstood idea about playing quickly and perfectly. Perhaps this shows overall differences in learning related to age. Perhaps very young students are mostly about curiosity and imagination while children older (9-12) look for more concrete answers to problems.

These transcriptions are also evidence of the artistry I incorporate into lessons. I enjoy playing for the students so that they have a model to listen to, and also for ear training skills. I want them to hear how subtle changes make a big difference, and also to show them where the limits are (or aren't). One thing I noticed about myself is that I need to stop saying the word 'right' as a hypothetical question/remark. I said it twelve times in Laura's half hour lesson! That would become annoying for anyone.

Transcriptions are highly valuable documents that I would encourage every private teacher to create. I've realized things about myself and about my students that will change the way I teach. I also deeply appreciated the feedback I received from my colleagues and the time that was taken to help me in my pursuit.