

Piano Teaching Philosophy

I believe that students learn best when they feel safe and comfortable in their learning environment. I will approach my students with patience and confidence, believing in their abilities and seeing them as a whole child with gifts and talents that can be nurtured and fostered. I will encourage them to work hard and to be unafraid of making mistakes or exploring unfamiliar concepts. I believe that, when given the opportunity and the support, every student can grow and succeed in learning to make music. Student learning should be structured for a basic understanding of the content, but also full of discovery and creativity to stimulate interest and independence. I believe that teachers should allow their students the freedom to make mistakes, to try new things, and to explore different ways of learning. A student should not only be challenged and motivated by their teacher but made to feel capable of achieving whatever they set out to do. According to Frances Clark “A student is almost always motivated to practice if he leaves his lesson feeling capable.” Each student learns in their own unique way and should be provided with opportunities to learn using the auditory, visual, and kinesthetic approaches.

In addition to presenting the different learning styles to my students, I also believe that student learning must be guided by both the rote and the discovery approach. By using the rote approach, students will learn the importance of the rules and principles of theory, physical motion, and exercises. Learning in the rote style will give my students a structure to their musical education that will allow for them to succeed when searching for answers to technical questions. On the other hand, I also believe that discovery learning is a very important component for my students’ musical education. Discovery learning encourages students to engage in higher-order thinking and deeper thought-processing. By building a firm foundation using the rote approach, I will be able to then guide my students to a meaningful process of discovery learning where they will ultimately become independent life-long learners of music.

When teaching my students, I believe that both structure and hands-on discovery must be carefully balanced. While providing clear-cut answers, examples, and specific expectations for my students, I will also afford them opportunities for discovery, choice, and independence. Learning is a life-long process and I believe that teaching is a collaborative process where both the student and the teacher learn from one another to grow into better musicians.