

Growing in Flexibility

The (online) teaching experience!

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What is your story?

- Have you had experience teaching online?
- What is your instrument/specialty?
- What would you like to get out of this session?

My Story

- With many questions and some significant reservations, but a desire to REACH STUDENTS who would otherwise not be reached, I started teaching online piano lessons January 2012.
- My biggest RESERVATIONS were:
 - Tone/sound quality
 - Not being able to play with my students at the same time
 - Not being able to be a hands-on technique teacher – something I value, being trained in Alexander Technique.
- With a flexible, open mind and heart, I dove in and started to discover how I could work around these reservations to help my online students reach their full potential and enjoy music!
- I found that it is possible to offer quality instruction and music making online if I am flexible and patient - willing to invest!

My Story Continued...

- I have seen student GROWTH and SUCCESS online at levels comparable to my traditional students. I am very pleased to offer this option as a teacher!
- I believe that online teaching is the BEST OPTION for many situations:
 - Rural settings where quality instruction is lacking
 - Overseas settings where quality instruction is lacking
 - American ex-pats living overseas in areas where music is not valued and/or taught in English (example: certain Muslim countries)
 - Current students moving away wanting to maintain continuity with teacher.
 - Busy families that are unable to take time for travel to in-person lessons.
 - Occasional option for local students due to weather, rescheduling, etc...
- Now I am teaching ONLINE in Asia, Middle East, Europe and North America!

Why Teach Online?

- GROW in flexibility and be challenged by new circumstances to be an even better teacher!
- REACH eager students from many different backgrounds
- SEE MORE LIVES TRANSFORMED and the vision of MacPhail SPREAD!
- BONUS: You might even get to teach more daytime hours!

FLEXIBILITY and REROUTING

- We need to be flexible and able to reroute lessons to KEEP STUDENTS ENGAGED & help them REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL
- Because....Every lesson, traditional or online, has SURPRISES and ROADBLOCKS to desired outcomes that can cause students to lose interest or give up!

Potential Surprises/Roadblocks to Learning

1. Technical Issue
2. Environmental Distraction
3. Attitude or Behavioral Issue
4. Disconnect between what teacher says and what student understands

Rerouting

- Each of these ROADBLOCKS can lead to an impasse in learning a new concept
- It is the teacher's responsibility to REROUTE to help get the concept across!

REROUTING requires FLEXIBILITY

- ATTENTIVE, RESPONSIVE, and ADAPTIVE to the needs before them.
- RESPOND CREATIVELY to new situations, SHIFT STRATEGIES, and IMPROVISE to meet different student needs/environments/resources

Reroute – Dig into your TOOLBOX!

- As teachers, we are collectors of ideas, principles, sounds, technical tricks, movements, creativity and more
- This collection can be like a TOOLBOX to dig through, searching for the best tools or tricks to help a student reach understanding and enjoyment.
- Online teaching will only EXPAND YOUR TOOLBOX COLLECTION

The Flexible Teacher – Self-Reflection

- Am I adaptable? Do I have a multi-faceted understanding of the topic at hand so that I can present alternative explanations and pathways for my students to understand?
- Is my understanding of some technical skill or musical idea so second-nature to me that I struggle to explain how it works?
- If that's the case, how can I expand my toolbox of ideas to help meet the individual needs of my students?
- “My student can't do _____” Can I probe that skill or idea and break it down into easy, small steps that allow my student to follow and progress to understanding and “owning” this skill for themselves?

CONSISTENCY – an important COUNTER-BALANCE to FLEXIBILITY

Consistency Sets LESSON EXPECTATIONS

- Type a weekly practice guide (online lessons)
- Take the lead in lesson time management.
- Ask questions to understand your student and know their goals/interests/ideas.
- Take more responsibility than them for outcomes.
- Check in with your student on previous weeks goals to show accountability.
- Set Performance Goals!

Consistency of our Actions:

- What we MODEL in attitude and example (NOT just SAY!) in the lesson is what they will do at home!
- Examples:
 - If you desire students to practice something slowly, model that S-L-O-W-L-Y. Tempos are infectious!
 - If you want a student to build a good practice habit, have them do the repetitions in the lesson to reinforce their importance.
 - If you are bored; students most likely will be... soon!

Group Idea Exchange – FLEXIBILITY and REROUTING

1. Your video just cut out on Skype while you are trying to demonstrate a new technical skill (such as wrist lifts off the keys or bow grip or how to breath) How could you continue to teach your student without them having the ability to see you?
2. You see too much tension in your students arms/shoulders as they play a technical passage. Encouraging them to “relax” bears no results. What else can you try?
3. You have a young online student who is distracted by her siblings, dog and seeing herself on the screen. Time is being wasted. How can you help her focus?

Toolbox Tricks Exchange

- The MacPhail Idea Exchanges are a perfect place to come collect and share toolbox tricks for your teaching studio!
- Observing other teachers is very powerful too.
- Online challenges will create new opportunities to grow in rerouting and finding new pathways to understanding for students! You will be surprised at how this will then benefit your traditional lessons as well.

Questions and Thoughts...