



Teaching Tips from

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Teaching Keyboard Performance

1. Enable children to explore the keyboard in a musical way capitalizing upon their sense of fantasy:

Away from the Keyboard

- "Rage Over the Lost Penny" (Beethoven) fantasy performance, Music Discovery Book 1, p. 21
- "Finger Play" song, Finger number preparation, Music Discovery Book 1, p. 14
- Pretend your hand is a hand puppet and knock and say "Hello" to develop wrist flexibility.
- "Beauty and the Beast" from The Mother Goose Suite (Ravel), relax shoulders, hands and arms, Music Discovery Book 3, p. 19

At the Keyboard

- "Racing Car," Exploring black and white keys, Music Discovery Book 1, p. 10–11
 - "Grand Galaxy March," 5-finger patterns, Music Discovery Book 2, p. 20
 - "Flying Fingers," Introduces bass clef, Music Discovery Book 3, p. 12
 - "Irish Jig," Coordinating both hands, Music Discovery Book 3, p. 32–33
 - "Calypso Dance," Intervals, Music Discovery Book 3, p. 42–43
 - "Sharp and Flat Song," Teaching direction of accidentals, Music Discovery Book 4, p. 34
2. Introduce new patterns or isolate patterns from keyboard pieces using "My Turn, Your Turn" game
 - My turn: Watch and listen. Your turn: Play and sing
 - Keep the pulse steady while alternating between teacher and student
 3. Sing, dance or play rhythm instruments while listening to the accompaniment of a new keyboard piece.
 4. Use General MIDI accompaniments, adjusting the tempo as needed. This functions as a musical metronome freeing the teacher to supervise the student's performance.



5. Choose from the list of instructions for each piece in the Music Lesson Book. Establish a good practice habit by drawing a “practice box” around a difficult measure or section. As pieces become longer, teach students to start with the more challenging section, rather than always starting at the beginning.
6. Develop a repertoire of short pieces, even from the earliest stages. Students should memorize pieces that they can perform anywhere, anytime.
 - Avoid checking off a piece each week as a goal. Students can develop confidence and good technique by continuing to perform pieces that they have mastered.
 - Begin to apply the fantasy techniques learned earlier to the actual keyboard performance.
7. Ask students to give “concerts” at home for parents and Beethoven Bear, Mozart Mouse and the rest of their “music friends.” These performances serve as important preparation for recitals and talent shows. Ask the student to announce the piece and bow before and after playing. Serve cookies!



Teaching Note Reading

1. Don't assume that the students know anything! Review, review, review. As adults, a concept may be “second nature” to us. Each new note or note value is carefully introduced in the lesson book and reinforced in the workbook and on flash cards. However, consistent review through challenge games is important. It's good to have the parents take a turn, too! (Show “Same and Different” and “Switch on the Rest” games. Ex. line note, line note, line note, Space note!)
2. Use flash cards and magnet boards consistently from level 2 on. Children sometimes identify a note within the context of a piece they are playing but will be unable to recognize it on the board.
3. Begin with note values. Have students clap or use rhythm sticks reading patterns drawn on the board. Let each child take a turn to be the teacher, pointing to the notes of the pattern on the board. Do the same with flash cards. (My students have to pass a flash card test as a group before going to the next level. Parents help them review at home).
4. Students need to be able to count the lines and spaces from bottom to top. It may seem silly, but there is often confusion identifying note names when they start counting from the top line rather than from the bottom ... parents,



too. ("Drive your magnet car all the way along space #1, then park it at the end. Now drive your magnet car all the way along space #2," etc.) Also, practice identifying line notes and space notes. "Put a magnet on line #1, now put a magnet in space #1," etc.

5. Any note VALUE can be placed on any NOTE NAME. This is another seemingly simple concept which can cause confusion for young students. "Let's draw a quarter note on the line of 'e,' now a half note." Or, in the book, "find me a whole note on the line of middle 'c.' Now, how many quarter notes can you find on 'd'?" I sometimes draw a whole sequence of note values as well as a star, heart, happy face on a line or space and have the children say, "A happy face on 'f,' a quarter note on 'f,' a whole note on 'f,' etc.
6. Use the General MIDI disk or CD accompaniment while students read and play the rhythm pattern of a new lesson book piece using rhythm sticks. Use the concept pieces from the Discovery Books many times. "Step and Skip March" helps children make a kinesthetic connection between what they see on the page and what their fingers need to do. "The Sharp and Flat Song" helps them remember sharps to the right, flats to the left.



Sample Piano Class Lesson Plan by Christine H. Barden <i>Music for Little Mozarts Book 2, Lesson 14</i>			
Lesson Focus: Steps and skips	Book	Page	CD or GM Track
As children enter the room, teacher checks workbook assignment and awards stickers.	Workbook		
Hello Song (Music Lesson Day- sing w/"helpers")	Discovery	6	CD 1
Skip to My Lou (singing with movement)	Discovery	36	CD 19
Listen & Sing #5 with scarves	Discovery	27	GM 11
Keyboard Signal Song	handout		
Grand Galaxy March (keyboard warm-up)	Discovery	20, 21	CD 10
Stepping Fun, Teacher: "Tell me everything you notice."	Lesson	30	GM 21
Stepping Down (LH)		33	GM 23
Reading skips in bass clef (c to a) color at home	Workbook	35	
A Bunny's Wish	Lesson	34	GM24
Step & Skip March (walk toe to toe, hop instead of skipping)	Discovery	38	GM 16
Skipping Fun (my turn, your turn)	Lesson	35	GM 25
Brother John (rhythm ensemble)	Discovery	14	GM 5
Solo Time (if time allows)			
Goodbye Song (It's Time to Say Goodbye)	Discovery	48	GM 20
Homework	Lesson	30, 33, 34, 35	
	Discovery	14, 15, 36, 38	

Note: for a very young class I might eliminate one keyboard piece and add "JS Bunny's Hop." The younger the class, the more action they need.

