

TWINKLING THE IVORIES

November 2018

TEACHING TENACITY: IDEAS FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS AT PRACTICE TIME

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At the Fall Workshop, parents were lucky enough to hear from Nicole Wilton, a Suzuki Association of the Americas Teacher-Trainer, who spoke to parents about tenacity. She discussed the best ways to encourage it in your children and sustain it in yourself through the long-haul as a Suzuki parent.

Nicole shared some tried and true strategies that she has learned as a parent and teacher:

Practice Consistently:

- Find the right time of day by trial and error.
- Break it into 2 or 3 sessions if only 1 is too long.
- After the private lesson, work with your child to make a clear practice plan using your lesson notes. Include short "Body Breaks" for the child who can't sit at the piano for very long. "Body breaks" are short episodes of exercise away from the piano. They can include dancing, jumping jacks, etc.

Inspiration:

- Go to concerts, watch YouTube performances, talk about musicians, past and present.
- Attend and participate in group classes, and your teacher's recitals.

Be Thankful:

- Thank your teacher on a weekly basis.
- Talk to your child about how grateful you are for the opportunity to learn piano.
- Have a positive attitude about listening to the recordings, practising, attending private and group lessons, and concerts. Positivity is contagious.

Share:

- Create opportunities for your child to play review pieces: record videos, play for neighbours and friends, have mini concerts with friends, play in the school talent show etc.
- Talk with other parents at events - you can always check your emails and texts later.

Reflect:

- Help your child see his/her progress, whether the accomplishment was large or small.
- Watch videos from when he/she started.
- Talk about how their daily practicing has made such a difference.

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TEACHING TENACITY, CONTINUED

Improvise/Educate:

- Allow your child to “noodle” on the piano. This can mean anything from experimenting with different sounds, composing, improvising, trying out the pedals, and figuring out the latest pop song. Don’t meddle during this time of creativity.
- Show your child how the piano actually works. With your help, let your child see inside the piano. Watch some videos about how they are made. Let your child watch for a few minutes when the piano tuner is working.

The Tough Stuff:

- Your child won’t be successful at the piano if he/she has too many other activities and is never home to play, relax, hear the recording, and practice.
- Don’t stop practicing daily with your child unless you’ve discussed it first with your teacher. Talk with your teacher if you are thinking about stepping back from helping your child practice.
- Your child will not always want to practice, but it is the parent’s job to make sure it happens daily.

With contributions from Tess Brown and Rhonda McEachen.



Scenes from the 2018 Fall Workshop.

Thank you to Nicole, Nena, Lana and Zach for working with our ESPS students!



MEANINGFUL REVIEW

I recently attended a teacher workshop and was once again reminded how important review is in the lesson and in the daily practice. There are times in my own teaching and my student's practice sessions that we just run out of time and review can get put on hold until a later date. It was so good to be reminded that review should be the last thing that gets dropped.

Just as Olympic athletes need to exercise even after they have their gold medals, students need to spend time playing what they already know how to play, even if they already play well. Once we consider that the purpose of practicing is to make playing easier, then there is a sense of purpose when playing old familiar pieces. When the bulk of a practice session is time spent reviewing pieces, this then allows the students to use well known notes to learn new skills and to play them in a 'new' way.

Practicing is always more successful when you practice the things you can already do well.

It is important that review be done in a meaningful way and with a sense of purpose and strategy. (Don't be like the hamster on the wheel just spinning round and round, faster and faster going nowhere in the end.) Avoid playing through the pieces, just 'rattling' them off without any thought to how they sound.

Here are a few suggestions for reviewing old repertoire in a new way:

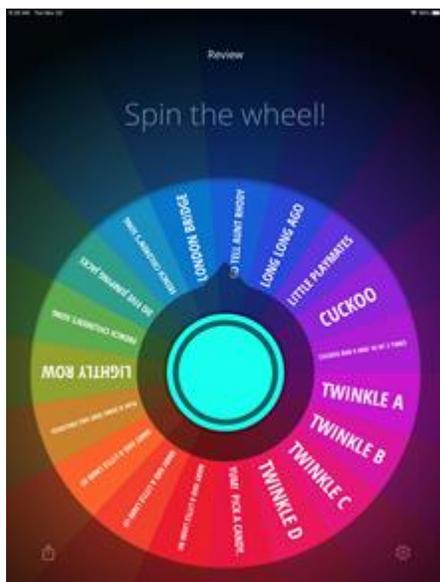
- Play RH or LH only
- Play the middle section only
- Play the first 4 bars of 6 pieces
- Play all the sections that are f or p

There are countless options and ideas can be incorporated into a review session that goes beyond just playing the notes from the beginning to end.

THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT!

There is a great app that can be purchased for \$2.49 from the app store which my students have found useful in going through their review. It's called 'DECIDE NOW'. It's a wheel that spins and whatever it lands on is the thing to do. 5 or 6 spins at the end of a practice session gets you doing a good amount of review, it's fun and a great way to end the practice. I have included a sample of the wheel, so you can check it out.

Nancy Thornhill



2018/2019 EVENTS CALENDAR

January 20, 2019 Graduation Concert at Muttart Hall

February 3, 10 & 24, 2019 Winter Recitals at PCL and Bryan Hall

March 16, 2019 Spring Festival at SCS

March 17, 2019 Graduation Concert at Muttart Hall

April 5, 2018 ESPS at the University of Alberta Symphony

April 21, 2019 Spring Festival at Suzuki Charter School

May 5, 2019 Group Concerts at Suzuki Charter School

June 2 & 9, 2019 Summer Recitals at Convocation Hall

June 23, 2019 Graduation Concert at Muttart Hall

July 8 – 12, 2019 River City Suzuki Piano Institute

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR SUMMER PRACTICE CHALLENGE PARTICIPANTS!

Congratulations to all the ESPS students who successfully completed the Summer Practice Challenge! In addition to receiving a souvenir medal, practice challenge students were entered in a prize draw. Prizes winners were randomly drawn at our Annual General Meeting. Congratulations to these recipients:

Julia P	Salomea K
Isaac C	Qianna S
Mark RL	Calla N
Brandon T	Aleksandr O

MILESTONES AT ESPS

Congratulations to ESPS teacher **Hillary Paul**, who was recently honoured as an Associate of the Royal Conservatory, an internationally respected designation awarded by the Royal Conservatory of Music.

Baby News! Congratulations to ESPS teachers **Heather Hindman** and **Melanie Bodnar**, who have both welcomed new babies into their families. We are looking forward to hearing Declan and Ruslana perform the Twinkles one day soon!

MUSICAL TRICK OR TREAT: STUDENTS PERFORM AT A HALLOWEEN CONCERT AT DEVONSHIRE CARE CENTRE

This Fall I organized a concert at the Devonshire Care Centre, on Sunday, October 28th. Piano students provided the entertainment for the Sunday afternoon tea. Many residents and their families attended the concert and they enjoyed the music and seeing the young people. To the delight of the seniors, many of the students wore their Halloween costumes.

The cook provided Halloween cupcakes for the students to enjoy afterwards. What a pleasant surprise!

One of the residents had been a piano teacher for most of her adult life, and she thoroughly enjoyed hearing some of the Suzuki standards that she once taught: Book 2 Minuets, Beethoven Sonata, The Wild Rider etc.

Thanks to all the families who participated, and to Devonshire Care Centre for hosting this fun concert.

"Music is a world within itself. It is a language we all understand." - Stevie Wonder

Rhonda McEachen

CONGRATULATIONS NOVEMBER GRADUATES

Congratulations to the following students for their hard work and well-deserved graduations:

Volume 1

Alexander Chae
Joshua Koop
Brielle Korzan
Olivia Korzan
Qianna Sianturi

Volume 2

Alexandra Chapin
Edison Leung
Mia Luo
Fiona Mack
Jayla Stecyk
Abigail Suen
Hannah Tao
Isabella Wang
Pauline Van
Antero Williams

Volume 3

Toby Johnson
Erin Delos Santos

Volume 4

Anita Guo
Lauren Huang
Linnea Johnson
Rachel Mack
Victor Phan

Volume 5

Jane Chen
Anna Heintzman
Eric Mierzewski
Hannah VandenBorn

Volume 6

Micah Truong