Building an Online Piano Studio: Surveys and Interviews with Piano Pedagogues

by

Hillary Lin Santoso

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts
(Music Performance)
in the University of Michigan
2023

Doctoral Committee:

Associate Professor John Ellis, Co-Chair
Professor Logan Skelton, Co-Chair
Associate Professor Matthew Bengtson
Associate Professor Joseph Gascho
Associate Professor Kevin Maki

Hillary Santoso

hsantoso@umich.edu

ORCID iD: 0009-0005-9038-7302

© Hillary Lin Santoso 2023

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Michelle Santoso, who was the first person who introduced me to the world of music, and has supported me in my life in countless ways.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my dissertation committee, beginning with Dr. Ellis, who has been incredibly supportive through my research about online piano pedagogy. I would also like to thank Prof. Skelton, who has been a constant source of musical inspiration and knowledge. I also owe many thanks to Aya Hagelthorn, for her tremendous mentorship in my piano pedagogy journey. Lastly, I would like to thank my entire family for their constant support.

Table of Contents

Dedication…… ii

Acknowledgements……... iii

List of Tables…….…… vi

List of Appendicies……..vii

Abstract…….…..… viii

Dissertation Recital 1: Lecture Recital…….…… 1

Dissertation Recital 2: Solo Recital…….. 2

Dissertation Recital 3: Pedagogy Workshop……... 3

Introduction……... 4

Chapter 1: Literature Review…….. 6

I. Educating Music to Teach in the 21st Century: A Case Study of Piano Pedagogy Training that Prepares Musicians to Teach Synchronous Piano Lessons Online

II. Exploring Teachers' and Pupils' Behavior in Online and Face-to-Face Instrumental Lessons

III. Transitioning From Traditional To Online Piano Lessons: Perceptions Of Students, Parents And Teacher

IV. Piano Education Online: Challenges and Solutions

Chapter 2: Context for Survey and Interviews……..… 17

Chapter 3: Challenges and Solutions when Teaching Online…..……..19

I. Sound Quality……. 19

II. Piano Technique…… 21

III. Communication and Rapport……..… 25

IV. Engagement and Motivation…… 28

V. Distractions and Environment…… 31

VI. Parent Involvement and Support…… 34

Chapter 4: Conclusion…….. 37

Appendices……... 39

Appendix A: Survey Questions…… 40

Appendix B: Survey Responses……..…….. 41

References…….. 115

List of Tables

Table 1: How Many Years Have You Taught Piano Online?..... 43

Table 2: Level of Physical and Mental Fatigue…….. 53

Table 3: Rate Online Piano Teaching…… 63

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Survey Questions……39

Appendix B: Survey Responses……..42

Abstract

Two dissertation recitals and a piano pedagogy workshop were given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctoral of Musical Arts in Piano Pedagogy and Performance at the University of Michigan.

The first dissertation lecture recital, *Afro-Cuban and Brazilian Dances*, was presented in McIntosh Theatre on Wednesday, November 30, 2022. The program included *Six Afro-Cuban Dances* and *Mazurka Glissando* by Ernesto Lecuona; *Eponina Waltz*, *Julietta Waltz*, *Tango Habanera*, and *Odeon* by Ernesto Nazareth. The presentation highlighted musical and historical Afro-Cuban and Brazilian influences within the pieces.

The second dissertation solo recital was given in McIntosh Theatre on Tuesday, April 18, 2023. This recital was intended to feature a range of compositions that touch on the theme of grief and nostalgia, with elements of improvisation. The program consisted of Sonata in C-sharp minor, Op. 27, No. 2 by Ludwig van Beethoven; and Sonata in A minor, K. 310 by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart; Transcendental Etude No. 9 in A-flat major, “Ricordanza” by Franz Liszt; *Maple Leaf Rag* by Scott Joplin; a transcription of “When I Fall in Love” by Bill Evans; and a transcription of “Over the Rainbow” by Oscar Peterson.

The pedagogy workshop, *Building an Online Piano Studio*, was presented on Wednesday, April 26, 2023 in Watkins Lecture Hall. This workshop showcases an

overview of advantages, disadvantages, experiences, and tools that may be applied to navigating teaching piano virtually. This workshop featured interviews with a range of piano pedagogues: from piano teachers who solely teach online, to pre-college piano professors, or collegiate piano professors.

Dissertation Recital 1: Lecture Recital

SCHOOL OF
MUSIC, THEATRE & DANCE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

DISSERTATION LECTURE RECITAL

HILLARY LIN SANTOSO, PIANO

Wednesday, November 30, 2022
McIntosh Theater
8:00 PM

AFRO-CUBAN & BRAZILIAN DANCES

6 Danzas Afro-Cubanas (1930) La Conga De Media Noche Danza Negra Y La Negra Bailaba! Danza de los Ñañigos Danza Lucumi La Comparsa	Ernesto Lecuona (1895–1963)
Mazurka Glissando (1953)	Ernesto Lecuona
Eponina Waltz (1913)	Ernesto Nazareth (1863–1934)
Tango Habanera (1925)	Ernesto Nazareth
Odeon (1910)	Ernesto Nazareth
Julietta Waltz (1895)	Ernesto Nazareth

smtd.umich.edu @umichsmtd #umicharts #umichsmtd

umichsmtd

We have implemented careful safety procedures in partnership with U of M's Environment, Health, and Safety Department to allow for unmasked performances. We are taking precautions to keep students, faculty, staff, and audiences safe.

Dissertation Recital 2: Solo Recital

SCHOOL OF
MUSIC, THEATRE & DANCE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

SECOND DISSERTATION RECITAL

HILLARY LIN SANTOSO, PIANO

Tuesday, April 18, 2023
McIntosh Theater
8:00 PM

Sonata in C-Sharp Minor, op. 27, no. 2 ("Moonlight") (1801) Adagio sostenuto Allegretto Presto agitato	Ludwig Van Beethoven (1770–1827)
Transcendental Étude no. 9 in A-Flat Major ("Ricordanza") (1838)	Franz Liszt (1811–1886)
Sonata in A minor, K. 310 (1778) Allegro maestoso Andante cantabile con espressione Presto	Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)
Maple Leaf Rag (1899)	Scott Joplin (1868–1917)
When I Fall in Love (1956)	*arr. Bill Evans*
Over the Rainbow (1954)	*arr. Oscar Peterson*

This program was drafted and created by the artist in support of their performance
smtd.umich.edu @umichsmtd #umicharts #umichsmtd
umichsmtd

Dissertation Recital 3: Pedagogy Workshop

SCHOOL OF
MUSIC, THEATRE & DANCE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

THIRD DISSERTATION RECITAL: WORKSHOP

HILLARY LIN SANTOSO, PIANO

Wednesday, April 26, 2023
Moore Building, Watkins Lecture Hall
7:30 PM

Building an Online Piano Studio:
Surveys and Interviews with Piano Pedagogues

This program was drafted and created by the artist in support of their performance
smtd.umich.edu @umichsmtd #umicharts #umichsmtd

umichsmtd

Introduction

As a piano teacher whose career has largely remained untouched by digital technology, I've observed my colleagues grappling with the same questions as we faced the lockdowns enforced due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. As we scrambled to find effective ways to teach piano remotely, questions about lesson accessibility and best resources emerged. Throughout the process, I grew more curious about the various solutions and resources available to piano teachers.

Teaching piano online from March 2020 presented several challenges for educators, including teaching group classes and working with young students. Along with my peers, I found myself unsure about how to deliver quality lessons remotely, leading to many questions about best practices, technological resources, angles, and maintaining the high standards of teaching.

This curiosity led me to have further questions, including the most efficient way to teach piano online, the common themes in transitioning lessons from in-person to remote, and how university professors navigate mood or personality changes in students during this time. The thesis also aims to examine the impact of online teaching on in-person lessons in the future.

This dissertation document seeks to explore the challenges of teaching piano virtually, along with solutions for each challenge. My research study includes an in-depth survey or virtual interview with nine piano pedagogues, ranging from the most prominent online piano educators to professors from the world's most renowned

schools. The primary objective of this document is to identify the best practices for teaching piano online and the necessary steps to maintain a completely remote studio.

We will see that it is certainly very possible to teach piano online, with quality close to that of in-person teaching. Music educators will feel more equipped to teach during a pandemic or if they are looking to teach remotely for any reason. By using the findings in this paper, piano teachers should feel more confident to navigating virtual piano instruction even when it is not a necessity and understand the wealth of online resources and technology at their disposal.

I have chosen to structure this document as 1) a literature review of existing texts discussing teaching piano online 2) framework of my research 3) challenges and solutions of online piano teaching 4) conclusion and 5) survey questions, responses, and interviews.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

The field of online piano education has grown significantly in recent years with the increasing accessibility of technology for long-distance learning. While traditional in-person piano instruction has been standardized, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the shift towards online education, including in the field of music. There is, however, a limited amount of research available on the effectiveness of online piano education versus in-person instruction, and this sector is continuously developing.

The advancement of technology has made a major impact on the manner in which piano lessons are taught. With the growing popularity of online learning, an increasing number of piano teachers are considering instructing their students remotely. As a result, a growing body of research exploring the effectiveness and problems of online piano teaching has arisen. The purpose of this literature review aims to explore the available scholarship on online piano teaching, including studies done on teachers and students, benefits and drawbacks of online teaching, and the technological tools and platforms used to deliver online piano lessons. By synthesizing the existing literature, this review will provide an overview of the present level of knowledge in this field and highlight possible areas for further research.

Educating Music to Teach in the 21st Century: A Case Study of Piano Pedagogy Training that Prepares Musicians to Teach Synchronous Piano Lessons Online

In a study conducted by Pamela Pike, titled "Educating Musicians to Teach in the 21st Century: A Case Study of Piano Pedagogy Training That Prepares Musicians to Teach Synchronous Piano Lessons Online," Pike investigates the effectiveness of an online training program in preparing piano teachers to teach synchronous online piano lessons. An investigation of piano instructors in Louisiana State University's Piano Pedagogy Program was undertaken as part of the study using a case study methodology. This program introduced an online synchronous teaching course in 2017. The course was designed to prepare piano teachers to use technology within their teaching, specifically for teaching online lessons. The purpose of the study was to determine how well-prepared piano teachers would be for online instruction after taking the course.

Several techniques, including interviews, surveys, and course evaluations, were used to gather the data. All 26 students who signed up for the course completed the pre- and post-course surveys. In addition, 11 of the 26 students participated in interviews, and all students completed their course evaluations.[1]

The study's findings demonstrated how well the course had prepared piano instructors for synchronous online classes. Some of the topics covered included: how to use technology for synchronous piano lessons, how to teach utilizing a multi-camera

[1] Pike, Pamela. "Educating Musicians to Teach in the 21st Century: A Case Study of Piano Pedagogy Training That Prepares Musicians to Teach Synchronous Piano Lessons Online." Journal of Music Teacher Education 27, no. 3 (2018): 28-42.

setup, best strategies for engaging students in online environments, how to develop and maintain a pleasant and productive teacher-student relationship online, how to provide effective feedback and assessments in an online context, and how to address technical difficulties that may emerge during online lessons. The course also emphasized the significance of creating a pedagogical philosophy that is suitable for online instruction, and gave opportunities to the teachers to reflect on their own teaching practices and make adjustments to better serve their online students. The surveys conducted before and after the course revealed that students' confidence in online teaching, technological proficiency, and overall efficacy as a teacher all significantly improved. The follow-up survey also showed that these improvements persisted over time, with students reporting continued use of the skills they had learned in the course.

The interviews conducted as part of the study provided greater insight into the students' experiences with the course. According to the students, the course was well-structured and provided practical instruction in using technology for teaching. They also reported that the course encouraged them to think more about how the skills abilities required to teach online could be used in in-person teaching. In terms of outcomes, pre and post course surveys revealed considerable improvements in various areas. For example, students' confidence in their abilities to teach online grew from an average score of 2.96 to 4.36, on a 5-point scale, before and after the course. Similarly, the students' ability to use technology in teaching increased from an average score of 3.08 to an average score of 4.56.

Overall, the study offers compelling evidence that synchronous online piano teachers can be successfully trained through online teacher preparation programs, and

that there was positive sentiment among teachers when teaching online. The case study approach used in the study allowed for in-depth exploration of the program, and the data collected through surveys, interviews, and course evaluations provided a comprehensive view of the students' experiences with the course. According to the study's findings, it is possible to boost students' confidence and online teaching abilities.

Exploring Teachers’ and Pupils’ Behavior in Online and Face-to-Face Instrumental Lessons

The goal of Andrew King's study, "Exploring Teachers’ and Pupils’ Behavior in Online and Face-to-Face Instrumental Lessons” aims to compare and contrast the two types of instrumental lessons with a focus on teachers' and students' behaviors. The study included 10 individuals (5 teachers and 5 pupils) from a UK conservatoire who had experience teaching various instruments online or in-person. Data was gathered for the study also using a mixed-methods approach, including interviews, observation, and videotaping.

The study was executed in two phases. The researchers' initial phase was the collection of data from both online and in-person piano classes using numerical methodology. This involved the employment of an observation tool that was developed to record information about student and teacher behaviors during the lessons. The instrument, called the Music Lesson Interaction Analysis Tool (MLIAT), was used to keep track of the frequency and length of time that behaviors, including verbal and nonverbal interaction, demonstration, feedback, and engagement, occurred. The MLIAT

is a coding technique that enables objective observation of specific behaviors throughout a lesson, with each behavior assigned a number code. The observer keeps track of each behavior's occurrence and length, enabling statistical analysis of the lesson.

In the second phase, the researchers conducted interviews with teachers and students to collect more detailed information. A selected group of the teachers and students who had taken part in the study's initial phase were the subjects of the interviews. The purpose of the interviews was to examine the opinions and experiences of both teachers and students regarding the efficacy of both online and in-person piano classes.[2]

Descriptive stats, such as frequencies and percentages, were used to interpret the data that was gathered in the first phase. The results demonstrated that there were significant behavioral differences between teachers and students in face-to-face and online classes. For example, it was discovered from the study that teachers used verbal communication more frequently in face-to-face lessons than they did in online lessons. On the flip side, students were more engaged in face-to-face lessons compared to online lessons.

The more qualitative data gathered in the second phase was examined using a thorough content analysis The investigation showed that there were differing perceptions among teachers and students about the value of in-person versus online instruction. Due to its flexibility and convenience, some teachers and students preferred

[2] King, Andrew. "Exploring teachers' and Pupils' Behavior in Online and Face-to-face Instrumental Lessons." British Journal of Music Education 35, no. 3 (2018): 299-316.

online lessons, while others still preferred face-to-face lessons due largely to the personal connection and contact with the teacher.

According to the study, there were noticeable disparities between how students and teachers behaved in face-to-face and online lessons. In online lessons, the teacher's behavior was found to be more directive, while in face-to-face lessons, the teacher's behavior was more facilitative. Also, it was discovered that the teacher offered more material in the online lessons than they did in the face-to-face ones. Additionally, it was discovered that students behaved differently in the two contexts, conversing more online and making more physical gestures in-person.

Quantitative data was gathered through the coding of the lesson videos. According to the results, there were notable differences between the frequency of teacher and student behaviors in face-to-face and online sessions. More material was provided by the teacher and more questions were raised by students during online lessons. On the contrary, in face-to-face lessons, there were more instances of the teacher providing guidance and of the student nodding in agreement. The study also discovered that a few technical problems with online lessons, including subpar audio and video, could have an impact on both teachers' and students' behavior. Poor audio quality, for instance, made it challenging for teachers to hear the subtleties of the students' playing, while poor video quality made it difficult for students to see the teacher's demonstrations.

In terms of numerical statistics, the study discovered that the teacher needed to provide information 8 times more frequently in online courses than in face-to-face lessons. Similarly, there were 6 instances of the student asking questions in online

lessons compared to only 2 instances in face-to-face lessons. There is a larger proven need for student clarity in online lessons. On the other hand, in face-to-face classes, the teacher offered advice 11 times, as opposed to just 3 times in online lessons. Also, there were 6 times when the student nodded in agreement during face-to-face classes as opposed to just 1 time during online lessons. These differences in behavior between the two environments suggest that it would be best for teachers to modify their teaching style to suit the particular medium they are using.

Overall, the research study provides valuable insights into the similarities and differences between online and face-to-face instrumental lessons and highlights the necessity of understanding these differences to provide effective teaching and learning experiences.

Transitioning From Traditional to Online Piano Lessons: Perceptions Of Students, Parents, And Teachers

The purpose of Diana Dumlavwalla's study, "Transitioning from Conventional To Online Piano Lessons: Views Of Students, Parents, And Instructor," was to examine the perceptions and experiences of five students and four parents who had transitioned from traditional face-to-face to online piano lessons. The study utilized a mixed-methods approach, using both surveys and semi-structured interviews.

The five students, who ranged in age from ages 10 to 16, had all previously taken conventional piano lessons before switching to online instruction. The four

parents had children taking online lessons and had also experienced traditional piano lessons themselves.[3]

In order to analyze the participants' experiences and impressions of the transition as well as to acquire some basic demographic data, a survey was first presented to them. The survey included questions on the students' overall satisfaction with the online lessons, the quality of instruction, the technology used, and the advantages and disadvantages of online lessons encountered compared to traditional ones. The survey also inquired about the perceived benefits and drawbacks of online lessons, as well as any worries or difficulties that arose during the transition.

Following the survey, semi-structured interviews were held with each participant to gain more detailed information about their experiences and perceptions. The interviews were guided by a set of open-ended questions, that explored the reasons for the transition, the perceived advantages and disadvantages of online lessons, the technology employed, the quality of instruction, and the overall satisfaction with the online lessons.

To find recurring themes and patterns in the participant responses, content analysis was used to examine the survey and interview data. This involved categorizing the replies into themes and subthemes based on the study questions, which were then compared to generate conclusions and insights. The study concluded that participants typically considered the switch from conventional to online piano classes to be beneficial and appreciated it. Most students and parents said they were happy with the

[3] Dumlavwalla, Diana. "Transitioning From Traditional to Online Piano Lessons: Perceptions of Students, Parents and Teacher." International Journal of Instruction 13, no. 1 (2020): 173-188.

online sessions and valued the comfort and flexibility of learning at home. The quality of instruction was also reported to be high, with some participants even reporting that the quality of instruction was superior to that of traditional lessons.

Unfortunately, some flaws with the audio and video quality, which impacted the entire learning experience, were brought up in relation to the technology employed. Additionally, some participants also missed the immediate communication and feedback that came with in-person training.

In conclusion, the study helped explore the views and experiences of five students and four parents who switched from traditional to online piano lessons, which helped give a more comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences. The study can be helpful for piano teachers and students who are thinking about making the switch because it offers insightful information on the advantages and drawbacks of online piano training, from the point of view of not only the teacher, but student as well.

Piano Education Online: Challenges and Solutions

RunTao Ma and Runchun Ma outline the difficulties of online piano instruction and provide potential answers in their article, "Piano Instruction Online: Challenges and Solutions." The authors draw from a variety of literature to support their arguments. The authors initially point out that the benefits of online piano education include flexibility, convenience, and cost savings. However, they note that there are also several obstacles that need to be addressed, such as technical difficulties, communication impediments, and the absence of physical interaction.

The complexity of giving real-time feedback during online piano lessons is one issue that has been raised, as discussed in all 3 previous texts. Online instructors must rely on verbal explanations or visual examples, which can be less successful, since they are unable to physically alter a student's hand position or posture. In addition, technical issues such as sluggish internet or subpar audio quality can further hinder communication.[4]

The lack of physical interaction and its possible impact on student learning outcomes and motivation is another difficulty mentioned. It can be challenging to match the personal connection and bond that can develop between the teacher and student in a traditional piano lesson. Additionally, the article mentioned that students may have a harder time staying motivated when they are not physically attending a lesson.

The authors suggest several solutions to address these challenges. One potential solution is the use of video technology to enable real-time feedback. For instance, the instructor could videotape a student's performance and then use a video overlay to point out specific areas where the student can improve. This strategy can assist in bridging some communication gaps and enhancing the efficiency of online piano classes.

To address the lack of physical interaction, the authors suggest integrating social media and online groups into the learning process in piano lessons. The students would be able to connect with people who share their interests and receive support and feedback from a larger network of people by establishing an online community of piano students and teachers.

[4] Ma, Runtao, and Runchun Ma. "Piano Education Online: Challenges and Solutions." International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning (iJET) 13.12 (2018): 194-207.

The authors also suggest that special types of technology can be used to boost motivation and engagement. To make learning more entertaining and participatory, for instance, teachers can employ enrichment tactics. Teachers can improve student engagement and motivation by integrating game-like components like badges, levels, or incentives.

In conclusion, the literature on online piano teaching has demonstrated the efficacy and potential benefits of this method of instruction. It has also highlighted the challenges that teachers, students, and parents could encounter in the transition from traditional to online piano lessons. The case studies by Pamela Pike, Andrew King, Yuhan Li, and Diana Dumlavwalla have provided some insights into the perceptions and experiences of different participants, including teachers, students, and parents. Technical problems, communication problems, and varying educational philosophies are among the concerns covered in the literature. However, the advantages of online piano instruction, such as greater accessibility to qualified instructors and scheduling flexibility, could potentially outweigh these drawbacks. Moving forward, it will be crucial to keep researching the best methods for teaching piano online and to come up with solutions for the difficulties that arise with doing so. In the following section, I will discuss now the results of my surveys and interviews, in a series of challenges and solutions when teaching piano online.

Chapter 2: Context for Survey and Interviews

As technology advances and the world becomes more connected, it is no surprise that piano teachers and professors are turning to online platforms to teach their students. However, this new method of teaching does not come without its challenges. To better understand the difficulties and solutions of online piano teaching, I conducted a survey in either text or video format with 26 questions, given to 9 piano pedagogues.

Of the 9 respondents, 5 surveys were filled out, and 4 video interviews on Zoom were conducted. 4 piano teachers have or are currently teaching at well-known pre-college piano programs universities or conservatories. Likewise, 5 piano teachers have been teaching in their home studio.

The range of the number of years the piano teachers have taught piano span from 3 years to 11 years, with an average of 5 years. 7 piano teachers have been teaching piano online prior to March 2020, the start of the pandemic, while 2 teachers were forced to convert from in-person teaching to online piano teaching beginning March 2020. Of the 7 piano teachers who have taught online prior to March 2020, 4 teachers were only teaching piano to students online, and not in person. Among these 4 teachers, the decision behind choosing to teach piano only online was a result of wanting to connect with students who lived with other cities/countries. The remaining 3 piano teachers were sporadically teaching a few students online due to logistics (ie: sickness, weather, or being in other countries).

While these teachers taught students from ages 4-60, my surveys and interviews centered around students ages 4-18.

The context and framework for this study will set the stage for the various obstacles that arise in the online teaching process, discussed in the surveys and interviews, as well as solutions to these challenges.

Chapter 3: Challenges and Solutions when Teaching Online

1. Sound Quality:

One of the most discussed difficulties encountered when teaching piano online is sound quality. Sound quality is a major issue encountered by both teachers and students in online instrumental lessons, not just piano, and is often affected by factors such as poor internet connection and inadequate equipment.[5] In one particular question asked in the survey, “what issues did/do you personally come across when teaching online,” 80% of respondents discussed difficulty in hearing accurate tone quality. Difficulties in assessing sound quality were commonly attributed to internet upload speed and technology sound distortion.

Joseph D’Amico, owner of Flex Lessons, which specializes in providing live online piano lessons, mentioned that “internet speed, particularly the upload speed on the student’s end, was often a major problem. Students who had a strong internet connection using a more recent device had no issue, but students with older laptops and slower internet connections had to directly connect to their router or lessons were not possible.” To address these problems, a few teachers have required their students before the piano lesson to ensure they have a certain level of internet upload speed as well as an updated computer or laptop. Additional suggestions have been made such as

[5] Daugvilaite, Dainora. "Exploring Perceptions and Experiences of Students, Parents and Teachers on Their Online Instrumental Lessons." Journal of Music, Technology & Education, vol. 13, no. 2, 2020, pp. 195-214.

recommending students to use external microphones, improving their own sound systems with Zoom's music setting, or using specialized software to enhance audio quality. Josh Wright, specialized in online piano teaching for over 11 years, owner of ProPractice Piano Academy, an online catalog of piano courses, and previous piano professor at the University of Utah, requires his students to invest in a Blue Yeti Microphone, ensure their internet upload speed is high, and that their Zoom audio settings are set up properly prior to piano lessons.

In addition to sound being affected by internet speed, hearing the accurate tone of notes being played due to slight distortion of technology was a common theme. Diana Dumlavwalla, Associate Professor of Piano Pedagogy at Florida State University, mentioned that "When going back to in-person lessons, I sometimes found that my students' tone quality wasn't what I was expecting." A solution she incorporated, that was also suggested by a few respondents, was having students submit video recordings of their playing before their lessons to be given the opportunity to hear different sound perspectives of the pieces being played, giving a more accurate depiction of the nuances in sound. One positive aspect of this, and something that was commonly found among online piano lessons, is the fact that students can make and submit recordings of themselves playing, allowing them to hear their own sound quality and tone, which can help them improve their technique and musicality. In-person piano lessons do not offer the same opportunity for students to hear and evaluate their own sound quality and tone through recordings. This feature also allows for easy review and feedback from the teacher, helping students to progress more quickly.[6]

[6] Johnson, Carol. "Teaching Music Online: Changing Pedagogical Approach When Moving to the Online Environment." International Journal of Music Education: Research 35, no. 1 (2017): 67-78.

While there are various challenges within sound quality when teaching piano online, there are several solutions that have helped pedagogues, including the use of quality equipment, technology, and recording, as well as proper communication. [7]

2. Piano Technique:

When strategizing how to teach piano technique online, several blockers are immediately faced. At least four challenges can be identified. First, it can be difficult to monitor students' hand placement and proper body posture, which could potentially have the ability to impact a student's technique over the long run, especially a student who's first time taking piano lessons, is virtually.[8] Second, latency issues on virtual platforms can make it difficult to keep students in time with the music and slightly disrupt the flow of the lesson. Third, it may be challenging for teachers to provide physical demonstrations and hands-on corrections, so alternative solutions are required.[9] Finally, issues with sound quality, as previously discussed, can make it difficult to accurately assess a student's tone and dynamic control, which are also key aspects of developing foundational technique.

Maintaining proper posture, finger, and hand placement is crucial for developing a well-developed technique when playing the piano. When teaching online, this can be challenging for teachers to have an accurate view of their students' technique. Teachers

[7] Chen, Sheng-Ying, and Shih-Hua Chen. "The Effectiveness of Online Piano Teaching during the COVID-19 Pandemic." Frontiers in Psychology 12 (2021): 649662. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.649662.
[8] Greher, Gena. "Virtual Piano Instruction for the College Learner." Journal of Music, Technology & Education 7, no. 1 (2014): 25-37.
[9] Gudenau, Sarah. "The Challenges and Benefits of Virtual Piano Lessons During the Pandemic." The Oakland Post, 28 October 2020, https://oaklandpostonline.com/41958/features/the-challenges-and-benefits-of-virtual-piano-lessons-during-the-pandemic/.

may find it difficult to monitor students' positions especially fully, especially if the camera angle is not set up correctly or if the student is not positioned at the right distance from the screen. And even if the student positions the camera in an ideal distance and angle (ie: from the right side of the piano and piano bench, or overhead panoramic view of the keys), it may still be difficult for a piano teacher to assess their students' accurate technique and provide accurate feedback, because online platforms may not allow for a full view of the student's body and hand positioning.[10] In the survey question "How do you address technique in online piano teaching," 90% of teachers reiterated the importance of being as clear and direct as possible, giving verbal movement instructions in a way where adjustments were made step by step. By communicating, asking questions about how the student is positioning, the teacher would not only be able to examine how the student's posture looks, but also how they feel as well.

In terms of latency issues on virtual platforms, all teachers on the survey responded that playing the same passage alongside their student was near to impossible. To address how students can play in time with their music, a solution discussed was having the student play back-and-forth with the teacher. In a form of call-and-response, but the "response" being the same passage the teacher played, the student would be able to emulate what the teacher is playing, rhythmically and dynamically.[11] An additional solution suggested was asking the student to sing the melody along with what they were playing. The teacher mentioned that their students

[10] Bellelo, Rebecca Carter. "Musical Achievement and Attitude of Beginning Piano Students in a Synchronous Videoconferencing Lesson Environment." Journal of Research in Music Education, vol. 65, no. 3, 2017, pp. 345-358.

[11] Bulletproof Musician. "Tim Topham on How to Maximize Your Effectiveness When Teaching Lessons Online." bulletproofmusician.com, 6 Apr. 2020, https://bulletproofmusician.com/tim-topham-on-how-to-maximize-your-effectiveness-when-teaching-lessons-online/.

felt that by using this method, they felt the teacher was physically next to them. Andrea Miller, piano teacher and entrepreneur of Music School Startup, conducts rhythm exercises that involve clapping a specific passage back and forth with students to address latency issues.

To effectively show physical demonstrations and hands-on corrections, a few teachers incorporated certain schools of teaching that were more easily executable for teaching piano virtually, especially students who are starting their first piano lessons online. An example is Katie O-Rourke, a piano teacher who has been specializing in online piano teaching 2 years prior to March 2020. She uses the Feldenkrais method in her teaching, which is a form of somatic movement education that integrates the mind, body, and psyche through verbally administered cues.[12] This method involves increasing awareness of body movements to allow for more efficient movements within the body. Katie teaches movements through sensory awareness, which allows students to have the opportunity to put together their pieces themselves. It is more of a “student-centered, exploratory learning process.” Additionally, another school of teaching incorporated is the use of the Piano Safari Method for beginning piano students. This method offers a sequenced, intervallic approach of learning for students, which places great emphasis on technical exercises that are animal-themed, demonstrating the basic motions of piano technique. Students are able to understand how much arm weight to use, because of visual and verbal descriptions, for example.[13] Utilizing this curriculum,

[12] Buchanan, P.A. (2015). Feldenkrais Method. In P. Ennever, L. C. Hyer, & E. M. Brown (Eds.), International Encyclopedia of Rehabilitation. https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/medicine-and-dentistry/feldenkrais-method

[13] Monroe, Martha Frances. "A Descriptive Study of the Faber Series Piano Adventures and Its Implications for Piano Pedagogy." PhD diss., University of Mississippi, 2012.

Andrea was able to prioritize technique in her piano teaching curriculum and her students would be able to understand and execute technical concepts, especially new piano beginners.

Sound quality is another challenge that can affect the accuracy of assessing a student's tone and dynamic control, which are aspects of developing a holistic technique. How can students hear if they are using the correct amount of weight to produce an optimal tone? How can they decipher how to control their dynamics?[14] As discussed in the section about sound quality, teachers can address this issue by using high-quality microphones and encouraging students to record themselves and listen back to their playing. A way to emphasize the importance of touch and feel on the keys remotely, is to describe to students to pay attention to the way they are interacting with the keys. An idea described in the survey is the use of technology to provide audio and visual feedback. An example of this is when a particular teacher used a soundwave software that allowed students to see a visual representation of the sound wave being produced. This graphic can give visual/audio cues and help students make adjustments to improve control of their tone.

Overall, teaching piano technique online presents unique challenges that require careful consideration and adaptation. By addressing issues such as posture monitoring, latency, physical demonstrations, and sound quality, teachers can help students develop a strong foundation in piano technique despite limitations of the online environment.

[14] Smith, Stacy Leigh. "A Comparison of the Effectiveness of Traditional Piano Instruction and Computer-Assisted Instruction in the Development of Elementary Piano Performance Skills." PhD diss., University of Mississippi, 2001. https://egrove.olemiss.edu/etd/1027/.

3. Communication and Rapport:

Effective communication is crucial for successful piano lessons regardless of teaching in person or online, but teaching online can certainly pose challenges that make communication more difficult. In the survey, respondents identified several communication difficulties, including conveying instructions or explanations to students and also ensuring that students understood the musical explanations given. Lastly, teachers also faced issues with feeling disconnected from lack of in-person interaction, which made it difficult to gauge student engagement and understanding.

One of the main challenges in communication identified by piano teachers on the survey was conveying instructions and ensuring that students understood musical explanations, especially with younger students. There is a limit on providing visual demonstrations and receiving feedback, which can possibly slow down the learning process. This can be further complicated if there are language barriers between the teacher and the student.[15] Teachers need to ensure that they are clear and concise in their instructions and provide extra support and resources to students who may be struggling to understand. One respondent mentioned the “importance of being a better communicator to teach any subject online, not just piano, and to practice articulating as specifically as possible, everything that is physical or auditory.” This teacher attributed becoming a better in-person piano teacher from having to practice these skills online.

[15] Callahan, Michael. “Teaching and Learning Undergraduate Music Theory at the Keyboard: Challenges, Solutions, and Impacts.” Music Theory Online, 21, No. 3 (2015): 1-21. http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/1845754029?accountid=12085

Another tip suggested breaking down instructions into short, digestible bits of information, as this ensured students were able to follow along, and communication wasn't broken.

The second challenge in communication is interpreting students' emotions and moods. It is essential to understand students' emotional states to adjust teaching approaches and provide appropriate support. However, online teaching can make it challenging to read nonverbal cues or body language, which can impact the teacher's ability to respond to students' emotional needs. For example, if a student seems to be frustrated or confused during a lesson, it may be difficult for a teacher to recognize this if they cannot see the student's facial expressions in real time, or their complete body language.[16] To overcome this challenge, a suggestion made from the survey was that teachers need to establish a supportive and safe learning environment that encourages open communication between themselves and their students. Examples of this include actively listening to what students say, asking follow-up questions, and using open-ended prompts, which was able to encourage students to express their thoughts and feelings. When students are pushing out extra verbal communication as well, teachers can better understand their students' emotional states, which can help them adjust their teaching approaches and provide appropriate support. Additionally, while teaching online can make it tricky to read nonverbal cues and body language, there are still ways to gauge a student's emotional state. For example, piano teachers can take note of a student's tone of voice, the pace at which they speak, or even the language they use.

[16] Hamond, Luciana, Evangelos Himonides, and Graham Welch. "The Nature of Feedback in Higher Education Studio-Based Piano Learning and Teaching with the Use of Digital Technology." Journal of Music, Technology & Education 13, no. 1 (2020): 33-56. doi: https://doi.org/10.1386/jmte_00015_1.

By paying extra attention to these vices, piano teachers were able to gain insight into their students' emotional states and make any necessary adjustments to their teaching approaches. However, a plus noted from the survey, was that teachers noticed that students were much more relaxed not having to rush from one location to another. 50% of teachers reported on their students seeming “more interested, positive, and upbeat in online piano lessons, than when studying piano in person.” This was largely attributed to the dependency between the teacher-student relationship for support, companionship, and entertainment.

Lastly, online teaching can lead to a lack of in-person interaction, which can make it difficult for teachers to feel like they are establishing connections with their students. This can impact motivation and engagement, making it challenging for students to remain committed to the learning process. To overcome this challenge, teachers need to use creative approaches to build a connection with their students. For example, using icebreakers and conversation starters at the start of each lesson can help establish a more relaxed and friendly atmosphere that encourages students to participate in the learning process.[17] A few teachers in the survey mentioned providing regular feedback and encouragement outside of lessons, which they found was an effective way to help students feel supported and valued. By giving feedback to audio recordings, or providing sample recordings that are specific, actionable, and timely, teachers can help students understand their strengths and weaknesses and set goals for improvement prior to the lesson.

[17] Riley, H., MacLeod, R. B., & Libera, M. (2016). Low Latency Audio Video: Potentials for Collaborative Music Making through Distance Learning. Update: Applications of Research in Music Education, 34(3), 15-23.

In conclusion, effective communication plays a significant role in successful piano teaching and learning, irrespective of whether in person or online. While teaching online has its set of challenges, such as difficulties in conveying instructions, interpreting emotions and moods of students, and feeling disconnected from lack of in-person interaction, teachers need to establish a supportive and safe learning environment, use creative teaching approaches, encourage open communication, and provide regular feedback and encouragement.[18] By doing so, the piano teachers were able to help their students learn and progress successfully, even in the online teaching environment.

4. Engagement and Motivation:

The data from the surveys and interviews reveal several difficulties students face with engagement and motivation when learning piano online. Firstly, students may lack structure and routine, leading to a lack of motivation and disengagement. Second, without in-person feedback, students may struggle to stay motivated and may not receive the same level of personalized attention and support as they would in a physical classroom. This can lead to feelings of isolation and discouragement. Third, students may struggle to connect with their online teacher, as they do not have the same opportunity for casual conversation or building a personal relationship as they would in-person. These difficulties can have a significant impact on student progress and learning outcomes.

One of the most prominent difficulties discussed in the surveys and interviews that students could face, is the feeling of lack of motivation and engagement, because

[18] Delorko, Ratko. The Nuts and Bolts of Online Piano Teaching: Long Distance Teaching Demystified. Germany: tradition, 2022.

of the lack of structure and routine in online piano teaching. Because online learning is often more flexible, allowing students to set their own schedules and learn at their own pace, it can make it easy for students to procrastinate or put off practicing, leading to a lack of progress and a decrease in motivation.[19] However, a teacher in the survey mentioned that students were "more responsible, for instance in note-taking, and way more independent and willing to take the initiative with their own practice routine," as they had more time on their hands from being home. A few recommendations discussed to ensure consistent motivation and engagement in online piano lessons include: requiring students to send the teacher recordings of small musical sections prior to lessons, and in turn, the teacher sending a list of voice notes as immediate feedback to the recordings. One teacher discussed switching a mode of instruction every 2-3 minutes - for example - switching between sharing a screen of a piece of music, to a top piano overlay, to a side angle of the teacher, to boost concentration during the lesson.

The second difficulty that was discussed in the surveys and interviews that students face is the lack of in-person feedback, which can lead to feelings of isolation and discouragement. Without the ability to receive immediate feedback and correction from teachers, students were reported to struggle to identify and correct mistakes in their playing by themselves. This reportedly led to some frustration and a decrease in motivation to continue practicing, as discussed in the previous section. One teacher, however, mentioned that although they missed being able to point to pages and keys in lessons, their students had a chance to level up their ability to navigate the score and keyboard independently. There was a realization that the "in-person assistance got in

[19] Pike, Pamela. Dynamic Group-Piano Teaching: Transforming Group Theory Into Teaching Practice. United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis, 2017.

the way of the students' understanding." Interrupting the student occasionally when they were in the middle of playing would help contribute to a feeling of simultaneous or immediate feedback.[20]

The third challenge discussed among engagement and motivation that students face when taking online piano lessons is the struggle to feel connected with their online teacher, which can lead to a lack of trust and engagement in the learning process. Without the same opportunities for casual conversation or building a personal connection as they would in-person, students could feel disconnected from their teacher and the learning process.[21] A teacher reported intentionally setting aside at least 5 minutes in the beginning and end of class chatting to the student about anything outside of their lesson plan, to allow the student to feel more connected to the teachers. As an additional way to overcome the challenge of feeling connected online, at least 80% of online piano teachers in the surveys or interviews mentioned creating online recitals hosted on Zoom for their students, to provide an opportunity for the students to perform for each other. The recitals were either held as livestreams, or pre-recorded videos being played. Students were given opportunities to provide supportive feedback in the Zoom chat. On a similar note, two teachers conducted studio classes online where students had the opportunity to give each other real-time feedback and ask the teacher questions. By fostering a sense of community and connection, students can feel more engaged and motivated to continue learning and improving their pianistic skills.

[20] Crappell, Courtney. Teaching Piano Pedagogy: A Guidebook for Training Effective Teachers. United States: Oxford University Press, 2019.
[21] Increasing Productivity and Efficiency in Online Teaching. United States: IGI Global, 2016.

5. Distractions and Environment:

Teaching piano online poses several challenges related to students' environments and distractions. One difficulty is the lack of a dedicated space for pupils to have their piano lesson, as students may have trouble locating a quiet space to practice and may become distracted by outside noises. A second difficulty is the possibility for students to become sidetracked by technological devices or other activities occurring in their environment, which can make it difficult for them to pay attention and focus during lessons. Lastly, students likely do not have access to the same resources they would have as they would in an in-person lesson, such as a metronome, or supplemental pedagogical tools, which can make it more difficult for them to progress effectively. These difficulties can impact the quality of the virtual lessons and can make it challenging for students to advance in their piano studies remotely.

The first challenge ensuring that the student has a quiet space to take their piano lesson can be particularly difficult for students who live in noisy environments and most commonly, share living spaces with others. The lack of privacy and quiet space can create distractions, and students may struggle to hear themselves playing the piano or to focus on the lesson material. Students diagnosed with ADHD, for example, would spend longer periods of time sitting with new concepts due to more external sounds and movement incurring in their home.[22] According to the survey conducted with piano teachers, Gillian Geraldine, owner of Gillian Geraldine Studio in Surabaya, Indonesia,

[22] David Mullins, William. "A Survey of Piano Teachers Whose Students Have ADHD: Their Training, Experiences, and Best Practices." OhioLINK. Ohio State University, June 8, 2016. https://www.ohiolink.edu/content/ohiolink_electronic_theses_and_dissertations.

who specializes in working with pre-college pianists, mentioned that her “biggest challenge for her younger students was being able to maintain eye contact with her students.” A solution that seemed to work was having parents sit with the student to help the student focus, even though outside noises or interruptions from other family members. According to this study by Brain Balance, the optimal amount of time 4 year old students can focus for are for 8-12 minutes, for 6 year olds: 12-18 minutes, for 8 year olds: 16-24 minutes, for 10 year olds: 20-30 minutes, for 12 year olds: 24-36 minutes, for 14 year olds: 28-42 minutes, and for 16 year olds: 32-48 minutes.[23] In traditional in-person piano lessons, time is almost “constant” while learning is a variable, but in online piano lessons, time acts as a variable while the learning is constant.[24] When teachers in the surveys and interviews communicated their expectations about having parents ensure their children had a designated, quiet space for the piano lesson, occasionally checking up on their child, if not sitting with them during the class, the lesson often was as successful as an in-person lesson.

Another difficulty is the potential for students to become easily distracted by their devices or video conferencing tools in their environment. In an online piano lesson, students may be more prone to checking their phone or engaging in other activities on their computer during the lesson, which can hinder their focus and attention. One particular teacher noticed that a few of their younger students (ages 6-8) were playing around with video filters and sound effects on Zoom. As mentioned previously, teachers

[23] “Normal Attention Span Expectations by Age.” Brain Balance Achievement Centers. Brain Balance, 2023. https://www.brainbalancecenters.com/blog/normal-attention-span-expectations-by-age#:~:text.
[24] Noonoo, Stephen. “How Long Should a Remote School Be?” EdSurge. EdSurge, May 4, 2020. https://www.edsurge.com/news/2020-05-04-how-long-should-a-remote-school-day-be-there-s-no-consensus.

may need to set clear expectations for students regarding their attention and engagement during lessons and integrate activities or exercises to help students stay engaged and focused, away from technological distractions.

Lastly, students may not have access to the same resources they would have in an in-person lesson, such as physical metronomes, flashcards, whiteboards, teacher notebooks, new sheet music, etc. While some materials can be provided digitally, others may be more difficult to access. Ory Shihor, founder of the Ory Shihor Institute, a classical piano performance training program for gifted young pianists, utilizes the Scribble Together Whiteboard App to share music and make annotations and notes that the student can also annotate and archive as well. A variety of games and apps such as the Piano Maestro App, Note Rush App, and Rhythm Randomizer were used by Diana Dumlavwalla for her students. In a question about how lessons were hindered by a lack of technological resources, a few comments about equity and its effect on retrieving tools were noted. Some teachers did not feel that they could ask parents to purchase more equipment. One piano teacher in particular mentioned in a few instances “telling their student to use their piano lesson tuition on buying equipment and resources for their online piano lesson.” By doing so, the teacher allowed the students to have access to resources that would enable them to have a “close-to-in-person-lesson.” 80% of respondents in the surveys and interviews simply made the most of their students’ environments and resources, but two teachers mentioned “requiring that students meet a certain technological standard before proceeding with lessons.” By addressing these resource limitations, teachers were able to help students to have more useful resources and improve their learning outcomes in online piano lessons.

In conclusion, the difficulties of finding a quiet space to have online piano lessons, dealing with technological distractions, and having a limited access to resources can make the online piano class a daunting task for young students. However, with the involvement and support of parents or guardians, these challenges can be addressed. Parents can help create a conducive learning environment at home by helping their children find minimizing distractions during lessons and support their progress.

6. Parental Involvement and Support:

Parent support and involvement in online piano lessons can be greatly beneficial for students. According to the responses as a result of the survey, the first of the two main advantages of parent participation in online piano lessons include increased motivation and accountability for the student. Parents can help encourage their children to stay on track during their lessons, practice more frequently, and provide positive reinforcement. Additionally, respondents of the survey and interviews found that parent involvement could also help facilitate communication between the teacher, student, and parent, which can lead to a better understanding of lesson goals and progress. Overall, parental involvement and support can improve childrens' learning experiences and help them advance more successfully in their piano studies.

Parental engagement and support can help students stay on track with their learning in virtual piano lessons by motivating them to practice on a more regular basis. In addition to setting up a regular practice routine and assisting their children in sticking to it, parents can help offer words of encouragement and supportive feedback. For

example, a parent can sit with their child during virtual piano lessons and provide feedback to the child after the lesson, such as identifying areas where improvement is needed or praising their child for a job well done. This can help increase the child's confidence to continue practicing and improving. This is an added benefit for online piano lessons - the convenience for parents to be able to listen in on their child's lessons at any given time. Jannie Lo Burdeti, piano teacher based in Vancouver, BC, utilizes this to her students' advantages by asking parents "to check shoulders, hold the arm, touch the wrist." By working together to direct the student to practice more efficiently, this allows parents to help their children to set goals and track their progress over time, which can provide a higher sense of accomplishment without putting the bulk of the work on the parent and expecting them to physically sit in every piano lesson.[25]

Parental involvement can also help better communication between the student and teacher. For example, they can be a necessary buffer between a demanding teacher and a more vulnerable student.[26] Parents can almost serve as mediators between the student and teacher in online piano classes, especially within young students, relaying any questions the child may have if concepts are not demonstrated clearly, or if sound is cutting out. More than 60% of respondents involved their students' parents in online piano lessons in some shape or form. One teacher discussed how a particular student was eating chips during their piano lesson - and a parent was not present for the lesson. By taking an active role in their child's virtual piano lesson,

[25] Wise, Nicole., Rosenfeld, Dr. Alvin. The Overscheduled Child: Avoiding the Hyper-Parenting Trap. United Kingdom: St. Martin's Press, 2010.
[26] Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly., Rathunde, Kevin., Whalen, Samuel. Talented Teenagers: The Roots of Success and Failure. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

parents can help set their child up for an enriching positive learning experience as one would have in an in-person piano lesson.

For children to succeed in online piano classes, parental support and involvement are crucial. Parents may assist their children to stay on track with their learning and build a love for playing the piano by offering motivation, encouragement, and goal setting. Additionally, parental engagement can make it easier for the student and instructor to communicate online, ensuring that the student's needs are addressed and that they are getting the support and direction they need to succeed. Ultimately, the team collaboration between teacher and student helped enable a successful online piano lesson experience.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

As a piano teacher who has been used to teaching in-person for so many years, I have personally witnessed the impacts that technology has had on our craft. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit and we were forced to teach remotely, it was a sudden and unexpected shift that left many of us scrambling to find ways to adapt. As we tried to make the transition to online teaching, questions about accessibility, resources, and best practices arose. When navigating this new landscape, I became increasingly curious about the various solutions and resources available to piano teachers. What was the most efficient way to teach piano online? How could we maintain the high standards of teaching that we had previously upheld in in-person lessons? How could we continue to provide quality lessons to young students or in group settings?

These questions formed the purpose of why I was so interested in this topic, which aimed to explore the challenges and potential solutions of teaching piano virtually. Through surveys and virtual interviews with nine piano pedagogues, including some of the most prominent online piano educators and professors from renowned schools, it was such a rewarding experience to gain insight about best practices for teaching piano online and the necessary steps for maintaining a completely remote studio.

The research's conclusions have been eye-opening. Despite the challenges, teaching piano online is not only feasible, but it can be done with quality close to that of

in-person teaching. Furthermore, this research has shown that music educators have access to a multitude of resources and technology that can help us to navigate virtual instruction, even when it is not a necessity. I believe that the shift toward technology in our field will only be beneficial and rewarding for all teachers and students, as long as we embrace this change.

Personally, this research has been incredibly rewarding for me. As someone who has been teaching piano for many years, it has been fascinating to explore this new frontier in music education and to see how technology can be used to enhance our teaching and reach new students. I hope that my research can be of use to other music educators as they continue to navigate virtual instruction in a post-pandemic world.

Appendices

Appendix A: Survey Questions

1. How many years have you taught piano online?
2. Were you teaching piano online prior to the pandemic? If so, how long?
3. If you taught online prior to the pandemic, what drove you to do that?
4. What age range of students do you work with?
5. When transitioning into online teaching from March - September 2020, what differences did you notice in the quality of students' lesson preparation, style, and musicianship?
6. If you were new to online teaching from March 2020, what steps did you take to work on sound quality and tone production in your students? Were there technological steps you took to enhance sound quality during the lesson?
7. Did you notice changes in mood levels or personality during the transition to online teaching? If so, can you elaborate?
8. How many of your students would you say (percentage wise) preferred online teaching, and how many preferred to go back into in-person teaching?
9. What are the advantages for students taking online piano lessons?
10. What issues did/do you personally come across when teaching online?
11. Did teaching online alter your in person teaching? If so, how?
12. Did the experience of teaching online change your current in-person teaching approach, if so, how?

13. Did you feel in your transition to online teaching in the first 5-6 months, you found yourself using more energy, same energy, or less energy as teaching in person? And why? (For example: did you become more introverted, or extroverted/ less/more energy, talking louder, shouting etc...)
14. Select your level of physical and mental fatigue after a day of teaching online during the beginning of the pandemic compared to in person teaching:
    a) I was more fatigued after a day of online teaching than in-person teaching.
    b) I was more fatigued after a day of in-person teaching than online teaching.
15. Where do you teach? School/home? Please describe your teaching setup and any video conferencing platforms you use.
16. Describe technological resources you use to teach online. You may link any products you use, such as cameras, lighting, microphones, recorders, pedals, etc.
17. If you had multiple video angles, did you find this more valuable or less valuable than in-person teaching. (For context: A particular camera angle can help a student focus exactly on where to look.)
18. Please list out any teaching supplements or resources you have used to aid in online teaching. (apps, rhythm, sight singing, folders, etc.)
19. How do you address the each of these problems in online teaching:
    a. Sound quality
    b. Technique
    c. Disembodiment from students in terms of personality

20. Pedagogically, teachers have the opportunity to play along with a student on a second piano or on another octave of the same piano to demonstrate. How do you address this issue when teaching online?
21. How did online teaching impact your flow of lesson planning? (For example: starting with scales, vs. pieces, or starting with rhythm warm-ups...etc.)
22. How do/did you handle administration within your online teaching? (ex: billing, scheduling)
23. How did you handle studio recitals? (For example: Zoom watch parties, pre-recorded videos, a mixture...etc.)
24. What marketing techniques do you use/have you used for your studio when teaching online?
25. How did you feel about your students' home setup for their online piano lessons? How many lessons were hindered by a lack of technological resources? Please list any issues related to equity, financial hardship? How did you address this (For example: scholarship…etc.)?
26. Rate your experience teaching piano online from 1 to 10.

Appendix B: Survey Responses

Table 1

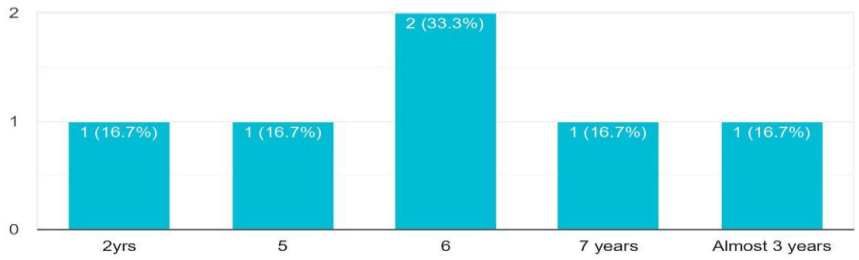
Online Piano Teaching Survey

6 responses

Publish analytics

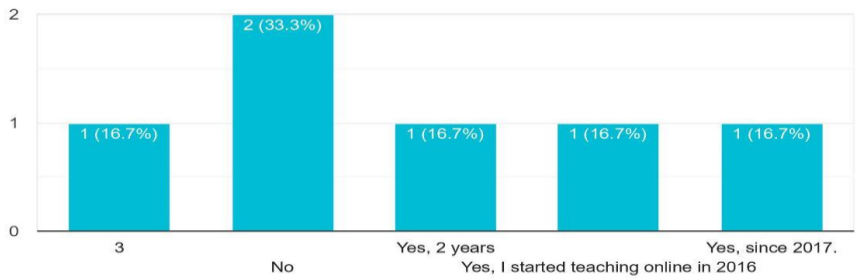
How many years have you taught piano online? Copy

6 responses



Were you teaching piano online prior to the pandemic? If so, how long? Copy

6 responses



If you taught online prior to the pandemic, what drove you to do that?

6 responses

Logistics; if the student could not make it to my house due to snow or illness.

I was teaching students who lived in other cities and countries

N/A

I enjoyed it, my students enjoyed it, and I found it to be much more convenient. Also, it was easier to increase my income when teaching online.

I had moved from Canada to the U.S.. I had about 5 students who still wanted to study with me that year and so we decided to try online lessons. During that time, I didn't intend for the arrangement to be permanent. I felt that online lessons would help provide them a smoother transition to a new teacher.

.

What age range of students do you work with?

6 responses

7-adults

mostly 8 -18. Some collage age and a few adults

4 to around 60

I have a few students who are between 10-18 but most of my students are older adults.

I have worked with students of all ages (from as young as 4 to senior citizens). The youngest student I have taught online is 7.

4-29yo

When transitioning into online teaching from March - September 2020, what differences did you notice in the quality of students' lesson preparation, style, and musicianship?

6 responses

I noticed they were more engaged and interested in music, and more prepared.

Students had a harder time grasping nuances and needed to become more self reliant.

It was easy for them to be less musical because my energy wasn't as palpable to them being online. Some students were much more prepared because all their in-person extracurricular/sports were cancelled! Others had a very hard time with their listening skills—especially those who are kinetic and rely more on the physical contact/seeing my hand right next to theirs while playing.

I transitioned much earlier than this. When I did transition, I immediately noticed how students were not self sufficient at all. They were accustomed to relying on all my physical cues and my presence in the lesson. I realized that I was doing too much for them and stopping them from being able to do basic things like count, find their position, feel pulse, etc. I did not notice any difference in the quality of student's lesson preparation or musicianship.

I would say that the level and quality of students' preparation was about the same as when they were F2F. In terms of their style and musicianship, if I had been teaching them already for some time prior to the start of the pandemic, I feel like I could coach them effectively as we already had an established language for artistry. I found that students were quite motivated during this time period since they didn't have many other activities going on.

They're actually more responsible, for instance in note-taking, and in a way more independent and initiative with their own practice routine probably because they also have more time to be home and therefore no other choice to practice (LOL) i also use a lot of voice notes, which I think very dramatically, help my students during practice.



If you were new to online teaching from March 2020, what steps did you take to work on sound quality and tone production in your students? Were there technological steps you took to enhance sound quality during the lesson?

6 responses

I wasn't new, but I've worked continuously throughout the last few years to improve my setup. Initially I got an external mic and webcam, and used proper Zoom sound settings. I did a lot of experimentation with audio interfaces and mics as well. I also bought a new laptop in Dec. of 2020.

Luckily I was not new to it, but certainly took steps to enhance my setup right away. I used zoom from the beginning of the pandemic. I used multiple camera angles as well as external mics/wifi sound.

I looked into external mics but didn't find anything satisfying. I tried different apps and settled on facetime being the best quality (back then). Now, I think it is zoom.

I helped them work on balance between the hands, dynamics, phrasing, rubato, etc. In order to do this, I had to encourage some students to get a microphone, but most students using a MacBook or ipad didnt need to do anything. On my end, I invested in a set of stereo mics and a mixer for a 3rd mic for my voice as well as multiple cameras.

I was not new to online teaching during this time.

By using FaceTime instead of WhatsApp or zoom call, and recommending AirPods to some students. The sound quality was heavily dependent on the Internet connection that day.

Did you notice changes in mood levels or personality during the transition to online teaching? If so, can you elaborate?

6 responses

Students seemed more interested in piano than ever before and during lessons seemed very upbeat, although for the most part it was business as usual. It's impossible to separate the move online to the difficult life circumstances that occurred due to the pandemic. Things went smoothly, and I felt I was able to bond with my students even more because we really depended on each other for support, companionship, and entertainment.

It was clearly harder to keep the students' focus. I combated this by uploading my music to a whiteboard app, which allowed me the annotate the music in real time (as long as the student was using an ipad as well)

Yes. Some were more relaxed not having to rush from one place to another. But others were more bored and less engaged.

Many of my students really enjoyed the convenience and their general mood level seemed more positive. Perhaps that was because mine was more positive because I didn't have to drive anymore!

No, I did not notice changes in mood levels or personality during this transition to online teaching. For the most part, students were quite optimistic. I must also say, I don't have a large private studio (since university classroom teaching fills up most of my day). Therefore, I probably haven't encountered a large enough cross section of pre-college student population.

Yes, especially for younger students. They were a lot less attentive and easily distracted. Obviously eye contacts were not as present compared to Onsite lessons, so that was the biggest challenge for my younger students just to listen to what I have to say. Some of my younger students needed their parents assistance in order to focus through the whole lesson time. And they needed a lot of "rewards" to get them to stay interested.

How many of your students would you say (percentage wise) preferred online teaching, and how many preferred to go back into in-person teaching?

6 responses

I still teach online only and the majority of my students studied with me pre-pandemic. I only lost three students due to an explicit interest in in-person lessons and incidentally one has been trying to get back on my schedule. (I don't have space...)

All students preferred to switch back to in person lessons, as long s they are are able to geographically.

I would say about 95% prefer in-person. I only have one student who was in-person pre-pandemic, online during the pandemic, and now is still online (even though they live in the same city) because they prefer it like that—or should I say, the parent prefers it.

Most students preferred online, maybe 80-90%.

Nearly all my students have switched back to in-person lessons. I have two young students who are still online since they live in a different state. They also started lessons online.

10% preferred online due to locations. the 90% preferred in-person teaching.

What are the advantages for students taking online piano lessons?

6 responses

Lack of commute, can study with someone anywhere in the world, they get to learn from their instrument at home (which could also be a disadvantage if the instrument is poor), they have a safe little bubble to be in and it's more gentle from a sensory perspective. I wrote some other things here: https://www.awarenessthroughmusic.com/blog/2021/7/6/benefits-of-online-piano-lessons

The multiple angles are valuable, but I offer that during in person as well

No commute, save time; I know one family (not my student) who switched teachers to someone in New Jersey (they live in Vancouver)

With the right teacher, students taking online lessons are more self sufficient. Also, in my studio, since some musical nuance is lost, the focus shifts to playing more pieces and covering more material. As a result, the students become better readers and learn how to prepare material more quickly. Lastly, many students wouldn't have access to any lessons if it wasn't for the possibility of online because of where they live.

Convenience (no commute for them or parents). It may heighten their interest for a period of time since it's on a screen! It's possible for students to continue progress even if they have a little cold or for whatever reason, they can't get to their lesson. In some ways, they and the teacher are "forced" to concentrate more. The teacher has to find new and creative ways to describe things and so the student may get a more focused lesson. I also found that the students had everything ready at the start of their lessons (as opposed to in-person when they're sometimes just sauntering into the room). I really like how I can record the lessons for the students so that they have something to refer to during the week.

Obviously, they can save time, gas, and transportation expenses. I strongly feel online lessons are very beneficial for older students.

What issues did/do you personally come across when teaching online?

6 responses

I wish that I could have a full three dimensional view of the students movements, and I also wish I could use touch to clarify movement. The online sound quality and technology can be irritating, but I have an auditory sensitivity and other sensory sensitivities, so online is actually better for my nervous system!

Zoom sound quality (now much improved of course) was the No.1 issue. Weak connection due to students' slow internet connection.

Boredom, lack of interest…. I had one student (who is no longer my student) who was eating potato chips during the online lessons

The internet speed, particularly the upload speed on the student's end, was often a major problem. Students who had a strong internet connection using a recent device had no issue, but many students with older laptops and slower internet connections had to directly connect to their router or lessons were not possible.

Sound, sound, sound. It's still so tricky to ensure you're hearing what your students are actually playing. When going back to in-person lessons, I sometimes found that my students' tone quality wasn't what I was expecting.
Additionally the lack of the kinesthetic approach makes lessons very difficult especially when starting students out from the beginning level. It's possible to get to a certain point but I'm still don't think the online lesson can replace the in-person lesson without question.

Giving them real time example of sound quality, I think it needed for us to be in the same room to experience the better example of sound that I wanted to give. Also, with younger students I experience a lot of stiffness in their arms, and so not being able to meet and direct them in person has been a big struggle. Other than that, the unstable Internet connection is also a problem.

Did teaching online alter your in person teaching? If so, how?

6 responses

I haven't really returned to in-person teaching, so I don't know. The few occasions when I have taught in-person it feels like a pretty seamless continuation from how I teach online. In-person I tend to focus more specifically on movement and ensemble playing because it is more difficult to do these things online.

Yes, am able to utilize my multi camera + audio setup in order to capture all lessons and offer the videos to students.

The only thing I changed was prior to the pandemic, I used to just write the homework in their notebooks. During the pandemic, I had to start writing the homework in my own notebooks to keep track of what each student was doing and send them pictures of the homework. I have continued to do that so that for one thing, I don't spend that much time writing during the lesson and also, having my own record, I can refer to things easier for lesson planning.

I actually stopped in person teaching when I started teaching online. If I continued to teach in person, I would imagine that self sufficiency would become a major focus. I would really have to go out of my way to avoid giving students too much assistance with my cues.

I suppose my analogies and verbal explanations became more descriptive. I also feel like we have another option for having a lesson if either the student or teacher is feeling under the weather.

In a way, yes. I feel I had become more practical in delivering my points. I had become more strict and really lessen any small conversations that we would normally have in onsite lesson.

Did the experience of teaching online change your current in-person teaching approach, if so, how?

6 responses

I haven't really returned to in-person teaching, so I don't know. The few occasions when I have taught in-person it feels like a pretty seamless continuation from how I teach online. In-person I tend to focus more specifically on movement and ensemble playing because it is more difficult to do these things online.

Not really.

No

See above answer.

I think my answer for this question is the same as the previous question.

Yes. I continued using the voice notes and sometimes taking videos for my students to replay with that week, so that they would go back to the lesson fixing all of the stuff so we had talked about. I thought that was very very effective, and I continue doing it with my onsite students.



Table 2

Did you feel in your transition to online teaching in the first 5-6 months, you found yourself using more energy, same energy, or less energy as teaching in person? And why? (For example: did you become more introverted, or extroverted/ less/more energy, talking louder, shouting etc...)

6 responses

I think I expended more energy in my life in general , but this was because I was under stimulated and bored due to the pandemic shut down. I threw myself at my teaching out of necessity. During the lessons I think my energy output was the same or even less!

Yes, much more energy. Everything needed to be simplified and/or exaggerated

I was spending way more energy shouting at the device and trying to be extroverted to be engaging. It was very tiring. Now when I have online (long-distance) students or online because they are sick, I've gotten used to it.

Less energy over all because I didn't have to drive, but I do remember being more fatigued before I learned how to manage my technology.

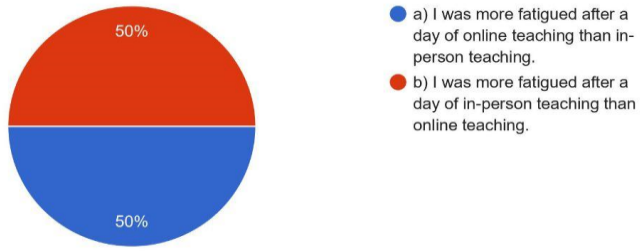
I was definitely using more energy and talking louder. I felt like I had to come to life for them through the screen (I still feel that way).

I feel like I'm using less energy during online lesson. When I went back to teaching in person, I was three times more exhausted (socially & physically) and it took some time for me to adjust.

Select your level of physical and mental fatigue after a day of teaching online during the beginning of the pandemic compared to in person teaching:

Copy

6 responses



Where do you teach? School/home? Please describe your teaching setup and any video conferencing platforms you use.

6 responses

I teach at home using Zoom.

My own studio

I teach at home. I use zoom and facetime and signal for my current students.

I teach in a studio that I created specifically for teaching online in my basement. I have a grand piano with a side profile mirror less camera and an overhead webcam, 2 stereo mics near the outside of the piano, a mic to capture my voice, and a mixer to mix the mics and send it to my laptop which is a 2021 MacBook Pro.

For private lessons, I teach at home. I use Zoom, a laptop, Yeti Mic and external speaker. I usually log in with my phone as well so that I can provide students with an above-the-hands view.

Home. I had set up my studio inside my house. I'm mostly use zoom or FaceTime for online teaching.

Describe technological resources you use to teach online. You may link any products you use, such as cameras, lighting, microphones, recorders, pedals, etc.

6 responses

I use the Logitech Brio as my front facing camera, and a Logitech C930e as an overhead camera. I use the Scarlett Focusrite 2i2 interface and AT 2020 mic as my only mic. I have a Kawaii digital piano that goes directly into the interface for piano sound. I use my iPad and Apple Pencil too!

Video: 3 Sony a6600 with G master lenses. 2 Sony FDR AX100 camcorders (one overhead using a C-stand). Blackmagic ATEM extreme ISO video switcher, Elgato streamdeck XL (for running different scenes). Apple mini M1 (running everything audio and video). LG32 with ergo stand (computer monitor). Lighting: Aputure 300c Nova, 2 aputure 120D, 2 falcon eyes RX. Audio: 2 Schoepps mics (CMC MK2) and 2 DPA mics (4011), 2 Sennheiser G4 lavaliers. Grace Design M108 mic preamp (all mics powered through it), Merging Technologies Anubis audio interface. Barefoot Microstack 45 monitors/subs (connected to the Anubis). Hedd Headphones (heddphones). sony 4K 46' TVs (one for zoom, the other to monitor the ATEM). I believe that's it.

Just ipad

Audio Technica 2035 mics, Audio Technica shotgun Mic, Yamaha 10 channel mixer, MacBook Pro 2021, A6100 mirror less camera and cam link and a Steam Deck to switch camera views, manage lesson timers, and start and end recordings. I also used an IPad for my own sheet music view and this was sent to the student as well.

Standard laptop, Yeti Mic

Ipad, iphone, tripod.

If you had multiple video angles, did you find this more valuable or less valuable than in-person teaching. (For context: A particular camera angle can help a student focus exactly on where to look.)

6 responses

No

Yes...I agree with "A particular camera angle can help a student focus on exactly where to look". I can't tell you if this is more or less helpful than in-person, however, the young children I started online play with very beautiful pianistic gestures and I never explicitly taught these things. I feel they were able to observe and naturally emulate more when they were shown exactly what to see on the screen. Perhaps it is more helpful?

Yes this is very helpful as discussed above

More valuable. I created a simple setup where I was able to press a button to change camera views from a side profile view, a sheet music view (from my iPad), an overhead view, and a view that combined all 3. I mostly left this final view up when teaching.

In-person teaching would still be more beneficial than multiple camera angles.

Please list out any teaching supplements or resources you have used to aid in online teaching. (apps, rhythm, sight singing, folders, etc.)

6 responses

I mostly use Zoom screen share, gmail, Noteflight, sometimes Google Docs...nothing fancy. I was already using the same apps I use pre pandemic. I do use YouTube more in lessons than before.

Scribble Together whiteboard app

Nothing specific for online

I used a program called OBS to put the camera views together and send my video feed to Zoom. I used Craft and then Notion for student notes and documents. I used a billing and scheduling application called Fons.

https://www.rhythmrandomizer.com/; Shared Google docs for lesson assignments; Youtube for lesson recording playlists; Note Rush app; Piano Maestro app

Metronome app. Imslp. Docscan.

How do you address the each of these problems in online teaching:
1. Sound quality
2. Technique
3. Disembodiment from students in terms of personality

6 responses

1. By sound quality do you mean the students tone quality or the tech issue of online sound quality? I can hear tone production differences just as clearly online as I can in person and I address it the same way as I did before.

2. I have grown more skilled at giving verbal movement instructions out of necessity. I am also a Feldenkrais practitioner so this is also just very natural for me now because I teach Feldenkrais movement classes too! I teach movement first through improving sensory awareness. I actually like the fact that students have to really put the pieces together themselves. It's a very student centered, exploratory learning process.

3. I'm not sure if I understand this. If you are talking about the fact that we are not in the room together, this is actually a benefit for me. I used to get so overwhelmed by all of the people coming in and out and I am able to perform better as I am less overwhelmed. No one has complained about this aspect of online lessons and I get the sense that this could also suit my students for the very same reason. On the rare occasion that we do see each other IRL it's a special treat.

I actually forgot how convenient it can be to point to the page and to keys in lessons, but in the absence of that students have really had to level up their ability to navigate the score and keyboard independently. This is a HUGE bonus. I didn't realize how much I was assisting them before and that the assistance got in the way of their understanding.

I feel remarkably connected to my students despite the screens between us. Most of us have been working together for 2-5 years and I think the continuity of our relationships help. I occasionally socialize with my adult students too.

1. Zoom music setting + equipment above. 2. Via the different camera angles. 3. By acting and speaking in a more animated manner

1. I hold my ipad to show my touch up close, 2. I often ask the parent to check the shoulders, hold the arm, touch the wrist, 3. I'm not sure what that means

For sound quality, I just had to show students how to get "original sound" in Zoom. If they had a low quality laptop mic, I suggested an inexpensive replacement. As for technique, I developed a curriculum that students worked through and I listened for certain things. I had students use the metronome a lot, count out loud, and play hands separate so that I could check for mastery. As for disembodiment, I was able to deal with this by simply taking to the student and understanding that we are all human. However, some students just couldn't really

get into it, and I recognized that piano or my particular teaching style wasn't right for that student, and I always let those students go.

Sound quality - students usually submit video recordings of their repertoire before their lessons and during the week so that I can hear how they sound without having to worry about bandwith and Zoom.

Technique - I try to be as clear, direct and descriptive as possible. I ask them to make adjustments step by step.

Disembodiment - Hmm, I have not had a student who has expressed this issue to me.

1. sound quality is heavily dependent on the Internet connection. 2. Technique is a challenge to give example of because of limitations of camera angles and width. Eventually, it's doable, but it's just taking more time, rather than when I show it in person. 3. They are less attentive, and i guess not treating me as a "person" teacher but rather "online". I can't find the words to describe it but they sure feel different. I am personally closer to my onsite students rather than my online students cuz most of my onsite students open up more about their personal life.

Pedagogically, teachers have the opportunity to play along with a student on a second piano or on another octave of the same piano to demonstrate. How do you address this issue when teaching online?

6 responses

They still can see me demonstrate online just the same!

I haven't been successful doing so (yet). Perhaps this will improve overtime.

I don't

I do not attempt to play at the same time. We just play back and forth. This is one of the downsides of online teaching. However, I don't feel like this is a big deal. As far as demonstration goes, I feel online teaching is very well suited for that.

I would ask students to sing along while they're playing. Sometimes I would ask students to sing and conduct themselves as we talked about phrasing. Then they would transfer this to their own playing. It kind of helped them feel that I was there with them.

By sending them a video recording.

How did online teaching impact your flow of lesson planning? (For example: starting with scales, vs. pieces, or starting with rhythm warm-ups...etc.)

6 responses

I pace lessons the same as I did before moving online.

Hasn't really impacted it.

Same

I took good notes on students and used the lesson time to deal with what they needed. This became much easier once I developed a curriculum so that students and myself always new what was needed and what was next.

I suppose my lessons became a bit more efficient. However, other than that, there was no difference in the flow or order of the lesson.

It does not impact my flow at all.

How do/did you handle administration within your online teaching? (For example: billing, scheduling)

6 responses

It's all the same! They even still mail me checks. No one complains!

MMS app

Same

I ultimately chose an application called Fons which allowed students to self-schedule according to my office hours and bill in very flexible ways. Once I started using this, I simply didn't have to worry about billing, administration, or scheduling.

I changed to only online payments.

I have a personal assistant, who contacts my students, or their parents for billing and sometimes scheduling. I always put my schedule on my iPhone calendar. I can't live without it.

How did you handle studio recitals? (For example: Zoom watch parties, pre-recorded videos, a mixture...etc.)

6 responses

We do Zoom recitals 2-3 times per quarter. I do two 30 minute recitals on week day evenings during recital week. Students play live the same as in their lessons, and occasionally I play a video if a student is not available but wants to share. They absolutely love this setup! Pressure is lower, and I feel that they watch more closely because I give them the option of sharing supportive feedback in the Zoom chat. These recitals are so easy for all of us from a logistical perspective! Soon we will have some in-person performances for the first time...I hope they enjoy this too.

Have conducted many and still do. Studio classes in particular. I conduct them both in-person and hybrid (in person and online).

I did pre-recording videos and put them together into a recital on youtube. I still do that actually since I have some students who either want another performance opportunity or who are purely online

I stopped hosting recitals. This was another downside. However, I do run a membership along side my lessons, which many of my students participate in, and they share recordings with me and each other using that system. This allows students to still prepare music for presentation.

Studio recitals were a mix of live Zoom recitals (particularly for the young ones) and participation in recorded video recitals offered by our teachers association.

I actually did an online recital with my fellow Harpist. So we combine my piano students in her harp students to perform a Christmas concert online. It was pre-recorded, and edited, we combine over 40 something students to create an ensemble.

What marketing techniques do you use/have you used for your studio when teaching online?

6 responses

I have not really needed to market. I have a wait list. I still have my website and that's about it! In the past I had a Google Maps listing and I canceled that after moving online.

Youtube videos

Nothing

I run a YouTube channel and just talk about what I do and how I teach. This has helped me to attract students who already enjoy my teaching style.

Same! Word of mouth.

Instagram

How did you feel about your students' home setup for their online piano lessons? How many lessons were hindered by a lack of technological resources? Please list any issues related to equity, financial hardship? How did you address this (For example: scholarship, reduced lesson rate…etc.)?

6 responses

None of my students have financial issues. Few lessons were hindered as most families took my recommendations to improve their technology.

My ongoing remote students have invested in a sufficient setup (external mic at a very min.). I typically recommend a range of external mics to students, so they are choose according to their budget. Some students have a full, multi angle setup, and some don't. We make the most of each scenario.

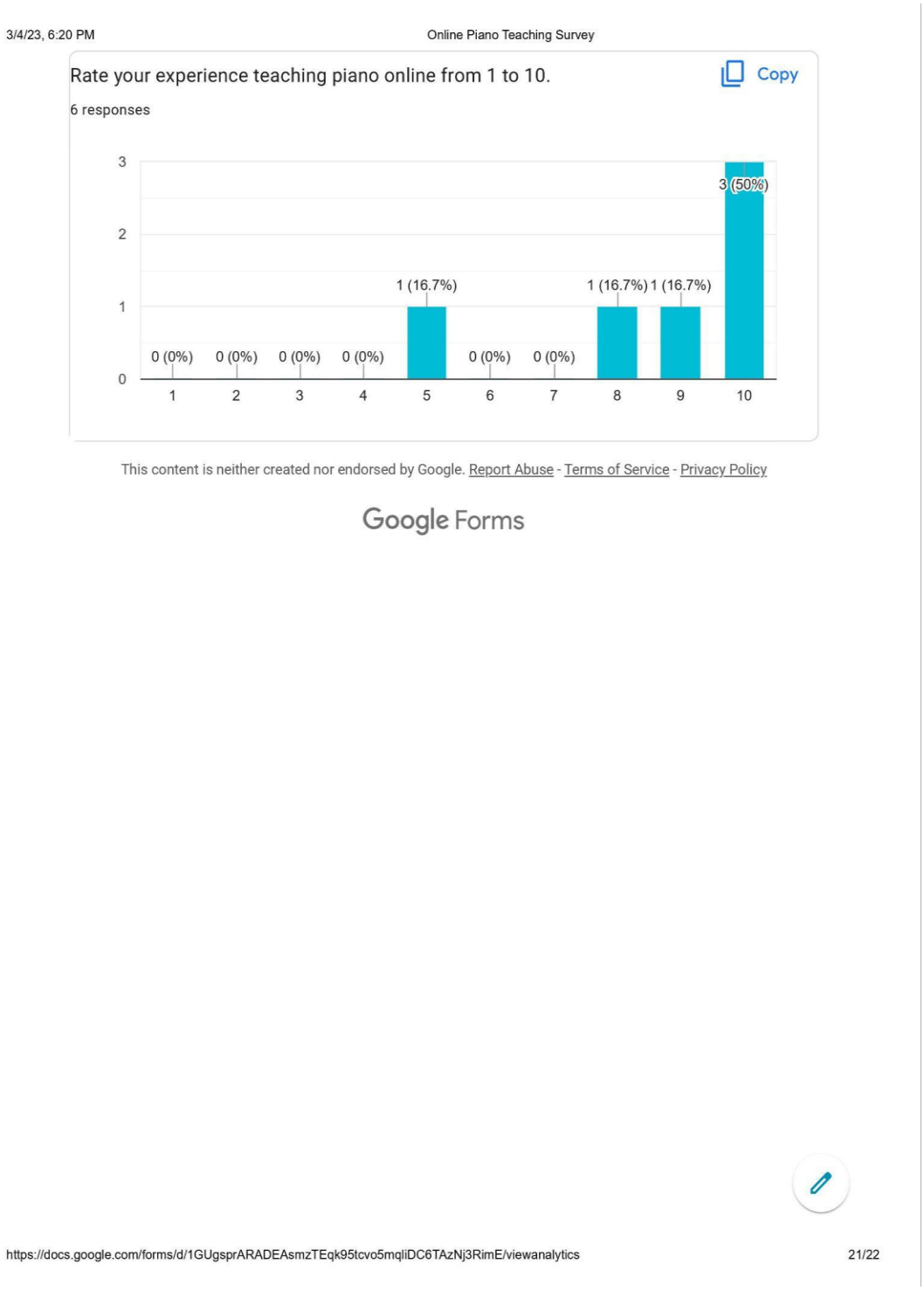
In general, students adapted quite easily. One adult student set up an overhead camera so he could toggle between the two as needed.

Most students had no issue with setup. Every now and then, I would get a student with a slow connection, usually from a different country. In some cases, lessons were just not going to be possible. I did require that students could meet a certain technological standard before proceeding with lessons. In one case, the student had a really bad piano and quite a lot of talent, and another one of my students actually purchased a really high end “Clavinova” style piano and had it shipped to the other student.

My students and I were fortunate that their families could provide good home setups for online lessons. I would have preferred that they had better mics but since online lessons during the pandemic were temporary, I didn't feel I could ask them to purchase more equipment. The students who are still online did purchase a better mic.

They are doing fine. I actually charge less for online lesson. About 5-7.5% less.

Table 3


3/4/23, 6:20 PM
Online Piano Teaching Survey
Rate your experience teaching piano online from 1 to 10.
Copy
6 responses
3
2
1
0
0 (0%)
0 (0%)
0 (0%)
0 (0%)
1 (16.7%)
0 (0%)
0 (0%)
1 (16.7%)
1 (16.7%)
3 (50%)
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google. Report Abuse - Terms of Service - Privacy Policy
Google Forms
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1GUgsprARADEAsmzTEqk95tcvo5mqliDC6TAzNj3RimE/viewanalytics
21/22

Andrea Miller Interview

Speaker: 2
Today I am with Andrea Miller and I'll be interviewing Andrea Miller about, uh, her experience with online teaching. So I'll start with the first question. How many years have you taught piano online?

Speaker: 1
I started in February, 2018, so I guess it's five years.

Speaker: 2
Wow, that's amazing. Um, quite a bit before the pandemic.

Speaker: 1
Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Speaker: 2
And since you were teaching prior to the pandemic, uh, what was your experience like and kind of what, what drove you to do that?

Speaker: 1
Mm-hmm. Yeah. So the thing that prompted me to do that was, um, I was moving, I was, had been living in the DC area and was moving back to St. Louis, and I had a studio of, was part-time studio 15 or so students. And it, yeah, I was like, you know, I wanna make this option. So, um, I didn't have strong convictions either way, if I'd stick to it or not. I just, I, posed the opportunity to my students and I said, if you wanna try it, we can try it. Either one of us can decide we don't like it, um, but let's, let's give it a try. So I had, let's see, 1, 2, 3 students take me up on it at that time. And, um, and then

yeah, others, I found other teachers for. Um, and yeah, I said, let's give it a three month experiment. Like let's give it a fair shot, get time to get adjusted. Um, and it's worked. So I've stuck with it, um, on the, like more personal or like pedagogical side of it, it did take a lot of soul searching. I think it was different at the time. You know, I wasn't forced into it by covid, so it was, it was different. And, um, there was a lot of, a lot of judgment around it, you know, in, in teacher conversations pre covid, um, about whether or not it was effective or useful. And, and I think I had my own questions about whether or not I could teach effectively that way, but I really had, the couple years leading up to that, I had been really just thinking about my own teaching philosophy and what I valued in teaching and what was important that students get out of lessons. Speaker: 1
And I realized that, um, I'm not the teacher who's gonna get students ready for Juilliard. That's just not my passion for teaching. Um, I don't do a lot of competitions. I do them as students are interested, but it's not something I'm pushing my studio. I have much more, um, I'm teaching the student who is probably gonna go on to be an engineer or a doctor or something. Um, and I want them to be able to sit down when they're 30 and they have 30 minutes in the evening free, and they just wanna enjoy the piano. That's the student I'm teaching and that's the outcome I'm teaching too. So I want them to be able to enjoy piano, um, while they're a kid, and also like, carry that into adulthood and not have piano be a, it's only productive if I can practice 15 hours a week, you know, to learn a beeth and sonata or something. Yeah. So when I realized that that was my student and that was what I, um, how I enjoyed teaching, I was like, I could totally do that in a Zoom lesson. Yeah. Um, and I do tend to follow the student's interests a lot with, like, like I said, these te these students are probably gonna go on to other things, not music degrees. So if I have a student who's really interested in math, then I'm gonna really emphasize the theory side. I've had students who are more interested in this, the science part, and like the medical field. And so we talk about things more like synesthesia and like the kind of, um, human interaction with music kind of things. Mm-hmm. So yeah. Those, that's, that's what I'm chasing in a lesson is that kinda like capturing their interest and yeah. Speaker: 1
So yeah, lots of personal reflection, um, but I decided it would work given my vision and philosophy for teaching.

Speaker: 2
I, I, I think that's so refreshing to hear. And actually, I would love to come back to the part that you mentioned about, um, the judgment, I think around online teaching prior to the pandemic mm-hmm. but, so I'll, I'll circle back to that in a bit because that's a really interesting topic and that definitely is not talked about enough mm-hmm. Um, I think that it's very inspiring to hear, you know, exactly the types of students you want to teach and see that it is very possible to achieve those goals with online teaching. Mm-hmm. Um, and yeah, that totally makes sense and it is fantastic. I guess on my next question, that makes me curious about what age range of students you started with and then what maybe right now you typically work with online.

Speaker: 1
Yeah. Let's see. Um, I had some adults who considered, um, switching to online when I moved. They did not end up doing it. Um, yeah, so it's just been kids that I've taught and I have started new students, new kids, strictly online. Um, I think with the adults, it wasn't an aversion to the online piece, it was just, um, you know, I left and so they took a break from piano, you know? Mm-hmm. That makes sense. One was nearing retirement, and so I think she had, you know, a few years left of her career and was just focusing on that, so, yeah. Yeah. I don't think it was specific about the online, I don't think that deterred them.

Speaker: 2
Yeah. That makes total sense. I mean, with kids, typically parents want them to just continue and not kind of like, take a break in the progress Mm-hmm.

Speaker: 1
Yeah. And the relationship, like I think these particular parents really valued the relationship I had with their kids mm-hmm. and didn't wanna see that go when I moved away.

Speaker: 2
Totally. Yeah. Um, what, when transitioning into, well, I guess this question is going to be framed, lessened to transitioning in the March to September, 2020 period mm-hmm. but I think in this, this note, because you've already been teaching online, um, and then let's say like March, 2020 hit and then all these teachers were going online and your students also in terms of like their school classes and maybe other areas were transitioning online. Um, what changes did you notice in terms of mood levels or like personality?

Speaker: 1
Yes. Um, okay. So I did have one in-person student who switched to online in that pandemic period, and I started a new student in the pandemic period. Mm-hmm. Um, so the new student, I didn't have a before and after to compare to. Um, but there, I, I think she was five five and I did see the struggle with, she spent a lot of time in front of the screen, you know, Mm-hmm. Um, so there was lots of energy, um, kind of a hard time concentrating that I don't think would've been an issue if there weren't so many other changes happening. Mm-hmm. Um, the one who had been in person and switched to online there, it was, you know, I, I don't know that I noticed as many, um, as much change from her specifically, like from the student, more from the parents, you know, like frustration and stress that the parents were going through. Yeah. And so I would say I dealt more with that, that particular student. I don't know, just like selecting specific ones. Um, for the students I had who had been consistently online for a couple years already, there was, there was a tiredness, um, a loneliness I would say that I noticed, especially the teenage ones. Less so for the elementary age, but yeah, the, or like middle school age. Yeah, I definitely observed that. And I don't know how much of it had to do with age. It was probably a combination of both, like age and also being just stuck at home.

Speaker: 2

Yeah, totally. That's interesting to hear about the, like, of course tiredness, but then the loneliness, especially within the teenagers. Because um, obviously they miss being able to talk to their friends and just like to see people in person. Yeah. Yeah. It's very lonely.

Speaker: 1
Yeah. Yeah.

Speaker: 2
Yeah. I guess, um, my next question would be in terms of just kind of like a average, um, how many of your students would you say percentage wise? I think this question would be more framed around because in this context you started online teaching a few years before the pandemic. Um, were any of them that stayed with you that went into online teaching, would you say a greater percentage preferred doing just like an in-person lesson or preferred doing online For the ones who had switched to online before the Pan pandemic? Yeah.

Speaker: 1
You know, they've never really said anything.

Speaker: 2
Hmm.

Speaker: 1
Either way.

Speaker: 2
Um Hmm.

Speaker: 1
Yeah, they've never said anything and it's been five years, so Yeah.

Speaker: 2
Yeah. So that probably is like a good I guess, doing something right.

Speaker: 1
I'll say the students felt so proud when the pandemic hit and they were like, I've been using Zoom for two years. You know, they were. That's true. It was really funny how much pride they took in that familiarity with it.

Speaker: 2
Yeah. They're like, oh, we can help you with all the zoom set up and mic set up, you know, how to do everything Um, okay. So I guess getting into just like online piano teaching, um, what are some advantages for students, um, in taking online piano lessons?

Speaker: 1
Um, I think that independence part where they have to take their own notes, like it, it just kind of forces them to be a little bit more, uh, take more ownership. Um, I think the consistency in, I mean, both parties can move, you know, the family can move and the teacher can move mm-hmm. Um, so I see that as a huge advantage for consistency. Um, especially, I don't have students in this market, but I work with a lot of teachers who do, like military families. There was no way for them to have any kind of consistent music education 10 years ago, and now they can do this, you know, like you can really advance in violin Yeah. Over the course of your whole grade school, middle school, high school year. So, um, huge advantage there for consistency, being able to, um, like having flexibility. I've had students who continue to have lessons on spring break just because they like it, even if they're away from the piano. I've had one who's like, can we just do a theory lesson next week because I'm on spring break and I'm an only child, so I'm gonna be kind of bored and yeah. So. Yeah.

Speaker: 2

Yeah. Totally. Yeah. All like completely great advantages. Um, yeah, so I guess like a couple questions. First question would be, uh, what issues did you personally first come across when teaching online, or if you still come across those issues right now and how do you address those issues?

Speaker: 1
Mm-hmm. It definitely takes more organization on the teacher's part. Um, I had been teaching for, let's see, when did I start twen? Since 2007 or something. So 11, 12 years. And I, because I follow a student's interest, like if they express an interest in or they ask a question, I will follow that rabbit trail. So my lessons are very much like I have a general structure that I'm following, but probably half the lesson is just following whatever curiosity they bring up. Mm-hmm. mm-hmm. So in person, I could just grab my staff, hand them a game, you know, like just really wing it. And that is much harder, like, because my resources weren't all online, um, they were more physical. So just having to replace the physical flashcards with an app or a, um, some online resource or digital resource. Um, yeah, that's just more work on my part. Um, remind me of the original question.

Speaker: 2
It was, Oh, no, Yeah. No, no, don't worry. You, you answered the question. Um, it was, what issues do you personally come across when teaching online? I'll get into, I know that there's the whole issue about like sound and rhythm and all that stuff, but I'll, I'll get into that next actually Cause I know that that's like, there's a lot that could be talked about, about that Uhhuh So on that note, how would you address three problems in online teaching? The first being sound quality, the second being technique, and then the third being just disembodiment from the students in terms of like personality mm-hmm. So the first one, sound quality, second one technique, and then third disembodiment.

Speaker: 1
Yeah. And how would I address those? Mm-hmm. Is that okay? Yeah. Um, so the disembodied part, that one, I guess I feel it more with the new students where I don't

like to point to the keys on the keyboard. Um, and I would say that that continues to be a struggle, but they eventually outgrow that, you know, like it, it passes with time. So it's a, um, yeah. Beyond that, I, and I think this is again, like the student I teach, it doesn't feel like the, the biggest struggle to me is that I can't touch their shoulder. Like, yes, if I were in person, I would, you know, ask them to relax their shoulder or you'd be able to do that in a physical way and I can't do it, but it's not, yeah, it's just not the topic. Do I face, um, sound quality. I did do some, try some different apps early on. I think there was kind of an explosion early covid of many different things. And I have landed on Zoom just still, still using Zoom. Um, just yesterday actually in the lesson I was telling a student, you know, I think it's time to try something else again, because things have fallen off the market and, you know, yeah. Things have come, you know, new things have come up. Um, but yeah, there was also a, a capacity issue I think with parents where they were already trying to figure so many things out and to throw a new tool at them, oh, can you just download this app for your kid after you've already tried to figure out online homeschooling, you know, all day and work and all that. So it felt like a burden to parents to try to troubleshoot that, I guess in covid when, when a lot of other options were coming out. Speaker: 1
Um, and I, I wasn't finding that there was a clear solution or a clear, like best thing, so mm-hmm. Yeah, I've, I've stuck with Zoom, um, but now as people have more capacity and like, I think it's time to revisit that conversation. Um, because duets, I do Miss Tuts a lot. yes. Um, I did do other things to fill that gap, I guess. Like I would record things and send them, um, recordings, but then it goes back to taking more organizational time for the teacher. Um, let's see, that's my biggest, that has been the biggest struggle. Um, yeah. What was the third item? Oh, yeah, no worries. Technique. Technique, yeah. Mm-hmm. Um, so that was interesting because around the same time as I started teaching online, I had also switched to Piano Safari. Um, I had been a long time piano adventure user, and I think I had maybe brought three students through the piano safari level one book in person. And then I had these new students online and that was, that was interesting because I felt like I was pretty new to the curriculum and, um, and teaching it online was like another level of complexity to teaching it. So I think the curriculum really helped there by having a more technique focused curriculum. I think I was, um, yeah, it

helped because it prioritized that in a different way than I was used to prioritizing it with piano adventures. I See. Um, yeah. And then that was with new students, with my older students, because we had an existing relationship pre online, they already kind of knew my language for, you know, trying to get them to do things. So yeah, I haven't had an advanced student start. Speaker: 1
Yeah. Like, I haven't started dating a high school student or something. Yeah. So maybe I dodged a bullet there.

Speaker: 2
That's actually really interesting to know, and I have to check this out because I'm actually not very familiar with Piano Safari. Barry. Familiar with some of the like Alfred and Faber, but Uhhuh will now definitely have to check this out because you mentioned that this was beneficial for like the online students.

Speaker: 1
Yeah. Well, and I don't know if it was beneficial for them as much as for me because I was putting technique first because the curriculum put it first.

Speaker: 2
Got it.

Speaker: 1
Mm-hmm. I did find it harder. Um, it's a lot of rote teaching Uhhuh and that was tricky. Has been tricky When I have two cameras set up, um, it works better obviously, but I don't. I've also moved, let's see, yeah, I've taught from three different locations since I moved. Um, and so I don't have a great permanent teaching space. I don't have one, like my cameras aren't always set up. Um, so the, yeah, like the logistics of getting the second camera set up and um, bandwidth and all that stuff. Like, it's always these trade offs. Got it. Mm-hmm. So like, do I use the overhead camera and deal with the delays? Yeah. Or do I not use the overhead camera and have a better experience that way? Um, so most of the time I've opted to not use the overhead camera. Um, and instead do

you know the little balancing act with The Yeah. Demonstrating how to play something. Um, the trade off then is, I mean, it's that independence thing though then that like the students do have to learn their keyboard geography pretty fast and be able to verbalize it. Um, yeah, Got It.

Speaker: 2
I have one quick question. Sorry. You mentioned that you do use your, or you don't use your overhead piano?

Speaker: 1
I occasionally use it.

Speaker: 2
Oh, okay. Got it. Yeah.

Speaker: 1
Yeah. And I would like to have a permanent one, that's another improvement I've thought about this year, like figuring out, trying some new apps again. Um, and then also getting a permanent solution for the overhead camera that is just dedicated to the piano.

Speaker: 2
Um, Yeah. And sharing.

Speaker: 1
Yeah. Would you believe help will, can the bandwidth support it or is it an annoying experience for the student? More annoying than it's worth having, so, yeah.

Speaker: 2
Yeah, yeah. Yeah, for sure. Um, yeah, for my next question, um, I'm wondering, so we kind of talked about how difficult it's difficult to like to do duets and things like that mm-

hmm. you mentioned like sending recordings, so I'm guessing like having a student play with that recording. Um, what, or how do you address this issue of playing together with a student? Like if you were to in person, just kind of like play on an upper register at the same time mm-hmm. online. Online.

Speaker: 1
Yeah. We just don't really do it. Yeah. Totally.

Speaker: 2
We Just don't, yeah.

Speaker: 1
Last week I was trying to do a rhythm exercise with a student mm-hmm. and I said, okay, so I want you to hear it just so you can internalize it. And it was this mm. What app do I use for the metronome? Do I play the metronome through my computer? That was the first try. I tried playing the metronome through, I was screen sharing, needed to screen share the iPad Okay. For the music, I would like to annotate and mm-hmm. everything. And so I was using the iPad metronome playing through my computer, but the iPad, the metronome sound is coming through at a different rate than my voice or my clapping Oh, Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. So like, okay, forget the iPad metronome, turn on the separate metronome, clap. Those came through at the same time. Um, yeah. And it took like five minutes of the lesson, you know, Yeah. Sort that out. So, um, I guess now I've got that one figured out, but, uh, That's okay.

Speaker: 2
Yeah. That's a difficult, it's a very difficult thing to Yeah.

Speaker: 1
Yeah. But the duet stuff, like really it hasn't happened. I have, um, I guess this is also an example of more independence. One student, I've got siblings and so mm-hmm. the

older sibling has kind of risen to the occasion and she'll do some of the duets with the brother, um mm-hmm. So that's one way of addressing it, but I see.

Speaker: 2
Yeah, that totally is nice to have help. Yes. uh, yeah. Um, uh, just like, maybe I'm gonna try to rapid fire questions now. Sure. Just with the time that we have Well, yeah.

Speaker: 1
And if you need, I've got a few minutes, if you need a few minutes.

Speaker: 2
Oh, that would be amazing. I'll just, I'll just respect your time. I'm gonna try to go as fast as possible with these last couple. Um, but I, yeah. Okay. So I'm gonna start, um, with the online teaching, how did that affect the flow of the lesson planning? I know you mentioned the teacher having to be hyper organized, but personally, like, for example, starting with scales starting versus pieces or like, I know that you mentioned kind of seeing what the student is interested in in the lesson and kind of going with the flow. How did you adapt to that in online teaching?

Speaker: 1
Yeah, good question. Um, I don't think it changed a whole lot from that perspective, except that if a student asked a question that was some fun thing we could chase, I might give them like a three minute version and then, oh, go dig up the resources and come back to it the next week. So there might have been more of a delay in our exploration.

Speaker: 2
Um, Totally. It's like, Yeah.

Speaker: 1

Yeah. Roughly same things actually. I think because my organization kind of got elevated, I have started being more consistent. Like, I have my checklist of let's do a review piece, let's, you know, keep on these scales, all that. So, um, because my computer's open and that's like my, my brain, you know, so Yeah, Totally.

Speaker: 2
Yeah. That makes a, like, you see everything all laid out and then you're like, yep. Like, Check, finish that all right, next mm-hmm.

Speaker: 1
Whereas in an in-person lesson, my computer would've been outta sight outta mind and I, I would've just said like, I'll get it next week for that thing. So, yeah.

Speaker: 2
Totally. Um, next question on administration. How do you handle administration with online teaching? Like billing, scheduling?

Speaker: 1
Same way? Yeah. That part hasn't changed. Um, I sent a Zoom link in 2018 and it's never changed. uh, that goes in my Google calendar. Um, and then billing, I've used wave apps and accounting software for that. I don't have a full studio now, or, I mean, I have a full part-time studio right now mm-hmm. Um, so I'm not doing a ton of makeup rescheduling or anything crazy like when I've had 35 students or something.

Speaker: 2
So Yeah.

Speaker: 1
My admin needs are pretty minimal and Got it.

Speaker: 2

Cool. Um, alright. I, I think, um, one last question. What marketing techniques have you used for your studio? Um, particularly I guess in finding online students.

Speaker: 1
Mm-hmm. Um, so the ones that have started online have been word of mouth and I'm not actively marketing my studio right now, um, with teachers I work with from a business coaching capacity.

Speaker: 2
Right.

Speaker: 1
Like the top thing I've heard, if I were to go out and do it, I would be using, um, Thumbtack.

Speaker: 2
That Would be my Oh, interesting.

Speaker: 1
Yeah. I've, the interviews I've done with teachers on Thumbtack have been just really like, if you need to drive students, that seems to be a really good bang for your buck Hmm.

Speaker: 2
Cool to know. Mm-hmm. Um, yeah. And, okay, I know I said the last question, but one last quick question. Rate your experience teaching piano online from one being like you'd prefer in-person teaching, 10 being you love online teaching. I know that's kind of a broad question.

Speaker: 1

I'm something like, how do I read it? I mean, there're frustrations, they're frustrations with everything, but I wouldn't give it up now, so I think I'd be like at nine.

Speaker: 2
Yeah. Sounds about right. Very convenient, For sure. Well, that pretty much sums up the interview. If I have any questions I'll definitely like, reach out to ask you about like any clarifying questions, but Perfect. Yeah, I definitely, I really appreciate your time. Thank you so much.

Speaker: 1
Yeah, thank you. And, um, let me know if I can support you in any other ways too. Like, like I said, if you need more teachers, I don't know what your whole scope of your project is, but I'm, I'm just super curious to Oh yeah, no, for sure.

Speaker: 2
I would, I would absolutely love that. Speaker: 2
Awesome. Have a good weekend.

Speaker: 1
Thanks, you too. Thank you. Bye.

Josh Wright Interview

Speaker: 1
We'll just begin with this survey. Okay. I'll start with the first question. How many years have you taught piano online?

Speaker: 2
Um, I think this is my 11th year. I started in 2012.

Speaker: 1
Wow. And were you teaching piano online prior to the pandemic? Um, I guess you kind of answered that here. And how long have you been teaching also in person versus online?

Speaker: 2
Um, I started in person when I, like in 2002, so probably 20 years now. So I started when I was 16. Mm-hmm. Um, so I guess it's my 20th year of teaching total. Um, just cuz I didn't wanna work with my dad anymore. He's a stone mason, it's really hard work. He's like, well, you're not gonna work at McDonald's. And I was like, he's like, you either work with me or you start your own business. I was like, I'll start my own business cuz I hate this So.

Speaker: 1
Wow. Wow. I didn't know that. Yeah. And, uh, what age range of students do you work with?

Speaker: 2

Um, I, let's see, my youngest student right now that I teach on a regular basis is probably 14. Um, I've taught from four years old up until like nineties. But, um, yeah. And then I coach quite a few people too. Um, people will ask me for an occasional lesson. They have their own teacher and, um, probably like eight or nine years old would be the, the youngest for that.

Speaker: 1
I see. Okay. So when transitioning into online teaching, I guess since you've already been teaching online, but when the whole pandemic hit, if you did have in-person teaching, what differences did you notice in the quality of students? Lesson, preparation, style, and musicianship?

Speaker: 2
I teach probably like 95% online anyway, so I only have two students in Utah right now, so where I live mm-hmm. so there was no transition. It was like, life is normal for almost every student. And those two students, um, had already done it online with me. Like I, one of 'em, I, I've taught for so many years, she actually would, you know, do lessons while I was at Michigan too. Mm-hmm. So that was back in like, we started a long time ago. And then the other one I taught at the University of Utah. Um, and then he wanted just private lessons after he graduated. And so we had done some online lessons just because there was a couple weeks where I was sick. So there was no, no transition for me with any of my students. They all knew what they were doing.

Speaker: 1
Wow. That's remarkable. Uh, were there technological steps that you took to enhance sound quality, I guess in the beginning of when you started off with online teaching?

Speaker: 2
Yeah. Ever since I started, I have used the Blue Yeti microphone. I did a lot of research on that. I started out with a sterling audio mic when I was first recording for my YouTube channel. And that sucked. And it's just, it's, it's not good cuz you gotta go through the

interface and everything. I just like the Yeti and I'm still on this. I've got like $5,000 worth of mics in this studio. Mm-hmm. But I still choose to use the Yeti just cuz it's not in my way. Like when I record my YouTube videos or pro practice, the mic's right here at my mouth mm-hmm. and that's good for teaching a tutorial. Right. Um, but it still is a little distracting cuz it's like either in front of your music or in front of the keys. You gotta get it just right. But I still use the Yeti, so I've always used that. But I was kind of a slacker, like I didn't switch to Zoom until 20, like the first part of 2021. And it's cuz I was presenting at this global piano summit for all these like very, like, it was crazy. I was like, why am I here? It was like um, like all these very prestigious teachers. And then it was me presenting on online teaching. Um, but I was like, I better learn how to use Zoom. And it is better than Skype. Skype used to be better than Zoom, um, for sound quality. And now Zoom just is so much better because they have catered two musicians because of the pandemic. So the whole like canceling background audio, um, the professional audio for musicians, things like that really helped. But I still have a very basic setup. Speaker: 2
It's just the mic. And then this is an advanced camera setup. Mm-hmm. but it's a basic audio setup.

Speaker: 1
I see. Interesting. So you used to use Skype before Zoom Really? Like enhanced all of their sound qualities for musicians.

Speaker: 2
Yeah. I hated Zoom. I, it was crazy. Yeah. Uh, sa you know, the singers, I don't know if you know him, I think his name's Sam Smith, he's super famous.

Speaker: 1
Mm-hmm.

Speaker: 2

Yep. His vocal teacher emailed me and he's like, Hey, I've watched your stuff on YouTube. Can I do a lesson? I'm Sam Smith's teacher. I was like, no way. I was like, okay, I'll do it. And he's like, Zoom's the best. And like, it was like the worst sounding lesson. And I was like, oh, I hate Zoom. So I had all this negative emotion towards Zoom. I'm like, it doesn't work and everyone's doing it. Uh, so I stuck with Skype for like the first nine months of the pandemic, but then I realized how much they'd improved their interface and yeah, it was really Good.

Speaker: 1
Wow. That's, that's very cool that you were able to teach Sam Smith's teacher.

Speaker: 2
Well, it was a one-off lesson. I don't even know if I taught him anything good. He never came back.

Speaker: 1
An experience with Zoom and Sam Smith.

Speaker: 2
Teacher: Yeah, exactly.

Speaker: 1
Um, okay, so I guess like, I'm kind of gonna jump around a couple of questions because a lot, lot of my questions are kind of catered for teachers who have started teaching online during the pandemic. And then there have been a few teachers I'm speaking to currently who have taught before the pandemic online as well. So I'm just kind of, kind of, skipping ahead. Yeah. So the next question will be, what are the advantages for students who are taking online lessons?

Speaker: 2

You don't have to have so many interruptions if you get sick or if the teacher travels. Like I know a lot of professors travel for the summer a lot of times either to visit family or to teach at a bunch of festivals. You can still meet with them. And that's, I think, the biggest advantage. And my, like, my family has to be very careful, um, cuz we have little tiny kids and then my dad's also immune compromised. So if a student's getting sick, I'm like, you can't come to my house if you're sick. Mm-hmm. And so, but we're so used to online, um, that they all can do that. So I, I think that, and then obviously the geographical, um, erasing of the geographical distance is so nice. Yeah. So I teach, I teach students all over the world, like on a weekly basis. Mm-hmm. Most of them are in the US but I have some in Europe that I teach every week and mm-hmm. Um, I used to have one in Hong Kong. I taught every single week. I referred her, um, to someone else. But I've taught on the o I've taught on six continents. I teach a kid in Brazil. Oh. I teach, I taught a guy in Africa that the internet was questionable anyway.

Speaker: 1
Yeah. Very cool. Uh, what issues, I'm sure there have been there, there, you, you mentioned a few already. Did or do you personally come across when teaching online? Obviously there's the obvious aspect of the internet.

Speaker: 2
Yeah. When I'm teaching to an established student, it's very annoying to get a new student set up. Like, I have like a whole thing of like all the Zoom settings you need to get you, if you wanna do a lesson with me, you have to, if they're anything above like beginner, you have to buy a blue microphone. So I just make sure they're set up. But really it's, it's fine. I actually enjoy teaching online just as much as in person. Unless the student is getting ready for a big recital or competition, then I like to hear the room. Mm-hmm. The only thing you lose online is room acoustics. Yeah. So if a student has a microphone shoved into their piano, you can't tell how much they're projecting. Like their balance could sound really good online, but it's terrible in person or vice versa. I've had students who don't sound so good online, you know, and then they get in person and I'm like, oh, okay. You, you are projecting. I, it didn't sound like it because your mic

settings were too low. So just getting that audio setting is, but I think actually in many ways, and this will sound weird, but in many ways online might be even more advantageous because of the camera. Mm-hmm. um, the setup that I have. So for someone to be able to see what's going on above and I can just say, Hey, like, okay, we're working on CHOP two number one, Watch how my wrist does. Three different Logan's I'm sure told you about doorknob turning, waving and up and down hinging, you can see that better from that overhead angle than you even could just sitting right across from the teacher. So there are actually some advantages along with like meeting when you're sick or traveling, uh, to the online if you've got a killer set up and it doesn't cost that much to get this type of setup. Speaker: 2
Mm-hmm. you just have to have cameras that are hdmi compatible. I use a Black Magic design, um, it's called an AAM Mini. Mm-hmm. I use the Ex AAM Mini Extreme. Um, so you can like, I'll show you real quick so you can flip through like, um, nice. Oh, let's see. Okay. Let me see how I, I I never take this off. So now I don't know. Um, but yeah, you can, you can take apart, like you can have different logos. Um, oh, this is cool. I can show you this if you want to see it. I don't know.

Speaker: 1
Yeah, sure. Um, How do you spell this by Chance?

Speaker: 2
The aem? Yeah. Uh, A T A T E M. Uh Huh. And then Mini Extreme, it's by Black Magic Design. Got it. So, um, this is cool too. This is almost better than a live lesson. So I was teaching the Wow fantasy earlier. Um, let's see here. Yeah. So you can, oh wow. So yeah, I just created it with an, let's see, I don't know why that just turned off. There we go. Um, so you can create like, okay, so here's just my side angle mm-hmm. oh that's how I do it. Here's my triple angle or like double angle. Um, and then this one is like my score view. And so I can say like if they're being, if my students are being idiots and being like, oh, I don't know where you're at. I can be like, um, go to bar three 20 mm-hmm right here and I can circle it for 'em in real time. They usually are fine. But, um, yeah. If a student really doesn't understand, it's nice to be able to have that score view.

So Yeah. Um, yeah. So that's nice. Uh, and then, yeah, that's pretty much the extent of what I've done. I haven't, um, really utilized even one 10th of what this switcher can do. You can do all sorts of like, you can have eight camera inputs. I only use two. Um, the reason I bought the extreme version, cuz it's like a thousand bucks, the A 10 mini is like three or 400 bucks. I see. Um, but it has builtin macros Right. On what, what, which means that I can just cycle through that angle, that angle to score just Wow. Right on the switcher. Mm-hmm. before that you had to like go into the software and press a button or get an mm-hmm. Speaker: 2
external things. Mm-hmm. Most people aren't gonna spend 600 bucks so they don't have to go into the software and press a button. But I'm that lazy. Right. And I was like, yes, I want that So that's actually incredible.

Speaker: 1
I've never, I it makes sense because on Zoom there's like two or three interfaces where you can just, you have to like manually like select which screen you're going to share and then you have to literally have the camera loaded from like a different device and make sure it's like plugged in with a bunch of different wires. So that actually makes it so much faster.

Speaker: 2
Yeah. Yeah. It was, it was good. I was glad to be able to help a little because it, and it's been fun too, like to explore all the other options. One of our good friends runs it mm-hmm. And having this AEM was really cool because we have like this side camera and then we had cameras above both pianos. And then I set up, um, a command that would fade it between cameras every 15 seconds. Mm-hmm. So in real time you can pretty much have like a, what would've had to have been like a full stage crew, like run, not like one person obviously could have run it, but like sitting and pressing the button, you know, like switching cameras. Mm-hmm. you can program that all right. Into the atem so you can press a button and it will start cycling through your cameras. Oh. All that kind of stuff. So there's a lot of cool practical applications for performing along with private teaching. So.

Speaker: 1
Hmm. That makes a lot of sense. Yeah. Um, awesome. Well, uh, my next question I'm really curious about is any teaching supplements or resources that you've used in online teaching such as apps, um, rhythms, site, singing folders, anything of that sort? I think this is more catered towards beginning students. So I don't know if there are any of these types of materials that you would recommend.

Speaker: 2
Um, well I use the four score app. So I use that like every day. Um, like sending my students those annotated notes mm-hmm. So I'll just take notes on the iPad so I don't have to scan anything, which is really nice. Obviously I use payment apps like Venmo or Zelle or things like that. Mm-hmm. Um, and then I like the Henley uh, app. That's awesome for getting pure scores. I don't necessarily use that just for teaching. I use that for myself too. Yeah. Um, and then I've used Piano Marvel to help my students with site site reading. Um, they kind of do that on their own. I can take a peek at what they're doing if I need to. But, um, that's a nice site reading app. The reason I like that so much is it tracks the student, um, note by note and kind of tells them where they're at. So they have this one hour long site reading assessment. It's like, okay, out of two, I think they level it from like 100 to 2000. You're at 600. Okay. Here are 10,000 pieces you can choose from. They just have a humongous library, which is really cool. So mm-hmm. Um, that's a nice thing. But other than that I mostly just teach traditionally like with technique and repertoire. Although my big thing is that I have that pro practice course.

Speaker: 1
Mm. Right, right.

Speaker: 2
And I'll have my students watch those videos before they come to a lesson. So I have those pre-recorded tutorials. Oh right. So it saves us like weeks, like several lessons worth of stuff. They just go in, listen to the one hour tutorial, write notes in there so they

already know what I'm gonna say in general about the piece. And then I can tailor write to them rather than spending Okay, uh, this week we'll go over fingering for these 10 bars cuz your fingering's bad it, they already have it from the tutorial or they know what they're doing dynamically. So that's been a huge help to supplement with that. Uh, just helps my, I have one guy who has only chosen pro practice videos to study. He's like, I'm gonna choose just from your stuff, um, that I teach privately. He's like, I want to just choose a ProAct, like in the level that I'm at. Mm-hmm. I'll just choose pro practice pieces that you've covered. And he comes to lessons so prepared. Like he, he doesn't make a lot of fingering mistakes. He mm-hmm. has a lot of artistry already baked in before I have ever heard it even one time. So that's been a really nice supplement too.

Speaker: 1
Wow. That's remarkable actually. And that makes total sense. If the student is diligent enough to practice and keep up with the pro practice, then it's saving a lot of time with the lesson and then can work on more. I mean if you've, you've already recorded that aspect and they have that, it's like a great resource already for them.

Speaker: 2
Yeah.

Speaker: 1
Yeah. Uh, awesome. Uh, okay, well I think, let's see. I'm just skimming through a couple of questions cuz we've talked through some, ooh, this one's something I'm curious about. So, pedagogically us as teachers often have the opportunity to play along with a student on a second piano or just like on an upper register or lower register to demonstrate how do you tackle this, uh, when teaching online when you want to play with someone at the same time or, uh, when you're trying to demonstrate the same thing, but obviously there's maybe like a lag.

Speaker: 2

Yeah. From what I understand, there is no good solution to simultaneously play. So what I'll do to bridge that gap is I'll make just like a voice memo recording on my phone and I'll be like, practice with this this week. So as if I was playing next to them, I'll just play it and I'll go slow and then medium and then fast or whatever they need. Mm-hmm. mm-hmm. And then they can practice with that. And that's almost better than even doing it at the lesson because they can practice with it, you know, all throughout the week versus just right there. Mm-hmm. So I'll do that. And then, um, I also, I did a masterclass like, play something you're good at. Speaker: 2
Yeah. And so, but the thing that I was amazed at, even though was quite mean during that lesson, is he, like, he got out of his chair like one time the entire lesson. Mm. And he was able to convey ideas, so succinctly to me mm-hmm. and just by how he communicated. So I think that's actually a piece of advice every online teacher needs. You have to become a better communicator to teach online effectively than you do in person. Because in person you can just get up and be like, here, look at my hand. Or you can put your hand on theirs and they can kind of feel it. Yeah. You have to learn to describe things much better. So I actually feel like teaching online has overall made me a better teacher period for when I'm teaching live or online because of how you have to communicate more effectively. You can't, you don't have all the physical resources you do in a live lesson.

Speaker: 1
So That actually makes total sense. And it's, I think like you worded that so well and that hit the nail on the head because I do think that for myself too, I've became a better teacher teaching in person because I've had to think about how to communicate rather than just showing and just by playing and which I think a lot of teachers have done and yeah. That's, that's a, that's a great, um, that's a great statement. Um, awesome. I have, I'm really curious about this question. I know we're like almost at times, but how did you feel, I know you mentioned like you typically require students to have a kind of setup. Um, so I'm curious about one, what that setup is and then two, if any of your students are hindered by a lack of resources financially or technologically, um, or geographically

even. Um, are there any ways that you address this kind of equity and like financial hardship? Um, if so, how?

Speaker: 2
Yeah. Um, well to a, to a certain extent, um, unless you just want to give like a student complete scholarship, you know, like, um, they have to, you know, have some something invested so you can give a discount to a student in a country where the exchange rate is horrible if you mm-hmm. find to do that. Um, if a student really is unwilling to, like, they're totally willing to take lessons, but they're like, no, I don't wanna buy a microphone. It's too expensive. I'll just be like, Hey, skip paying me for a week and go buy your microphone. Or, for two Weeks Just because I'm like, it will make my job so much easier. So sometimes as a teacher, you can make little concessions like that. Yeah. Um, you know, I know a lot of teachers get so annoyed at PayPal fees. Oh yeah. And I'm like, if you're getting mad over $2, you know, you're not charging enough You know, like that's That's true.

Speaker: 1
Mm-hmm.

Speaker: 2
um, like just up your rates by five bucks and then you can eat all the PayPal fees, stuff like that. And then, you know, I, I mostly charge everybody the same, like what's published on my website mm-hmm. but, you know, for my students who've been with me for a long time, it's just, I don't really change their rate Like Ever or often. Mm-hmm. and I don't care. Like I, I've been fortunate to be able to supplement my income with my online courses, so it doesn't mean as much. There was a time in my life where it did mean a lot, like, you know Yeah. Getting paid for all the lessons and stuff, but even then I still stood by, you know, like if they just didn't really believe in online lessons, like getting the mic. Like you could, you could not charge them for a lesson or two and have them buy that and then mm-hmm. You know, they, or I've, I've had students who were financially very tight mm-hmm. and They were getting ready for competitions and they

just, um, you know, I just didn't charge 'em for those extra lessons. And, and so my, all of my teachers have done that to an extent, even when we didn't need it. Like they're, they would keep me over, like, Logan's met with me a couple times over the last couple years and hasn't charged me for that. Um, you know, and I've offered to pay him, but you know, it's kind of baked into the culture almost like what my teachers have done for me. I want to give back. That's like why a big reason why I did my YouTube channel and stuff is just to share good information because I know no one like outside of someone with very, um, supportive parents could ever afford to get this advice. Speaker: 2
You know, like it's r Yeah. Like, I mean even, I don't even think Logan and Susan, my two primary teachers, charged nearly enough for how brilliant they are, but it's still like, who can afford, you know, a hundred or 150 or 200 bucks, however much it is per week. Yeah. To take a weekly lesson for 10 years. Like a lot of people aren't in that situation. Yeah. So, yeah. Sorry that went on way too long.

Speaker: 1
No, no. That was all like very, it was, it's very refreshing to hear you say all these thoughts because it's kind of like, I feel like it's like an unspoken thing in the field where you want to charge what you are giving for and the value you're providing. However, it's just not possible that everyone can afford that. And piano lessons are just very expensive. So on a case by case basis, especially when someone really wants to do well and likes to have a competition or a recital and in your case you want them to have these resources so they can have the best possible lesson, I think it's amazing that you're providing them with just like a free lesson essentially. And just like go, go like, purchase your microphone. I think that's brilliant in a way, cuz it then they have to go get their microphone because it's like, you're you're not, you're not paying me for the lesson, but you're gonna go pay for the microphone.

Speaker: 2
Yeah. Yeah. And, and it comes back to you. Like I, I feel like, you know, when you treat people with kindness in the right way and you'll get occasional complainers, you know? Yeah. Like a guy emailed me, he's like, your course is way too expensive. It's just like,

you're not think, I'm like, okay, my course is expensive. Like I know that, but it like, where could you find, you know, over 1000 hours of instruction? Yeah. For less than like, pretty much a dollar per hour. You know? Cause my course is like 7 99, but if they watch the webinar, they can get 200 bucks off, you know, and it's like, it's like for 500 bucks you can get like, probably, I don't know how many hours it's up to now, probably 500 to a thousand hours of instruction. But you'll get winers like that all the time. And usually you don't wanna work with people like that. You just want to be able to, you know, work with the, and, and the people who are dedicated will either make the sacrifice or you can meet 'em halfway. I, I've done that with a few students and usually when you meet a student halfway like that, they work like 10 times harder for you because they're so grateful for it.

Speaker: 1
So That's interesting.

Speaker: 2
Sometimes that's not the case. Sometimes people are just cheap. But for the most part I would say that is not the case.

Speaker: 1
Yeah. No, totally. That this is really, really, really great. Um, well I think like, um, that's pretty much all my questions. If I have any questions about anything else, I'll just shoot you an email. But I, I think this is all very, very helpful already for me to, like, I need to digest this and just like, organize everything down. But, um, this is really great, so thank you so much.

Speaker: 2
Yeah, you're welcome. Nice to meet you.

Dr. Michael Coonrod Interview

Speaker: 0
All right. So here we are, uh, we are starting, um, I am interviewing Dr. Michael Coonrod, who is a retired professor, uh, teaching at Interlock in, and we'll begin with the online piano teaching survey with our first question. All right. So how many years have you taught piano online?

Speaker: 1
Oh, online. Let's see. I've taught 50 years, 53 years in person online, since the pandemic, this 2019 in April.

Speaker: 0
Were you teaching piano online prior to the pandemic, or were you starting to teach online during the pandemic?

Speaker: 1
I can't remember teaching prior to the pandemic. I mean, it was extensive after that because our students left one week prior to spring break, and they never came back. The school did a great job of quarantining and we had a really good history cuz we were led really well during that pandemic. But it was a sad time, but everybody had to leave one week before spring break.

Speaker: 0
Right, right. Hmm.

Speaker: 1

So then I started teaching online.

Speaker: 0
I see, okay. So that makes sense. So that was the first time that was like an online teaching experience?

Speaker: 1
Yeah, we were what? Oh, Sorry. We were, uh, we were, um, through the state of Michigan, we were each given like $50 for learning online how to do it. I mean mm-hmm. they didn't have to do that. Of course, I didn't find that out. Our school said, all I have to do is register. And so we got a little bit of a fee for learning how to teach online.

Speaker: 0
I see. That's helpful. That makes it, you can get some resources.

Speaker: 1
Yeah. A little support.

Speaker: 0
Yeah. What age range of students do you generally work with?

Speaker: 1
High school grades ninth. Ninth through 12. I mean, I used to teach beginners. I used to teach class piano. I used to teach majors, uh, and, uh, and adults. I teach high school and former students who are in their thirties. Mm-hmm. And a few adult students.

Speaker: 0
Very cool. When transitioning into online teaching from March to September, 2020, what differences did you notice in the quality of students? Lesson, preparation, style and musicianship?

Speaker: 1
The students, not the actual process of zooming, it's, it's their process of learning. Yeah.

Speaker: 0
Yeah. Their process of learning. So not the zoom, but more of their like lesson preparation, their musicianship, their style, like when they into class, um, their interpretive ideas. How did that pan out when transitioning into online teaching in the first few Months?

Speaker: 1
Well, well we were all learning students as well. Yeah. Sometimes the students knew more than we did mm-hmm. uh, and so they could help me out, help us out, but then we understood what we were doing. Um, as far as the preparation, it was the same. Hmm. And now when we did teach online totally for classes and lessons during the summer camp, we were, uh, frightened about how this would work out because interlocking during the summer as a camp Right. And includes, uh, hands-on experience playing soccer, swimming, and we were afraid that just having a student sit in their room, it would be kind of boring for them. But yeah. Actually we were, after, uh, six weeks of doing this, we were very, very pleased that it worked, worked out well because the student was there by themselves. They weren't distracted with anybody else.

Speaker: 0
Interesting.

Speaker: 1
Unless they, unless they're on their cell phone, texting. Nice. But we, uh, required that they didn't do that. So they weren't distracted. So they're more focused. Mm-hmm. And they knew that they had to do this. We were all in it together. Yeah. So we were kind of a supportive group. So there's some good things that came out of that.

Speaker: 0

Hmm. That's interesting.

Speaker: 1
Interesting. Actually, we all had to deal with it. And so I'm talking about classes with maybe, uh, eight or nine students in one class on Zoom mm-hmm. and that we would, uh, share experiences for private lessons. Um, it was the same thing. They're on their own. Mm-hmm. and I would teach them and, and I, I'd listen to their playing occasionally we couldn't hear them or something went on. And so I said, why don't you just make a recording and send it to me online mm-hmm. and I can listen to it and I can make comments, send it back. And then we had another lesson, uh, I could hear the recording, which is good quality on their own piano mm-hmm. mm-hmm. as opposed to try to hear what was going on. Cuz I couldn't quite hear the bass.

Speaker: 0
Right.

Speaker: 1
Right. That's not quite fair. Uh, I must say the pedal doesn't come through very much. This student I have - a Zoom student, um, it, it sounds like she's not using a piano, a pedal, but she is interesting mm-hmm. So that's a detriment. Um, that's interesting To hear. Yeah. She doesn't have a big microphone.

Speaker: 0
Yeah. We'll get to the microphone question for sure. I, cause I have quite a bit to ask you about that, but it's interesting to hear that you think that the quality of preparation was actually okay because it makes sense that everyone's kind of supposed to be focused, like you can't really go out and things like that. So in the case of like, like in being an interlock in, students are actually more inclined to practice and focus on their academics And especially in classes.

Speaker: 1

Yes. Where, um, actually we're teaching, uh, some intermediate level students ages 11 or 13 mm-hmm. um, often I'll teach privately that way, but mostly it's high school. Because I teach at the academy. I used to teach at the academy, that's high school. I See. But when you have a class, it's not like they're distracted by the girls or the boys or conversing or whatever. They're not in the same room. They're all by themselves. So they're more attentive.

Speaker: 0
Hmm. Mm-hmm. That makes sense.

Speaker: 1
Just a few of 'em are serious and mature enough. And so when you have Zoom online, everybody's by themselves and they're fine. Yeah. That's better.

Speaker: 0
All right. Um, so for the next question, um, this is more of a, uh, kind of technical one. If you were new to online teaching from March, 2020, so I guess you were kind of newer to this during that time, what steps did you take to work on sound quality and tone production and demonstrating that to your students? Were there any technological steps that you had to take to enhance sound quality, for example, for the lesson?

Speaker: 1
Well, I would put the computer on the side so that people could see my hands. And I showed the motions, how to use the hand to produce a better sound mm-hmm. and how to move the hand for rotation and arm movement, wrist movement. Yeah. So they can actually see that just like they would be there in person, um, tone quality, I mean at the mercy of whatever microphone they may have. So I don't know what kinda sound they're getting, but, uh, from me.

Speaker: 0
Right.

Speaker: 1
They didn't seem to complain about it. Right. I mean, you show them how to approach it and they'll know that it's a good sound.

Speaker: 0
I see. So a lot of like showing and, and that kind of helps the good sound. That makes a lot of sense. There's a lot more to like, like visuals with the sound. Yeah. Rather than just relying on the sound itself.

Speaker: 1
And, when I put the vi mask on when they have their camera on, I ask them to put it on the keyboard. Mm. So it's, it's not like you and me would just see faces. Yeah. It's more important to see the keyboard in their hands. Yeah.

Speaker: 0
Yeah. That totally makes sense.

Speaker: 1
Unless they can get their whole body in it, then I can tell if they're tense and their shoulders are moving up or they're moving around.

Speaker: 0
Yeah. Yeah. That, that also Yeah, that makes perfect sense too, because then you see that okay, they're tense, so their sound also the, there must be a reason why the sound is justified and not maybe being optimal or et cetera.

Speaker: 1
Yes.

Speaker: 0

Um, great. Uh, did you notice any changes in mood levels or personality within your students during the transition to online teaching?

Speaker: 1
Only if they're having some issues with family. Uh mm-hmm. Interesting. I mean, what was kind of a detriment was sometimes the piano was in the main part of the home and the microphones would pick up the mother doing the dishes or the father doing the dishes in the next room. And that's all I could hear. And so it's really important if they could find a time when there were no oral distractions mm-hmm. or if they had a piano in their own room, that would be better.

Speaker: 0
Yeah.

Speaker: 1
So that was an issue.

Speaker: 0
That makes a lot of sense. Yeah. There's like extra sound. Um, did you notice any changes in like, kind of like mood though, in terms of being locked down and like, not being able to, like, the students not being able to like, go out and socialize maybe with other people maybe coming into the lesson, feeling a little bit more down than usual because of that reason? Or maybe notice that some people were more happy because they didn't, they got more chances to just be by themself, especially in the dorm setting.

Speaker: 1
Right?

Speaker: 0
Yeah.

Speaker: 1
Um, well for all of us, it was kind of disconcerting just to be by ourselves and it got to them just, they couldn't go out so much.

Speaker: 0
Yeah.

Speaker: 1
I remember that one time we had some covid get into the school, and so they had a lockdown. So it was frustrating that I would be teaching in my studio mm-hmm. But the students had to stay in their room and if they didn't have a keyboard, they couldn't have a lesson. The pianists were allowed to come over to the piano building I, and have their lesson on, on the piano mm-hmm. And they were assigned an hour beforehand to practice warmups. I see. It's, uh, there were, but in the piano building, the wifi wasn't so great. So once it would work. Okay. But then once this, this girl was playing and I was listening, I couldn't quite tell, so I opened my door and I went two doors down and opened the door. I said, okay. Did play that for me and see, oh, you're doing okay. It's the right note. You're doing right. And I go back to my studio, funny where you're teaching this student, but they're just two doors down.

Speaker: 0
Oh, that's actually funny to think about. That's because you're essentially locked down, but you're probably within the couple feet of each other and you could, it's like, ah, it's so close. We can have a lesson, but we can't.

Speaker: 1
Yeah. Well when you're at a boarding school like this.

Speaker: 0
Yeah.

Speaker: 1
Uh, um, now the voice department, they have two studios for one teacher. And so the student will go into one studio and sing to the microphone. And then in the other room is the teacher with the accompanist.

Speaker: 0
Oh wow. Interesting.

Speaker: 1
Somehow they worked it out where there wasn't a lag.

Speaker: 0
Wow. That's really interesting.

Speaker: 1
Actually, That was really safe because the people who had a lot of, uh, mist from their mouth, like when players, brass players and singers, had to be careful about covid.

Speaker: 0
Yeah. Yeah. That totally makes sense. They have to be extra careful.

Speaker: 1
And Yeah. When we did teach, uh, allowed to teach one student mm-hmm. uh, with one teacher, we had to be 15. Let's see, we had to be five feet away from each other.

Speaker: 0
Okay. I see. So Yeah, Big, big classroom space or big studio space.

Speaker: 1
Yes. And we allowed only 28 students in the recital hall.

Speaker: 0
I see.

Speaker: 1
Or let's see, I think we only add 200 in the main hall, which would normally seat a thousand.

Speaker: 0
Yeah.

Speaker: 1
So those were good steps to take. And we all had to sit two seats away from one another.

Speaker: 0
Wow.

Speaker: 1
You probably did that too.

Speaker: 0
We had something similar as well. I don't remember the exact number of people that were allowed in the recital hall, but it was like very few people. This was like in, in the height of Covid though. Um, and then I believe that in terms of lessons, I think there was a period of time when remote lessons were only doing remote lessons. That was only for a couple of months. But then after that, as long as I think it kind of depended on the teacher and the student. If we were wearing masks, you could kind of unofficially have a lesson. But if anyone had some sort of slight illness, even if it wasn't covid, then there's just no risk and you're just, just stay home in quarantine.

Speaker: 1

Well, we were required to wear masks anytime we were in a class, uh, concert. Any kind of a group setting mm-hmm. But in teaching it was optional.

Speaker: 0
Interesting.

Speaker: 1
Interesting. Yeah. And so we were one-on-one, we didn't have masks. Yeah. Well I got covid Oh no. That's the only way I would have gotten it. Yeah. That Faculty of like nine people, the two of us Got it. Oh wow. And there were about seven students who got it. This was in July.

Speaker: 0
Oh, that's a lot. Wow.

Speaker: 1
Well, when you had like 30 students. Yes.

Speaker: 0
Isn't it That's that's a big percentage of the 30 students.

Speaker: 1
And still we were wearing masks indoors all the time. Except for the teaching.

Speaker: 0
Yeah. All right, I'm going to go to the next question. Um, so I guess this being said, how many of your students would you say percentage wise, like just giving an estimate? Preferred online teaching and how many preferred to go back into in-person teaching?

Speaker: 1
I think everybody preferred to go back to in-person teaching.

Speaker: 0
Yeah. Yeah.

Speaker: 1
Because it makes sense. Yeah. We had to deal with making the best of what we had. Yeah. It's better than not having lessons at all. But of course everybody preferred it in person. Totally. I had a student I've taught her for a couple years. Uh, and then I taught her during the camp when everything was online

Speaker: 0
is this student, have you taught the student in person before and then switched to online? Or has this student always been an online student?

Speaker: 1
It's always online. Only. Last summer I taught her in person Wow.

Speaker: 0
Cool.

Speaker: 1
That's right. And then Chinese students, it's convenient. They just also have a lesson on Zoom. Um, and I can continue teaching them cuz one of my students of two years couldn't come back for his senior year or the continuing lessons. Mm-hmm.

Speaker: 0
That's amazing. So it allows him the opportunity to, he's not able to come back and live here, for example.

Speaker: 1
Right.

Speaker: 0
Yeah. Totally. Totally. So I guess that leads me to my next question, which is, what are some advantages? I mean, I guess we just talked about some advantages for students taking online piano lessons, such as the distance factor. If they really want to work with you, they'll still be able to. What are some other advantages such as? Um, for example, there's the aspect of if you have different camera angles, for example, I know some teachers use that, some PE teachers put their angle towards the side or they'll take their phone and then they'll just focus it on a certain area. It helps a student kind of like focus on where to look like, okay. Like look at my fingers, fingers. I'm gonna show you a technical motion from the side. You can really see the angle of the wrist from the, from above. You can kind of see what finger numbers you're changing. Are there any advantages that you can think of? Um, like in that aspect or anything else?

Speaker: 1
Uh, I can't think of anything other than the disadvantages, dealing with what we have and it's better than not having lessons. Yeah. Um, and to have people learn to focus because we're in a class, but we need to respond.

Speaker: 0
Yeah.

Speaker: 1
Um, you only think, I think of it as a disadvantage where you've got the lag and you can't, can't be right there with them. Yeah. Well Also you talked about fingering. Mm-hmm. Um, I have difficulty finding, watching their fingering in the left hand.

Speaker: 0
Yeah.

Speaker: 1
I said, you know, let me see your fingering for that. I see. So sometimes they have to tell me or they can put the camera close and I generally can see it, but there might be a question That makes sense.

Speaker: 0
That makes sense. Because you're usually on the right side of the student. Yeah. Typically.

Speaker: 1
Yeah. Now sometimes I'll take a picture of my fingering mm-hmm. on camera and I'll send it to them. So they have instantly, of course we did that in person anyway. Right. Instead of writing down notes and Well, can I take a picture of that?

Speaker: 0
Yeah. Yeah. Let's see. Um, my next question will be, did teaching online alter your in-person teaching? And if so, how?

Speaker: 1
Um, alter my teaching online. I can't think of any right now. Um, I'll think about it.

Speaker: 0
Yeah.

Speaker: 1
Well it made me really grateful to be in person.

Speaker: 0
That's true. Yep. We can come back to this if we want at the very end. Uh, we don't, we don't have To.

Speaker: 1
Ok. I can't think of anything Right now.

Speaker: 0
Yeah. Yeah. And if you don't, that's okay. Um, let's see. Did you find yourself in your transition to online teaching in the first five to six months like the pandemic, did you find yourself using more energy, the same energy or less energy as teaching in person?

Speaker: 1
A little more stress because so often it wouldn't work or I wouldn't understand what's going on. I have to go to it and you can't just go to it from the studio. But they were really nice. They would periodically come over, but not right away. So that doesn't help. So it'd be stressful making sure everything's all set. I'm doing everything right. And all of a sudden it doesn't work. Yeah. Or if there's bad weather, especially in China, if there's a big storm going on, sometimes I can't have a connection. Right. Or sometimes the government in China will shut things down.

Speaker: 0
Yeah. That's interesting. That's actually something that Yeah, that's unfortunate. It's out of your control.

Speaker: 1
That's right. But that's stressful to deal with. Yeah. And then so often students will try to get online at the time of the hour, whereas they should be figuring it out beforehand so they can open up right away. Yeah. Because sometimes I might have to wait five, 10 minutes for them to show up.

Speaker: 0
Oh, okay.

Speaker: 1

I See. And so, you know, I don't think that's respectful. People should think ahead.

Speaker: 0
Hmm. I see. Yeah, totally. It's just like showing up for your lesson on time rather than just lagging. Right. Opening up your laptop at your lesson time.

Speaker: 1
But if they start early and they really have an issue and it's not their fault, they don't have any control of it, I can understand that.

Speaker: 0
Yeah, that makes sense. Yeah. Yeah.

Speaker: 1
Uh, people need to learn to think in advance.

Speaker: 0
Yeah. Um, alright, so there's two options for this question. This one's kind of like a select A or B type of question. Uh, so select your physical and mental fatigue after a day of online teaching during the beginning of the pandemic compared to in-person teaching. So the first option is, I am more fatigued after a day of online teaching than in-person teaching. Just generally, like when you were teaching online and you had a full day of online teaching, you were more tired teaching like online versus a full day of in-person teaching. Or the second option is you were more tired doing in-person teaching versus online teaching. Because for some people, physical interaction is very consuming and they just get exhausted. And then for some people teaching online is like, you have to like to shout, you have to really put a lot more kind of physical energy to show what you're talking about.. So I'm just asking which one was more tiring: A day of online teaching or a day of in-person teaching?

Speaker: 1

Uh, it was more, more exhausting teaching online. Hmm. Even though I don't have to go, go somewhere. Well actually I always taught in my studio. Right. Not now cuz I'm retired, but I would teach in my studio so I was there all day. That's very frustrating and that's exhausting.

Speaker: 0
That Makes sense.

Speaker: 1
Mm-hmm. but you understand I live five minutes away, so it's for somebody who has to travel an hour, 40 minutes or 20 minutes to work. Yeah. And then go back home, that's tiring also. Yeah. To do that in person, for me, it's not a big deal during the weather, I can ride my bike for five minutes. Oh yeah. Or if I drive, it's also five minutes Right. And, I would spend all day there and sometimes when I didn't have a student, I would practice of course and fill the time preparing for something else. Yeah. For a class. So the answer is, it was more stressful online teaching.

Speaker: 0
That makes sense. Given the context of like kind of your, your normal day-to-day routine. Right. Yeah. All right. Um, so I was going to ask, uh, where do you teach - I'm guessing you teach in your studio, but to describe your teaching setup. Um, so I know you mentioned you placed your camera on the side, but anything else that you use, like if you use like top camera or if you take out your phone sometimes to like show different views, um, I think you mentioned video conferencing platform, which is Zoom, um, FaceTime, you can play together with a student. And then any technological resources like cameras, some people go all out with lighting, microphones, uh, recorders, anything that helps pedals, anything like that.

Speaker: 1
I just use the computer and, um, I don't have an external microphone. Uh, the students sometimes have a good microphone.

Speaker: 0
Hmm Mm-hmm.

Speaker: 1
Um, I don't have special lighting. Mm-hmm. I just, I just set it up on the computer on the piano. During classes I used, um, YouTube a lot. I would download a YouTube passage and I would send it to the students. I would share it with them. I'd either talk or I'll assign them to listen to it. That was very helpful. I don't usually do that during teaching. What helps me a lot is if I do not have the score, I go to, uh, I M S L P and I, uh, download that particular piece. And so I can see that right away.

Speaker: 0
I see.

Speaker: 1
And I have a few students.

Speaker: 0
Um, That's amazing.

Speaker: 1
But I, but I mentioned that for a reason. What, what, what were we on?

Speaker: 0
What We were talking about? Uh, they kind of like technological resources and like what Oh, oh, yeah.

Speaker: 1
Yeah. That I download things so I can Yeah. Oh, I know why. I was gonna say, that's just an aside. I started giving music to special students and then I started giving music

to anybody who wants it because, um, for the rest of my life I'm gonna play mostly Bach, Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms. Because my whole life I've been playing recitals and I've been playing 20th century music and a lot of different chamber music.

Speaker: 0
I see.

Speaker: 0
Actually, I was wondering more about how Interlochen does this, but how did you generally feel about your students' home set up for their online panel lessons? Like if they didn't have a really good, stable internet connection or laptop or computer and list any issues that are related to equity, financial hardship because of that. How did you address this or how did maybe the school address this? Were there scholarships? Were there like reduced lesson rates? Um, especially like in the peak of Covid 19 At interlocking, there weren't reduced rates.

Speaker: 1
Um, the thing we've covered some of it, like, um, online, if the student had bad WA wifi or if there's a storm, it was very difficult. We'd have to just reschedule a lesson. Mm-hmm. or if you had, uh, distractions of parents or other students' children in the other background, uh, the microphone pick up that quite a bit. Mm, Mm-hmm. and then the lag on Zoom. But Yeah. Three seconds. That was disconcerting cuz you really couldn't tell about how they started the piece.

Speaker: 0
Yeah.

Speaker: 1
And so it's, it was very, it was really bad. I just said, send me a recording mm-hmm. which could be really fine, send it on email and, and I listened to it. Yeah. It's a good recording. And I told them, gave 'em suggestions, but then I followed it up with a lesson.

Speaker: 0
Interesting.

Speaker: 1
Interesting. Yeah. I had a student, um, I couldn't teach because of Covid last summer and this girl was from South Africa and so she sent me a recording of the Passata and I knew exactly what she was doing and what she needed. And so when we had a lesson, no, I wrote detailed suggestions and then we had a lesson and we could just, I knew exactly what she was gonna do. So we talked about those places. So that was really efficient. Mm.

Speaker: 0
Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Speaker: 1
as you asked for the disadvantages. Yeah.

Speaker: 0
Yeah. No, that, that, that totally makes it a lot more helpful. Mm-hmm. Um, oh yes. Last question. How did you handle studio recitals or anything like that? Um, related to like interlocking or for your private studio if you Came? Studio recitals.

Speaker: 1
Well, we had juries and so we had to um, either have the kids send a recording and then my colleague and I would listen to them, give comments. Or more often than not, they would have a Zoom and we were, we held the juries in a, a recital hall and we had Okay. A monitor. And so we would set up the computer to the system and so you could see them perform. We did that for master classes too.

Speaker: 0

Oh wow.

Speaker: 1
That was a kind of an advantage that we had master classes and sometimes it was for free. Uh, more often than not, we would pay them, but it was, uh, reduced rate because they wouldn't have to be here. They would just be in their office and they'd give the masterclass and our kids would play in person on the stage and they could hear what they're doing. You just had to remember to speak into the microphone.

Speaker: 0
I see what giving the masterclass means.

Speaker: 1
Right. And so sometimes it didn't seem as personal as the person being right there, but yeah. At it leads to this better than nothing. And we got quite a few guests who would come Totally on Zoom. So for that reason we had more guests.

Speaker: 0
Yeah. That makes it better. You don't have to pay for the accommodations and things.

Speaker: 1
Right. So we actually did juries and uh, solo recitals, this one boy from Vietnam and he sent, he did his recital online live.

Speaker: 0
Wow.

Speaker: 1
So it was like, uh, well it was like 10 o'clock in the morning for us, but 10 o'clock at night for them. Yeah.

Speaker: 0
Wow.

Speaker: 1
But that worked out. Yeah.

Speaker: 1
Okay, well thanks for having me and getting, picking my brain. I hope I've helped a lot of the stuff that I mentioned. I'm sure you experienced yourself in your Zoom teaching.

References

Bellelo, Rebecca Carter. "Musical Achievement and Attitude of Beginning Piano Students in a Synchronous Videoconferencing Lesson Environment." Journal of Research in Music Education, vol. 65, no. 3, 2017, pp. 345-358.

Buchanan, P.A. (2015). Feldenkrais Method. In P. Ennever, L. C. Hyer, & E. M. Brown (Eds.), International Encyclopedia of Rehabilitation. https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/medicine-and-dentistry/feldenkrais-method

Bughin, Jacques, and Jonathan Doogan. “A New Way to Measure Word-of-Mouth Marketing.” McKinsey & Company. McKinsey & Company, February 5, 2018. https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/a-new-w ay-to-measure-word-of-mouth-marketing.

Bulletproof Musician. "Tim Topham on How to Maximize Your Effectiveness When Teaching Lessons Online." bulletproofmusician.com, 6 Apr. 2020, https://bulletproofmusician.com/tim-topham-on-how-to-maximize-your-effectiveness-when-teaching-lessons-online/.

Callahan, Michael. “Teaching and Learning Undergraduate Music Theory at the Keyboard: Challenges, Solutions, and Impacts.” Music Theory Online, 21, No. 3 (2015): 1-21. http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/1845754029?accountid=12085

Chen, Sheng-Ying, and Shih-Hua Chen. "The Effectiveness of Online Piano Teaching during the COVID-19 Pandemic." Frontiers in Psychology 12 (2021): 649662. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.649662.

Crappell, Courtney. Teaching Piano Pedagogy: A Guidebook for Training Effective Teachers. United States: Oxford University Press, 2019.

Daugvilaite, Dainora. "Exploring Perceptions and Experiences of Students, Parents and Teachers on Their Online Instrumental Lessons." Journal of Music, Technology & Education, vol. 13, no. 2, 2020, pp. 195-214.

Delorko, Ratko. The Nuts and Bolts of Online Piano Teaching: Long Distance Teaching Demystified. Germany: tradition, 2022.

David Mullins, William. “A Survey of Piano Teachers Whose Students Have ADHD: Their Training, Experiences, and Best Practices.” OhioLINK. Ohio State University, June 8, 2016. https://www.ohiolink.edu/content/ohiolink_electronic_theses_and_dissertations.

Dumlavwalla, Diana. "Transitioning From Traditional to Online Piano Lessons: Perceptions of Students, Parents and Teacher." International Journal of Instruction 13, no. 1 (2020): 173-188.

Greher, Gena. "Virtual Piano Instruction for the College Learner." Journal of Music, Technology & Education 7, no. 1 (2014): 25-37.

Gudenau, Sarah. "The Challenges and Benefits of Virtual Piano Lessons During the Pandemic." The Oakland Post, 28 October 2020, https://oaklandpostonline.com/41958/features/the-challenges-and-benefits-of-virtual-piano-lessons-during-the-pandemic/.

Hamond, Luciana, Evangelos Himonides, and Graham Welch. "The Nature of Feedback in Higher Education Studio-Based Piano Learning and Teaching with the Use of Digital

Increasing Productivity and Efficiency in Online Teaching. United States: IGI Global, 2016.

Johnson, Carol. "Teaching Music Online: Changing Pedagogical Approach When Moving to the Online Environment." International Journal of Music Education: Research 35, no. 1 (2017): 67-78.

Kim, Y., & Lee, J. (2019). A study on the impact of online piano lessons on college students' piano performance, motivation, and learning satisfaction. International Journal of Music Education, 37(2), 194-207.

King, Andrew. "Exploring teachers' and Pupils' Behavior in Online and Face-to-face Instrumental Lessons." British Journal of Music Education 35, no. 3 (2018): 299-316.

Lee, J. & Park, H. (2020). Difficulties in Maintaining Proper Technique and Posture in Online Piano Education. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 17(17), 6163. doi: 10.3390/ijerph17176163

Ma, Runtao, and Runchun Ma. "Piano Education Online: Challenges and Solutions." International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning (iJET) 13.12 (2018): 194-207.

Monroe, Martha Frances. "A Descriptive Study of the Faber Series Piano Adventures and Its Implications for Piano Pedagogy." PhD diss., University of Mississippi, 2012.

"Normal Attention Span Expectations by Age." Brain Balance Achievement Centers. Brain Balance, 2023. https://www.brainbalancecenters.com/blog/normal-attention-span-expectations-by-age#:~:text.

Patterson, Daniel. “The Piano Teacher's Ultimate Facebook Guide.” Grow Your Music Studio, 2016. https://www.growyourmusicstudio.com/guide/fb-guide-growyourmusicstudio.pdf.

Pike, Pamela. Dynamic Group-Piano Teaching: Transforming Group Theory Into Teaching Practice. United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis, 2017.

Pike, Pamela. "Educating Musicians to Teach in the 21st Century: A Case Study of Piano Pedagogy Training That Prepares Musicians to Teach Synchronous Piano Lessons Online." Journal of Music Teacher Education 27, no. 3 (2018): 28-42.

Riley, H., MacLeod, R. B., & Libera, M. (2016). Low Latency Audio Video: Potentials for Collaborative Music Making through Distance Learning. Update: Applications of Research in Music Education, 34(3), 15-23.

Smith, Stacy Leigh. "A Comparison of the Effectiveness of Traditional Piano Instruction and Computer-Assisted Instruction in the Development of Elementary Piano Performance Skills." PhD diss., University of Mississippi, 2001. https://egrove.olemiss.edu/etd/1027/.

Walton, Carly. “How to Attract Online Music Students.” Teach Music Online. Teach Music Online, September 8, 2021. https://www.teachmusic.online/blog/how-to-find-quality-students-as-online-music-teache r.

Kraft, Matthew A., and Nicole S. Simon. “Teachers’ Experiences Working from Home during the COVID-19 Pandemic.” UPBEAT. Teach Upbeat, 2020. https://f.hubspotusercontent20.net/hubfs/2914128/Upbeat%20Memo_Teaching_From_H ome_Survey_June_24_2020.pdf.

Wise, Nicole., Rosenfeld, Dr. Alvin. The Overscheduled Child: Avoiding the Hyper-Parenting Trap. United Kingdom: St. Martin's Press, 2010.