

My thanks to all of you for attending my Webinar. I really appreciate the great questions and wonderful comments. Please feel free to contact me (steckturner@hotmail.com) if you have additional questions. Also explore the Facebook group Piano Teachers for Special Needs for answers to your questions (a suggestion from Dana).

Q: What is the name of the book with note names in the notes?

A: The pre-notation with alphabet letters within the note values was taken from Walter & Carol Noona's Young Pianist Series, Solo Book, Primer, p. 12 (Lorenz). The type of pre-notation is used in almost all of the Primers/Book 1's of the various Noona method series: Noona Basic Piano, the Gifted Pianist, and Noona Clavier. It is not used in the very first series, Mainstreams Piano Method, and I do not know about the final series, Comprehensive Piano Library. All of these books appear to be out of print, but if you google the Noona's, you will find some copies on Amazon, eBay, and various booksellers.

Q: Who wrote the Waterfall and where is it printed?

A: The Waterfall is written by Melvin Stecher & Norman Horowitz. It is printed on p. 28 of Playing to Learn, Bk. 2 (Schmitt Music/G. Schirmer). Again, this book appears to be out of print but if you google it, you will find some copies on Amazon, eBay, and various booksellers.

Q: Where can you purchase a piano mat?

A: I made my mat. It is a remnant of naugahyde that I purchased at a local fabric store and then drew the keys with a marker. You must test the marker you plan to use. Some will smear and some become sticky depending on the mat material. My mat is over 40 years old and other than being a bit dirty, it is as strong as day one. You can purchase a mat at Music in Motion (Laura provided a phone number 1.800.445.0649). It is made of thinner material and has a shorter life. Others can be found on Amazon and at www.e-znotes.com as mentioned in the chat room.

Q: What method book is this?

A: I'm not sure where this question belongs in my presentation. Here is a list of books in order of appearance:

Step 3 Pre-notation book—the Noona mentioned above.

Step 4 Notation—Matthew is playing from Frances Clark Music Tree, as many of you guessed. I love the music in her books and her use of intervallic reading. I dislike the formatting so I have reformatted the pages we use.

Materials format portion:

Cluttered—If you want the title of this method, please email me at steckturner@hotmail.com.

Uncluttered—Donald Waxman Pageants for Piano, Introductory Pageant

Kitty Cat Book—Edna Mae Burnam Step by Step, Bk. 1

Color: Finding R.H./L.H.—Kowalchuk & Lancaster My First Christmas

Color: Difficult Notes—Hal Leonard Student Piano Library Piano Lessons, Bk. 1

Taping Patterns—Hal Leonard as above

Chunking The Waterfall—Stecher & Horowitz mentioned above

Closing video—Evening Song from Alfred's Premier Piano Course, Performance (I think), Bk. 2B

Q: As I scroll through your questions and comments, I (Sue) find many suggestions for method books from you. So, just what are the best method books for learning challenges?

A: There are no best method books. A creative teacher can teach from any method. What matters is how you use the material. As I said, you must decide your goals, the concepts you will teach, and your curriculum. All methods and materials can be adapted into your plans—you make it work. I would caution you to be really careful with the formatting. Therapists and speech pathologists have been consistent in telling me to present only the basic concept I am working with at the moment. Don't clutter it with superfluous illustrations and stories that could distract. Also please utilize the older method books. The music in general is very well written, quite musical, and interesting. In the end, attractive music is usually more effective than an attractive presentation.

Q: Any ideas for 3-4 year olds?

A: All of my Webinar materials work with young children. In fact, I started working with young children first. My class method for 4-5 year olds, Music for the Mini, was published in 1976. When my older daughter was born, I began working with 2 year-olds. It was only a short step from teaching early childhood to working with learning challenges. The basics are the same: simplification, hands-on, repetition, and patience!

Q: A comment from Patricia—For students with autism, colored page works better instead of bright white pages.

A: Thanks for your comment. Color is supposed to help with many types of disorders. I have tried it in several different formats—colored paper, colored overlays, colored print, etc. I have not noticed a substantial difference with most of my students. Reformating, enlarging and highlighting has worked well for me, but I'm ready to experiment again!

Q: Where do you get the tape mentioned?

A: I buy my highlighter tape online at Theory Time or Music Educators' Marketplace. You can also get it on Amazon as Alma mentioned. The best price I've found is at Theory Time.

Q: Is there a favorite software that anyone uses to create original music on digital staff paper that is fairly easy to use?

A: I have used PrintMusic! for many years. It is a simplified version of Finale. I also use StaffWriter (www.macmusicfonts.com), a MAC/PC hybrid font designed for word processing. It is a great tool for making flash card and theory papers. Both are friendly tools for those of us who are technologically challenged.

Q: Should we call the students disabled?

A: You could, but please don't. It is a labeling that many consider to be insensitive. Actually, when you think about it, we all are disabled in some way. I believe the current accepted, so-

called politically correct, terminology is “non-typical” learners. Prior to this, it was “exceptional” or “challenged” students/learners.

Q: How do you address a student with ADD in a group class?

A: This is a difficult question. So much depends on the dynamics of the class and the extent of the child’s deficit. I can offer three suggestion that have worked for me.

Keep the student within arm’s reach. If the child loses focus or becomes disruptive, give a little nudge. If you have parental consent and the parent is in attendance, the touch of a hand or arm might assist in regaining focus.

Have a secret sign that only you and the student know—a steady gaze and a touch of your head, nose, ear, etc. to indicate the student needs to refocus. This works well with older students, 7 or 8 up.

Consider bribery—unbeknownst to the rest of the class, of course. If there is some little item that the child really desires, develop a behavior goal and plan, adding and/or deducting points, until the set goal is achieved.

Q: How could this apply to teaching violin? / I love these webinars but they’re heavily piano-centric.

A: MTNA is very piano-centric. Thankfully this becomes less true each year as we gain more and more non-pianists as members. I’m going to attempt to answer this—I have limited experience with string education. I played very mediocre viola through college, and my older daughter survived about half a year of violin lessons before she created total havoc in the class.

I think all of my presentation is applicable to string instruments—with modifications. The major change is applying improvisation and keyboard topography to the string fingerboard and bow arm. I remember my daughter loved to pretend play with recordings and her bow arm looked great. I would think such listening and movement could be extended to improvisation.

Her teacher put small tapes on the fingerboard for finger placement when she began to play specific notes. I don’t know how many manipulative materials are available to string teachers so these modifications might be a challenge. I seriously doubt there is a fingerboard mat.

The teacher, or an artistic friend, could draw a fingerboard on a floor mat, using lines to indicate strings and finger positions. There should be lots of learning activities that could take place on that mat—especially the relation of notation to finger position and down the road, shifting positions.

In regard to reading, a treble clef mat should be easier to teach than the grand staff, especially since the lowest violin note is G. The guide note approach should work super well. The only difficulty might be teaching the leger lines below the staff.

My suggestion would be to start with one idea and explore it extensively while still retaining your current successful activities. Students will let you know what doesn’t work, and parents

can often suggest a better alternative or tweak. Remember you are teaching a student with limitations. Your goal is to produce to best musician possible while experiencing joy, growth, and success along the journey. Enjoy your journey!