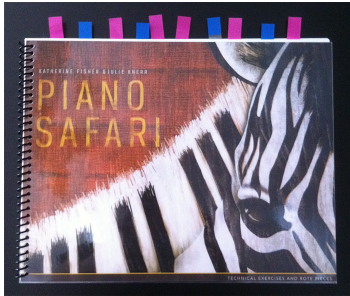


MINI ESSAY 10: HOW TO TEACH READING PIECES

By Dr. Julie Knerr

For all **Reading Pieces** in **Piano Safari® Repertoire Book 1**, the general teaching process is as follows:

1. Put blue page tab on the page to denote it as an **In Progress Piece**.



2. Play the piece for the student (with teacher accompaniment if possible) and sing the words to give him a sound model.
3. You play the student part while he points to the notes on the page and sings the finger numbers with you.
4. Analyze the piece and find the hand placement.
5. Introduce the piece using the **Teaching Strategies** of **Practice in Your Brain** (in small chunks), **Pointing**, **Playing**, **Singing**, **Counting Insurance**, and **Slowly**. Always check for good technique.
6. Ask the student if he feels like he knows the piece well enough to practice it at home.
7. Student practices each piece at home 3 to 5 times per day. Do not be dogmatic about the number of times a day. The basic goal of practicing is to learn the piece and then to keep the piece good for the rest of the week. **"Learn it! Keep it!"** Some children like knowing how many times each day to play a piece. Others are aggravated by such strictness.
8. At next lesson, use **Preemptive Insurance** to jog his memory about what the piece sounds like.
9. He plays while you use **Insurance** and check his technique.
10. He plays alone if you feel he can play without **Insurance**.
11. When confident, add the **Teacher Accompaniment** and sing the words.

12. Decide whether you think the piece is good enough to be completed. Generally, for these short **Reading Pieces** (in contrast to the more complicated **Rote Pieces**), if you can answer yes to all the questions below, the piece is ready to pass:
- Can the student play the piece alone with correct notes and rhythms?
 - Is the student playing with fluent and solid technique (good piano hand shape, firm fingertips, singing tone, bouncy arm on each note in either *non legato* or *legato* articulation)?
 - Can the student play fluently, without either you or he fearing that he will make a mistake?
 - Can the student play his part confidently while you play the teacher accompaniment?
 - Can the student play with good musical shape as indicated by the piece (tapered phrase endings)?
 - If you want to be extra thorough in knowing if the piece is mastered, can the student play the piece by memory with confidence and without mistakes?
13. If you feel that the piece is completed and ready to pass, he puts a sticker on the page. Ask him if he wants to keep it as a **Review Piece**. If he answers, "No," the piece is completed. Take off the blue tab. If he answers, "Yes," replace the blue tab with a pink page tab to denote it as a Review Piece. The student should practice the Review Pieces each day "for fun." I frequently have students who want to keep all their newly passed pieces as Review Pieces! This is great, because then I know they will stay at the piano longer and grow in confidence and joy at the piano by playing pieces they like. It also lets me know what types of pieces the student likes.
14. Each week, save some time to play all the **Review Pieces** so the student has a chance to play pieces he knows in a performance-like setting. Ask the student if he still wants to keep each Review Piece after he plays it. Remove pink tabs as he gets tired of a piece and says he does not want to keep it.