The Joys of Learning for Teachers  Jenny Macmillan

The joys of learning! As an adult as well as a child — indeed, perhaps more so as an adult!

One of the many joys to me of teaching is that is I am learning all the time — through teaching my own young pupils and their parents, each with their own personalities and idiosyncrasies, and through training teachers, each with their own skills and needs. I am also learning through attending ESA events, EPTA events, observing at workshops, reading books and journals, and identifying articles and blogs on the internet.

But there is also a place for specific, targeted learning, and this is offered by Teacher Trainers through ESA Continuous Professional Development (CPD) courses. Unlike some organisations, the ESA does not have a policy that its teachers should attend a certain number of hours of CPD courses in order to remain on its register. However, it does recommend CPD for all its teachers in order to maintain quality Suzuki teaching, to develop good role models for students and their parents, and to research effective everyday teaching methods.

Is it important for teachers to keep up-to-date with developments and continue to hone their skills? I certainly think so. I am well aware that the more I learn, the more I realise how much there is to learn, and the more I want to find out and gain further experience. Why not make a New Year’s resolution to attend at least one CPD course this year? You’ll pick up new ideas which you can apply to your teaching to make your lessons come to life in different ways. Your pupils will benefit — they’ll enjoy their lessons further — and will make even better progress. Even just chatting with colleagues is inspirational for teachers. The Suzuki Method™ works best when everyone shares ideas.

At the same time, this is a call to all Teacher Trainers to register at least one CPD course with the ESA every year. Registered courses are publicised on the ESA website, in a special targeted mailshot, and on the Suzuki Teachers Facebook page. Teachers will then be able choose from a wide variety of events and will benefit from a certificate of attendance to enhance their CV.

I organise Suzuki Piano Plus CPD Courses in conjunction with my Teacher Training courses. Amongst other topics, I cover Suzuki philosophy, parent education, teaching leading music educationalists, to give a workshop on sight reading for my pupils, which was observed by my teacher trainees. It was totally inspirational. Paul ensured all nine children, aged from 6 to 11, were interested and engaged for 90 minutes. The children had fun developing skills while doing intriguing clapping games, action games, identification games; the observing parents were able to learn while watching them; and the teacher trainees and I are now able to use these ideas with our pupils in our teaching.

There is such joy in feeling oneself develop as a teacher, as well as a person. Claudia Beltran Cubel says in her article My development as a Suzuki teacher (Piano Professional, Autumn 2017):

“I have learned to be a more positive person, to try to see the good side of everything, to appreciate the small details and to feel more secure in the execution of my teaching activities”.

I strongly recommend we all attend at least one course this year; and I hope teacher trainers will organise suitable courses and publicise them through the ESA.

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For more information on how to register a CPD Course see page 6 of the ESA TT Manual http://digital-e-brochures.com/EuropeanSuzuki/TTTraining2017/6/ or contact the ESA Office on esa@europeansuzuki.org