

My business encompasses piano sales, piano service and piano lessons.

Our experience is that elementary students make the best progress on real pianos (even when un-tuned and poorly regulated). Students that start on "digital pianos" proceed at a more leisurely rate and usually stall about the third or fourth year heading into early intermediate.

The fine motor skills needed to control a piano musically simply do not develop on a digital piano. There are expensive ones that address this issue but they cost more than an affordable (not the cheapest, I don't carry what I don't want to warranty) upright piano. People that buy digital usually do it on price.

I have discussed this with parents of students who were getting "stuck" and they purchased a real piano and the student took off and has become quite an artist. Not halfway through high-school and taking college piano credits is a real option for them now.

Our policy states that we will accept beginner students who have a digital piano for two years only and then they must upgrade or find another studio. We refuse to take students that have Wal Mart "keyboards" etc. There must be weighted keys, dynamic control via the keys and a sustain pedal ie a digital piano. The result is students that make rapid progress and show it off twice a year at recitals and get independently adjudicated by the Piano Guild annually. When it comes to piano, there are no shortcuts.

Andrew Anderson of Artisan Piano, Laredo Texas