

Animated Documentary Pitch



Interviewee: Sandra Wright Shen, Concert Pianist and Educator.

Overview: My animated documentary will focus on the portion of the interview from 21:00 to 23:50 minutes. The story told is of my subject's experience teaching a young student for the first time. Having no prior experience, it was difficult for her to connect with the child and successfully teach technique in other ways than through just giving verbal instructions. Seeing how a friend taught the child differently through a creative way - and how effective it was - taught her the importance of processing each student's individual level of understanding and realizing that the best way for them to learn may be different from others.

Title: The First Lesson

Goals: Animation is important in a profile documentary because it gives us the ability to create a visualization for intangible experiences, such as the emotions of the profile subject during important events. I'd like to be more creative in my choice of visuals so that I could metaphorically display emotions - like through mountains for fear, or breaking through a spider web as overcoming an obstacle - while incorporating a few literal visuals.

Timeline: (by the last day of each week)

- 4/1: Finish planning. Create some scene drawings.
- 4/8: Finish scene drawings. Start working on animating sequences with the rough drawings.
- 4/15: Continue working on animating sequences.
- 4/22: Animation outline finished. Next week, begin refining details and color, etc.
- 4/29: Details and colors for each animated sequence are added. Start on editing.
- 5/6: Continue editing. Product is finished.

Planning by section:

20;53 - 21;28

"First, I was not prepared to be a teacher at that time. I was teaching as how I was taught so I had no idea how the student was perceiving my messages. I was just trying to dump all the information that I know as much as possible on them, and they could be just totally clueless [about] what I'm talking about, because I did not consider their level, their understanding, their vocabulary."

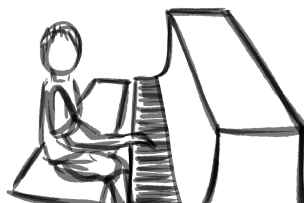
Not prepared: Walking to the classroom, seeing the small boy wave, mountains build up behind the room, rises with the student on it (student is on the peak), while the room lines disappear. Dark / black and white, cutting edge illustrations.

Inspiration for art style: *Persepolis*.



I had no idea how the student was perceiving my messages: Orthographic view, from view on a chair next to the piano bench, with the child sitting on the bench. Or, use this scene for the masterclass part, the student's hand leaps up with force, enough power to break out of the web. Perceiving messages: like a telephone. Teacher calls up from the bottom of the mountain (show via conversation cutouts, with symbols, while the student misunderstands (returning callout shows

something different). Ex. Sandra says ‘p’ for *piano* dynamic, but student thinks, *pressure*? Or: *forte*, but student thinks to build a fort and play. Or, *ppp*, and student thinks *ping pong parachute*?



Possible art style below - easier to animate:



Trying to dump information on them: trash can with crumpled paper and music notes, maybe piling around the student.

They could be just totally clueless [about] what I'm talking about, because I did not consider their level, their understanding, their vocabulary: Maybe light lines swirling in a large circle. Represents confusion / flexibility of the student, not knowing what is going on.

21;28 - 21;54

“So I remember one time I was teaching a young student, and there was this note that had a little dot. And that usually means short. You know, you let go of the note a little bit quicker. And so I was trying to explain to the kid, ‘This is staccato, that means short so you want to bounce it, letting go quick.’”

A note that had a little dot: Reminds me of Vishnu’s dots. Newton’s cradle maybe. Or a hand shot of Ms. Sandra demonstrating.

21;54 - 22;22

“Okay so the next week, the kid comes back and it’s still very long and somehow I said, ‘Can you remember? With the dot, that means just let go quick.’ Okay. And then the next week comes, the note is still there. So week after week, the mom got so frustrated that Mom jumped up from the seat and said, ‘Take your hands off! Teacher told you many times, it’s short!’”

A bouncy dodgeball, but the student is represented by a deflated dodgeball.

Mom got so frustrated: Hand destroying a chess set? Both dodgeballs **morph** into chess pieces, and the mom’s hand swipes the child’s piece to the side. Or, the mom’s hand slamming on the ground, and trying to pump up the deflated dodgeball, to the point it explodes. Maybe excessive.

Or: Ms. Sandra’s hand from the previous segment morphs into the child’s smaller hand, which starts playing long notes and not letting go quickly.

22;22 - 22;48

“Anyway, so the following week, I had a friend who came and I asked him to come and give a masterclass. So the kid played, and of course, the teacher observed that he didn’t let go. So what the teacher said was, he asked the kid, “Is there any insect that you’re afraid of?””

I had a friend who came: Friend appears from a puff of air, looking sharp in a tie. Or friendly. Depends on the appearance of the real person. Pensive face when observing the student’s mistake. Exclamation mark when he gets the inspiration.

Is there any insect you’re afraid of?: Beetles and flies crawl on-screen, maybe on top of the student and teacher scene (instead of a jump shot to a leaf or other solid colored background).

22;48 - 23;17

“And then sure enough, this kid says, “Yeah, I don’t like spiders.” And then the teacher said, “Okay!” So he drew these little spiders underneath that note with the dot. “And then whenever you go there, you want to really bounce away, because otherwise there’s a spider beneath that note. And he would jump up and bite you. And you don’t want to get a spider bite, right?””

I don’t like spiders: Legs, but no spider. Dark and gray, a graveyard feeling. Hints of webs. Ghost-like.

Drew these little spiders underneath that note with the dot: The round part of the note grows 6 legs, falls to the ground from the staff, can crawl around.

You don’t want to get a spider bite, right?: The half rest on the staff morphs into jaws. **How do I get two rests to come together?**

23;17 - 23;47

“So you can imagine this kid, when he goes to that note, he’d just go like this! He totally jumped away. So that taught me so much about speaking and understanding my audience. Who am I trying to communicate with? And using their language, what they can understand, and then lead them from there.”

When he goes to that note, he’d just go like this! He totally jumped away: Staccato with so much force (body moves back too), that the spiders and webs hanging around the piano (front view, of the hands) shake for a moment and then fall to the ground.

So that taught me so much about understanding my audience: Perhaps a live interview shot. How do I visualize ‘understanding my audience’?



Who am I trying to communicate with? And using their language, what they can understand: Shapes of young, middle, old individuals (not in this order) appearing in front of the previous one as the camera moves away. **How do I visualize language?**

Lead them from there: maybe a map laid out.