

## Why Doesn't Every Good Boy Do Fine?

Methods for learning the piano abound. Now University of Ottawa researcher Gilles Comeau is applying advanced science to discover what really works.

Researchers are exploring the delivery of remote piano lessons by video-conferencing.

Piano instruction abounds with methods and mnemonics. But while devices like "Every Good Boy Does Fine" (the lines on the treble staff) may be helpful, learning the piano is a big challenge for students. The majority give up during the first year.

To find out why, Dr. Gilles Comeau at the University of Ottawa has put together the world's first lab focused exclusively on the scientific study of piano pedagogy. The lab brings together researchers with expertise in a variety of areas, from motivational psychology to bioengineering, and is equipped with suite of high-tech tools. Video cameras in the lab's studio are networked with digitally-enabled grand pianos, electronic keyboards and sophisticated software to track and analyze every aspect of the learning experience. Researchers are even taking advantage of the high-tech environment to explore the possibilities of delivering remote piano lessons by broadband video-conferencing.

Why pursue scientific research on learning to play the piano? Comeau can suggest a variety of reasons, including the large economic investment Canadian families make every year in music lessons. But he also has a broader perspective on

the lab's contribution. "Every time we study how learning happens in one field, it has impacts in others as well."

**PROJECT:** Piano Pedagogy Research Laboratory  
**INSTITUTION:** University of Ottawa  
**RESEARCH SECTOR:** Arts and Letters  
**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** Gilles Comeau  
**TRUST INVESTMENT:** \$494,657  
**CANADA FOUNDATION FOR INNOVATION INVESTMENT:** \$494,657  
**TOTAL RESEARCH INVESTMENT FROM ALL SOURCES:** \$1,236,642

