

# My approach to teaching music

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## What does music mean to me and what should teaching be

Music, being an art form, exists because we, as humans, strive to express ourselves, learn about culture, and have a world to escape to. In some cases, art becomes a career path as students work to become top performers and teachers. I believe it is important to keep all aspects in mind when teaching but also to conform to the needs of each individual.

When young people aged 3 and up come to me for lessons, it was most likely the decision of the parent or guardian. In that case, our (parents and teacher) responsibility to make this a pleasurable experience becomes of the greatest necessity. The best way to create a true performer, who strives for expression and culture, and has a world to escape to, is to surround their world of music with as many positive experiences as possible while having certain expectations and concrete structure. Positivity and stability are the essence of a safe world.

## Home practice and mistakes

Display anger and scolding when a student makes a mistake or does not practice as much as needed, and you will get a student who hates him/herself when making mistakes and not practicing. In turn, you will get a student who hates practicing in fear of making mistakes even during practice, you will take away the idea of a 'safe world' and you will reduce the number of positive experiences.

How should we approach mistakes and practice?

Mistakes can happen for too many reasons to explain. Some mistakes are to be ignored and some addressed. If they are addressed, it should be done with the most patience. Suppose a student plays an out of tune note repeatedly because he/she does not place his/her finger on the correct spot due to inattentiveness. I would have to choose between continuing to remind the student of this fact, or to let it go for a while. Should I choose to continue reminding the student to look at the finger, I would do so in the same tone every time. It becomes a reminder and not a scolding situation. It does not become emotional because it does not need to. It is only an out of tune note, nothing more. If it needs to be addressed further, as reminders may not help, I would isolate that note and requests that the student only focus on that note. Sometimes attention span is the cause of a mistake. If I ever see a student feel bad about an out of tune note, and become self-scolding, I know that said student has had a very negative experience regarding fixing out of tune notes. Instead of it becoming an important part of growing as a person and a musician, it has become something that is 'not allowed' in music, it has become something to be afraid of. When a negative emotion is associated with a problem, it becomes more difficult to resolve.