

## Session 4: Successful Communication with Students and Parents/Guardians

### Session Chat

#### What introductory activities are most successful for your online lessons?

Type #intro before your answer

- 00:50:40 Anne : #intro. Making students laugh to get relaxed.
- 00:50:43 Esther : #intro Ask them how their week went. Ask how practice went this week
- 00:50:44 Lee : #intro music flash cards
- 00:50:48 Tania : #intro highlights and lowlights of the week
- 00:50:59 Beth : #intro talk to them about their week like I always do and with parents also
- 00:51:03 Svjetlana : #intro Ask them how their week went, how the practicing went.
- 00:51:06 Adrienne : #intro. Asking them what they did during the week.
- 00:51:12 Pilar : #intro Having a beginning chat with them.
- 00:51:12 Mage : #intro First question is how is your practicing between going, but that also includes how they are doing they will share about something that happened that week.
- 00:51:14 Linda : #intro - technique and warm-ups (that's what we normally do) (after the chat at the very beginning, of course)
- 00:51:19 Jane : #intro - copy cat, where I play a simple one hand melody and the student listen and repeat
- 00:51:55 Susan : #intro: technique....scales, triads
- 00:52:00 Jane : #intro - for older student, technique
- 00:52:10 debbie: #intro - ear tests, sight reading, technique, some theory, the go into pieces.
- 00:52:26 Jessica : #intro. I always begin with a compliment. Telling my students how happy I am to see them! Ask about any highlights of their week
- 00:52:32 Michelle : #intro Quick check-in on how they are doing. And I'll usually say something about what I've been doing, or the weather. Then we check audio, etc.
- 00:52:38 Alexis : #intro: ask them about any physical activity they are getting. So much sitting, and that really affects the vocal instrument. A lot are now taking a walk before their lesson. Yay!
- 00:52:44 Janice : #intro: after initial chat, ask students if they have any questions about the material they're worked on during the past week
- 00:53:06 Maria : #intro I start my classes with a smile and see how they are, what they have done during the week and after that, the lesson that I asked the last class. From that, I do

everything I planned or some times, I have to go over until they can understand much better the lesson, etc.

- 00:53:12 Linda : #intro: it would depend on the age and level of the student, too
- 00:54:02 Alexis : #intro yes! Articulation exercises, tongue twisters. I encourage them to make up some of their own.
- 00:55:01 Mage : #intro Tests that are gamified, can really help with engagement after the initial greetings. Ear training, note reading, sight reading can all work.
- 00:55:02 Maria : Smile are important!
- 00:55:21 debbie: And reassurance that everything is okay, and safe
- 00:58:42 Maria : Autistic are very difficult sometimes, but they love music. I have one little autistic, I have to go over and over, its different from others. I would like to know more about autism.
- 01:05:40 Janice : Re poll 2: I try to do all of these things in in-person lessons, but I've noticed that remote teaching requires special attention to extra clear, step-by-step instructions.
- 01:06:11 Jane : I agree
- What communication strategies are most crucial for student success during a lesson? e.g. providing instructions verbally, demonstrations**
- Type #strategies before your answer
- 01:07:14 Beth : #strategies I text parents and/or students during the week
- 01:07:37 Pilar : #strategies providing verbally instructions
- 01:07:46 Mage : #strategies I try to be as human as possible and add as much in-person feeling as possible while incorporating effective technologies.
- 01:07:48 Anne : #strategies Breaking everything down very simply. Sometimes, lowering expectations helps for some students.
- 01:07:49 Jane : #strategies - While giving clear verbal step-by-step instruction is important, I notice that I need to keep my sentences simple and short during lessons.
- 01:08:00 Cindy: #strategies demonstrations are very helpful for online learning, provides a good visual for the student
- 01:08:03 Linda : #strategies: Very clear instructions, broken down into distinguishable steps. Changing my camera angle when needed so student can see my hands on the keyboard when demonstrating, or when showing a marking on the music.

- 01:08:07 Lee : #strategies I'll say something and then with younger students have them repeat what I asked. We have an agreement that when one of us is speaking the other is quiet so the mic doesn't block either of us.
- 01:08:08 Leanna : #strategies - both verbal and visual. Saying something in more than one way.
- 01:08:23 Joanne : #strategies I ask students if they need to stop for a 'stretch break' if we're working on something that's challenging for them.
- 01:08:40 Michelle : #strategies. Demonstration works very well for me. Recording demos as part of the zoom lesson helps.
- 01:08:47 Alexis : #Strategies: Breaking down challenging parts of the music. Showing them on piano the notes, going over a spot and discussing the theory behind it. It helps singers realize how important it is to understand the notation as well as listen to the song. They are getting better at theory!
- 01:09:20 Jane : #strategies - when audio glitches, then type the instructions on chat or text
- 01:10:09 Beth : can you do hat on facetime
- 01:10:14 Beth : that
- 01:10:17 Janice : #strategies: check in with student frequently to make sure they are able to follow what you're saying
- 01:10:44 Maria : #strategies , prepare my music, but I have a basket with boards with magnets, pencils, colours, card, a little piano and toys for the youngest. Usually, when I notice that the lesson is not going to anyplace, I re direct that until I come back, if it is possible. Some students, like to re play a favorite song, and I allow. Recording videos, playing at the same time, me, the student, me etc, they love it.
- 01:10:45 Lee : Beth, not on FaceTime. You would have to send a message which takes you out of FaceTime. Skype or Zoom is best for that.
- 01:10:48 Jane : Not sure as I've been using zoom only
- 01:11:30 Beth : lee yes but some are doing facetime
- 01:11:33 Mimi Tran: <https://www.mymusicstaff.com>
- 01:13:02 Alexis : Confirming lessons the day before, I send out a text.
- 01:13:48 Beth : parents are usually in there taking the notes that I usually do
- 01:13:53 Maria : Almost always I have to confirm, don't waste time!
- 01:14:02 Lee : Beth, I have a few too on FaceTime you just need to know there are limitations in FT versus the other sites which are more meeting based.

### What are some communication challenges with parents/guardians?

Type #challenges before your answer

- 01:17:51 Esther: #challenges I had to be more assertive with one family this week and ask them to cooperate more in printing out the music and homework. It was a gamechanger this week since I had already sent the music multiple times. It was a longer text for sure.
- 01:17:53 Hannah Salazar: #challenges Unresponsive parents
- 01:18:04 Adrienne: #challenges. It is sometimes very difficult to get in touch with the parents
- 01:18:22 debbie: periodically, parents will be trying to explain, at same point that I am teaching. I have to ask them not to speak when I am speaking.
- 01:18:33 Anne : #challenges Parents are quite busy as well. There is a lot to juggle.
- 01:18:54 deborah : #getting the parents to wake up the teenagers for their lesson! I'm getting tired of having to text the students myself!
- 01:18:57 Alexis : #Mostly I just never see them anymore. I am implementing more contact, but often parents just used to drop kids off at my studio.
- 01:19:20 Joanne : #challenges So many of my parents are so overwhelmed having to juggle work, home schooling AND music lessons..... I often need to gently 'nag' them to get a response, but I always try to remain empathetic with their challenges.
- 01:19:22 Michelle : #challenges. Parents not sharing/printing off their assignment sheets. Parents not sharing the zoom videos. Lack of reading instructions about how to use the technology, therefore unnecessarily repeating instructions.
- 01:19:25 Lee : #challenges the main challenges are with parents that were previously unengaged. Grandparents paid for lessons, brought them to lessons and now parents were responsible for making sure the tablet was charged, student was ready and not at a friends. This happened with a couple families, and really just exposed an issue that was already in place.
- 01:19:26 Linda : #challenges - none really - the parents are thrilled that lessons have continued via Zoom, especially now, with summer activities canceled due to COVID
- 01:19:32 Mage : #challenges Parents/guardians are often too busy working and don't notice notifications. Luckily I use an app to manage the lessons communications and assignments (Tonara). And I found that they don't always cooperate when I explain that we need tripods/stands for optimal camera angles. However, I found that providing a 15-minute tech setup consultation helps!

- 01:19:33 Nelly: i agree that parents involvement before and after each online lesson have been very helpful in easing the communication.
- 01:19:37 Tania : #challenges I've been more understanding about rescheduling to a better time where there are less distractions better internet connections.
- 01:19:38 Jessica : #challenges. Having parents set up the technology and then leaving their child alone with me online
- 01:20:13 Leanna : #challenges - literally, it is difficult to keep the parents involved. But, I have noticed even my younger students take things more seriously.
- 01:20:24 Esther :#challenges There's definitely much more chasing compared to in person teaching.
- 01:20:39 Evelyn :#challenges. My communications with the parents are better now than before when they just drop them off and I have back to back students so had no time to chat with them before.
- 01:20:56 Maria : #Challenges: My students I could say they feel more "adults and mature" online, that in person, that's why they act like that, in general, I mean, If not, I have to call the parents.
- 01:22:00 Maria : Call the parents should be the last option! They don't like!
- 01:22:09 Esther :#challenges I had to ask one of my students to put headphones on on her end to minimize the distractions in the house from the other family members. That helped
- 01:22:12 Linda : #challenges: I agree with Evelyn. The parents are often listening in the background. I make it clear that they are welcome to attend in-person lessons any time, but they are usually too busy. Now that everyone is at home, parents are hearing what happens.
- 01:22:16 Alexis : Compartmentalizing!
- 01:23:05 Alexis : Create some template exercises that are prerecorded for them
- 01:23:50 Alexis : also hit one note on piano and have them listen, and do the exercise without you playing, to improve ear training.
- 01:23:58 Mimi Tran: <https://www.appcompanionist.com>
- 01:24:08 Beth : I do that but tinny
- 01:24:52 Alexis : Yes, acapella singing is getting so much better!
- 01:25:56 Linda : EVERYTHING takes more time when teaching remotely.
- 01:26:31 Esther : Good points. It's also good for our voices as teachers if we are not talking all the time. I've started talking less and more quietly.

- 01:27:07 Alexis : I work through the pre-recorded exercises to help them realize how many options they can create from a simple exercise. Changing up the vowels, all kinds of things. I ask them to pick exercises and tell my WHY they picked it-how is it going to help the warm up process. Their evaluation skills regarding their own voices have grown leaps and bounds
- 01:27:08 Beth : Diane how do you get vocalists to stand far enough back to see how their posture etc is and still hear them well enough
- 01:29:28 Alexis : Good headphones will really help you hear them, with much less volume on your computer. Yes, posture, really being a thing now. They want to sit down...not good! and yes, position of the device they are using so they are not doing something weird with their neck
- 01:29:58 Beth : exactly
- 01:30:29 Alexis : I put the pre-recorded lessons on a page hooked onto my lesson with a link I send them. They have that open in a tab, no delay, and available for practice.
- 01:31:08 Alexis : prerecorded exercises, not lessons
- 01:31:18 Nelly : I agree that preparing ahead of time is crucial in succeeding. I find sending videos before each lesson to introduce new concepts helps a lot.
- 01:31:23 Scott Price: My pleasure - thank you so much for having me here with you today! You are all doing wonderful work - thank you!
- 01:31:38 Esther : Thanks again everyone!
- 01:31:46 Lesia Viveiros: Thank you everyone!!!
- 01:31:47 Jane : Thank you thank you thank you!!
- 01:31:55 Alexis : Thank you all!
- 01:31:55 Janice : Thank you, everyone. It's so helpful to know we're not alone in this.
- 01:32:00 debbie :Thank you!
- 01:32:01 Pilar : Thanks a lot for the wonderful comment of taking care of ourselves
- 01:32:02 Diane Murray-Charrett: Another note as far as accompaniments for singing student. Many ways to send them to students. RCM has accompaniments. I would send them some as well.
- 01:32:07 Nelly : Thank you to all of you !
- 01:32:18 Christina: thanks for many practical tips!
- 01:32:24 Mage : Yes the RCM accompanists are terrific!
- 01:32:27 Mimi Tran: <https://www.rcmusic.com/teachingonline>
- 01:32:43 Scott Price: Have a great day, everyone!

01:32:44 Mage : Thank you so much for hosting this webinar!

01:33:47 Michelle : Thank you to all those involved in this presentation.

01:34:40 Scott Price: Thank you, my pleasure as always!

01:34:45 Diane Murray-Charrett: Thanks for hosting us, RCM team!

01:35:01 Svjetlana : Thank you.