

HOW TO GIVE CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK



- Begin by complimenting something positive. Provide a clear explanation of what the student is doing right.
 - Provide constructive instruction. Explain how the student could improve.
 - Be sensitive to the individual needs of each student. Know how to protect your student's feelings, if you need to be gentle or if you can be totally candid.
 - Know how to make comments that are impersonal, by only critiquing the performance, not the person.
 - Monitor your own facial expressions and gestures so they do not disturb your student's playing, but encourage positive performance.
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- Make your feedback apply to what the student is working on to help them with their practicing.
 - When making an assignment for the next week, encourage a student's input. Urge the student to let you know if he or she has more or less time to practice.
 - When students get older, you might suggest they take notes in their assignment book to help remember what they need to concentrate on for the upcoming lesson.
 - When providing feedback, focus on one or two major points to practice for the week. Keep it short and to the point.
 - Encourage students to make self-evaluations. One way would be to have them make a recording or video of a song they are practicing. Begin by providing the student a list of specific questions to answer, like
 - 1) What did you like best about your performance?
 - 2) What areas need more work?
 - 3) What did you learn by observing yourself?
 - 4) Then at another time, ask the student to create his or her own questions to answer.
 - Keep track of student practice through student assignment books, by writing a short email at the end of a lesson, by making an audio tape, or whatever works best for the student.
 - Provide clear and concise directions on how to practice, and be precise.

- Provide genuine and specific praise. General phrases like, “nice job” or “well done,” have little meaning. Instead, be exact by saying something like, “I liked your contrasts between loud and soft,” or “I liked the way to kept a steady tempo throughout.”
- If you own a large repertoire of music with various degrees of difficulty, consider cataloguing the music. Then you could provide a lending library for your students to check out and to play various pieces for sight-reading, warm-ups, review, or just for fun.
- Besides verbal feedback, write your comments in the student’s assignment notebook to help:
 - Organize their practice
 - Improve their practice
 - Keep on track
 - Answer a question they might have
 - Remind you later of what was discussed
- As a goal, involve students to learn the building blocks of success for an outstanding performance. Always end a lesson with a positive comment and encouragement for the upcoming week of practicing.