

Brief Tips for Suzuki Teachers

This new column will feature a variety of brief tips for Suzuki teachers. To submit your own tip of 150 or fewer words, please email publications@suzukiassociation.org with "Grace Notes" in the subject line.

The following tips were presented during the session "Great Ideas for Your Studio: Mini-Presentations" at the 9th SAA Leadership Retreat in May 2011.

Studio Tips

In an effort to garner more attendance at summer institutes, we tried something different in addition to the usual posting of institute brochures and SAA journals in our studios.

The "Year Round Musical Motivation" hour occurred during group class time. Students who had attended institutes were interviewed about their experiences, as were several parents. The hour began with student interviews (a moment of considerable humor, as one student compared the merits of food possibilities in Edmonton versus Waterloo, another the soccer possibilities between group classes), a brief introduction regarding institutes, Dr. Suzuki's creation of summer school, the excellent faculties, the importance of the institute in a child's musical experience, to name but a few attributes. Then I left the room so that parents and students could exchange ideas and ask questions amongst themselves. The result? Five hundred percent growth in institute attendance for 2011 with participation at four different institutes.

At our yearly master class for senior students, we gave paper and pens to all the participants and auditors who came to listen so they could write comments and suggestions about the performances. These comments were shared in turn with the participating performers. The thoughtful analysis and perceptive feedback (from Book Two students and up) was so appreciated by the performers that we will strive to find new ways to integrate this written "performance review" by peers in future events.

–Karen Michele Kimmett, Artistic Director, Canta Arya School for Strings, SAA Violin Committee Member

Tips on Technology

Besides the common uses of a smartphone, here are a few I use regularly while teaching:

- **It is a portable music device.** I teach to the recordings, and I listen to them while working with a student. Having the recordings on my phone gives me easy access to them.
- **It has a camera.** Parents can better relate to pictures showing their own child as the example. I always take pictures of my students demonstrating proper posture.
- **It is a digital recorder.** If a student is having difficulties picking up the notes, I will record the piece at a slower tempo than the reference recording. I have also used it to train transfer students on learning the pieces by ear by recording "mystery tunes" and have them learn them by ear for the next lesson.
- **It has a stopwatch.** I often hear that it will take too long to repeat a passage as many times as I ask. I use the stopwatch function to show them how long it takes to complete my required set of repetitions. It always takes much less time than they anticipate.
- **It makes video calls** (most do). I have watched students play live using Facetime, Skype, and ooVoo.

–Rolando Freitag, Violin and Viola Teacher, Western Springs School of Talent Education and DePaul University Community Music Division

Develop a YouTube Channel of student performances. Mine can be found at DianaGalindoMusic.com.

Get a Facebook account and connect your students and families to each other.

–Diana Galindo, Suzuki Piano Teacher and Teacher Trainer

