

Middle school and High school students are not in band, orchestra, choir, etc. to be the best musicians in the world. Students join music to connect with the music, find things that they enjoy. As a lesson teacher, I want to focus on the main aspect of the joy students so desperately want in their instrument, while also giving them skills they can continue to use in their life; whether they continue in the music world or not. I want to ensure that their progress is inevitable, and is entirely their own work. I am merely a vessel of information to assist them on the journey of learning.

Through the information given to them, I want my students to also understand how to teach themselves. The idea of troubleshooting in my own playing is one that I was not introduced to until my college career, and even to this day I think about it constantly. As much as I can tell students, ultimately they are their own teachers 90% of the time. Private lessons are only half an hour or an hour a week, who helps students grow in all the time that they're practicing? Many students at the grade school level are used to being told what to do without reason; they know they're getting better, but why? I want to give each student the knowledge and confidence necessary that they can go into their own practice rooms, hear the issues that were pointed out (or new ones that they notice), and know how to figure out a solution. This, of course, is only possible if students know what to listen to. In the flute world, younger students typically split players into two categories; can they play fast or not? Much of what younger flutists consider good has nothing to do with the actual components of a successful flute player. As a teacher, I also have the duty of showing students all of the puzzle pieces to success by giving them a glimpse of what I am thinking and hearing. By explaining what I am hearing in their lessons to them, I am not only helping them find a solution, but also opening up their ears to parts of their playing that they've never noticed.

Past their own playing, I also want students to be able to listen and understand other music. Opening their ears to the world of music that I hear is one thing, but there also is an element of understanding what they're hearing. They can understand that a note in a melody isn't part of the original key, but do they understand what that means and why it's important? Are they able to hear similar dissonances in other pieces, and even the leisure music they listen to? The intricacies of theory and ear training may be foreign to the students, but the ability to pick up the basic structure just from listening will allow them to continue their path to self sufficiency not only in music, but will act as a motivator to continue to be a step ahead in all facets of life.

In order to help my students achieve these goals, as a teacher I must be organized and purposeful with what and how I teach. Everything that I tell my students will be useful information, that further their playing and musicianship, rather than filler statements for a problem to solve later. I owe my students that level of instruction, if I am to expect a certain level of performance from them. The standard that each student is expected to be at is the best that they can do, and it is my job to show them that I am also holding myself to the highest of standards, to provide them with an education that will provide them with knowledge they can use at any time.

As aforementioned, at the core of all this knowledge that students receive, is still the idea of having fun, the real reason many of them joined the music world. In each and every lesson, I make sure to remind students that their self-worth is not tied to how fast they can play, what chair they placed in region, or how hard of a solo they're playing. I remind them that the end goal is to create a space where there is emotion, musicality, and a product that **they** are proud of. I want each and every single one of them to go into the world confident in their own abilities to get through anything; to troubleshoot and be self-sufficient. Most importantly, I want all of my students to enjoy the process of creating music, and leave each lesson inspired to create.