

How to Get Your Students to Practice.

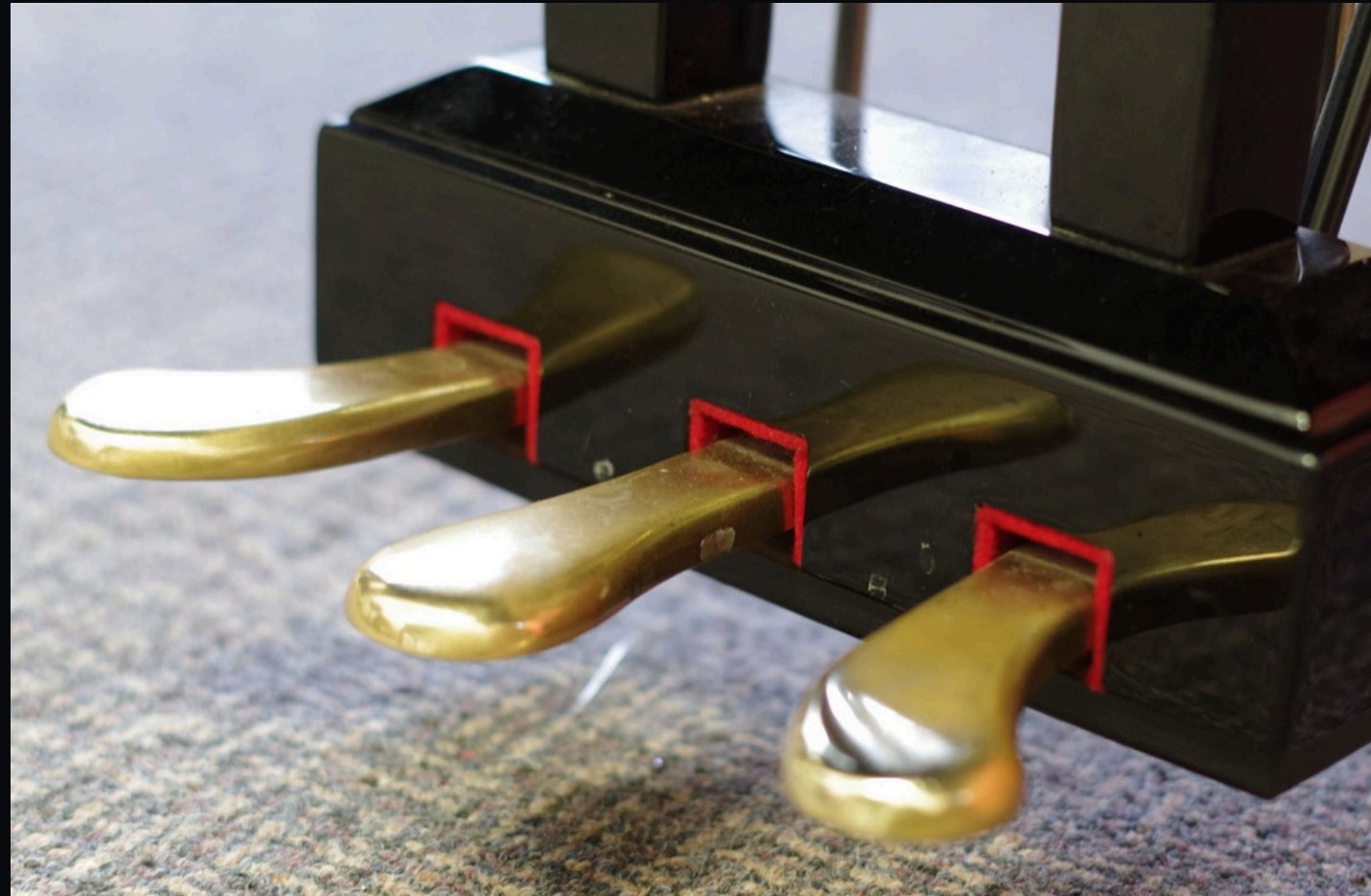
(You can't.)

Professional Development Workshop by
The Piano Instructor





The Piano Instructor



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This course is designed to address
how to get students to practice
consistently and enthusiastically.



You will be able to:

- Understand why you can't make someone practice
- Give examples of kinds of practice that can be demonstrated for the student should they choose to use them
- Describe the importance of studio design from the student's perspective

Who should take this course?

- Private music studio owners
- Group music instructors
- School music directors
- Homeschooling Leaders

Benefits:

- Researched-back methodologies provided
- Solutions for common issues are designed by you
- Immediately applicable techniques are demonstrated

Curriculum Designer



Tina L. VanOchten Dezerne is an award-winning educator, an award-winning film composer, educational producer, and pianist who has helped countless teachers and musicians achieve their goals.

With a master's degree in education and years of experience teaching and writing curriculum for companies like Pearson Publishing, Glencoe/McGraw Hill, and the Art Institutes and producing for organizations like PBS, you will learn methods for getting students to actually practice.

How to Get Your Students to Practice.

(You can't.)



The Piano Instructor
Professional Development Workshop

Motivation

The reason why you cannot make
someone practice is:

You don't know the motivation for
them being there in the first place.

They may not even know.

But what is motivation?

Motivation is the reason why
a person does something.

It's the driving force behind
human actions.

There are several types of motivation--
meaning there are several ways
folks are motivated.

achievement

affiliation

power

esteem

attitude

incentive

reward-based

fear

Here are a few ways.

A person stands on the edge of a large, weathered stone pillar. The sun is setting directly behind a second, slightly shorter pillar to the right, creating a strong backlight effect and lens flare. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue. In the background, a valley with green fields and small houses is visible under the twilight sky.

All motivation comes from within.



The science:

There are many influences
that affect a student's inner world.

A person's motivation is affected
by their environment, the
resources available to them, and
their general outlook
each day.

In addition to that, neurotransmitters
regulate our behavior.

Neurotransmitters are chemical messengers
that carry signals between neurons and other
cells in the body.

This means your
neurotransmitters regulate
your risk-reward processing,
your memory, and your
decision-making skills.

There are too many variables
that can dictate a person's
self-motivation,
and no piano teacher is
equipped to delve into
someone's brain with that
intensity.

However, if the student has come to
the lesson,
prepared or not,
then something is motivating them.

They've made the effort to get dressed,
travel, and deal with the public
to get to me?

And then pay me too?

What an honor.

I let that be enough.

It is enough that
they are there.

And since they are there,
and I am prepared,
we (both of us) are going to
have a great time.

I have studied,
and have been guided by
enough master teachers,
and have self-reflected enough
over the years, to
trust the process.

Practice is rehearsal for yourself.



The goal of practice is
to be able to play that thing that
the student wants
to be able to play.

It is not possible for you to
make your students
practice.

It is not your responsibility
as a teacher to make
anyone do anything.

Heck, you can
b.a.r.e.l.y.
make yourself do stuff!

Once you dispel yourself
of that idea,
the opportunities open up.

You can instead begin to focus
on everything else.

For example, you can focus on
creating fun-for-you
lessons during your planning.

When you begin focusing
on
fun-for-you
lesson planning,
the joy quotient
goes up, as does
musical comprehension
and mastery.

And students notice.



You may have pre-made lessons
or curriculum you have to follow.

That's ok.

Infuse those lessons
with personality.

Your personality.

You see, there's one type of
teacher--let's call them
Teacher A--who will read
word-for-word
from the curriculum they're given.

Their students will
receive instruction, certainly.

That's exactly what
is happening right now
with you and this course.

And then there's another type of teacher--let's call them Teacher B-- who includes anecdotes, jokes, and performances along with the information.

This is what occurs during
our live presentations, seminars,
professional development workshops
and keynote speaking engagements.

If you want to improve your students'
practice time,
be
Teacher B.

It is my experience that the
focus should be on creating a
classroom or studio
environment that invites a
person to want to
learn and explore.

In all of my years in education,
this is the only thing
I found that works.

I must take the time to create
environments of
curiosity and wonder.

Let's talk about
rigor.

The definition of rigor is:

the quality of being extremely
thorough, exhaustive or accurate.

In the classical music world,
“rigorous study” and “joviality”
are rarely in the same sentence.

But here they are anyway, in the same sentence!

Studying music “seriously”
versus
“casually” studying
are treated in vastly different ways.

This is the barrier
we encourage all teachers to breach:

You can study music,
and impart very technical ideas,
and create complex musical landscapes,
and still crack jokes.

Indeed, rigorous study combined with a
playful nature can create
music that transcends.

Consider
Børge Rosenbaum,
better known as
Victor Borge.

or

Doug Judy...I mean the Pontiac Bandit...

oops, I mean
Craig Robinson

or
Alfred Matthew Yankovic

or
Alfred Matthew Yankovic
(who ought to be in the
Rock n Roll Hall of Fame)

Summary.

You can't make someone do anything.

You can, however, bring your A-game and encourage others with your actions.

So, in service of encouraging students to practice, start with yourself:

1 Be prepared for your lesson. Know your marks, rehearse the technical parts, test equipment beforehand.

2. The only person who matters during those 30 minutes is your student, so show up, internally.
Be present and mindful.

3. Have fun.

Types of Practice



Athletes know that in the middle of a bout, we don't have time to think about what approach may or may not work.

When the situation
presents itself, we only
have time to act, and the
work that we did before the
event (the practice) will
determine
our win or loss.

This is true--
the purpose of competition
is to show the work
you did in practice.

Athletes find ways to
put ourselves in a
variety of situations to
decrease the chance of
surprise or
avoidable mishaps
during the actual
competition.



Contrary to the athlete mindset,
many teachers treat practice
as the end result,
when it ought to be a
stepping stone to mastery.

I believe that practice is necessary
for mastery,
so if I can practice under
a variety of non-ideal circumstances,
my performance will shine.

And so, as an athlete and
as a pianist, I practice in
many different ways.

There's variable practice.

This is when you learn multiple
versions of a particular skill.

For example, on the clarinet, there are at least two different ways to play B₄.

Variable practice will have you playing different pieces that require you to switch between the different ways to play B₄.

There's fixed practice.

This is what most of us
are familiar with:
this involves playing the same thing
over and over in the same environment
under the same conditions until you
get it.

There's part practice.

This is when you take a particular skill and break it down to its component parts and practice each of those parts

For example, on the piano,
practicing the fingering of a C major scale from A0 to C8 with
both hands requires breaking the steps down.

- First you need to get the fingering for one hand.
- Then you need to get the fingering
for the other hand.
- Then you need the coordination of both while keeping
your shoulders relaxed and your feet flat while breathing.

There's whole practice.

This is where you practice your skill
in its entirety.

This would be like practicing your C-major scale from A₀ to C₈ , ascending then descending.

There's mental practice.

This is where you imagine in your mind
performing the piece perfectly.

This is one of the most underrated
types of practice.

Studies have shown that practicing
your piece in your mind is incredibly
effective.

**The most effective type of practice is
distributed practice.**

This is when the instructor teaches a concept, and the student practices this concept in short intervals over a longer period of time.

Your Studio Space

One aspect of studio and classroom instruction
involves the environment,
an often overlooked piece of the puzzle.

Studio design is critical.

Is your studio space welcoming?

Here are additional
questions to ponder.

Some of them will not
apply to your situation.

Small adjustments
can yield tremendous rewards.



**1. Are your
instructors
well-qualified?**

2. What non-verbal cues does your studio exhibit?



**3. Do your marketing materials say,
“You’re welcome here”?**

4. Are your body language and vocal tone welcoming, moderated, and appropriate?



5. How does a student know when they've learned what they're supposed to learn?

What is your assessment procedure?

6. Do your students see themselves
in your instructors?

**8. What is your definition of
inspiring language
versus indifferent language?**

**9. Are students allowed to
disagree with you?**

If so, how do they know this?

If not, why not?

10. When was the last time you performed in front of a live audience?



Summary

Your studio design contributes tremendously to its success.

These ten questions can help guide your growth over time.

In this course,
we've established that you can't
really make someone practice.

Creating an environment of joy,
recognizing that they are motivated to show up
and using that fact to have fun while teaching
vigorously, and establishing an inclusive space
are great first steps.

These are just a few ways you can
increase the likelihood of your students
practicing, though.

For more options,
for a deeper dive into pedagogy,
and for more expansive techniques,
consider
The Piano Instructor
for your teacher training needs.

For consulting, curriculum design, keynote speaking, and studio audit, please email:

Lessons@ThePianoInstructor.net

with PRACTICE in the subject.





