

# Online Teaching Tips and Tricks

by Shana Kirk / [shana.kirk@gmail.com](mailto:shana.kirk@gmail.com)

## Handout / Resources

Online teaching is here to stay. This workshop covers the basics and provides some helpful tips for overcoming obstacles and even finding advantages to virtual teaching.

## Why Continuing Music Study is CRITICAL

- Provide needed continuity of a valuable activity
- You are already a trusted adult and source of help
- You are uniquely prepared to help
- Opportunities for new explorations and even new learners
- Music IS at the core of being human

## Choosing a Platform

- FaceTime
- GoogleMeet
- Skype
- Zoom
- Other Emerging Platforms (Rock Out Loud, etc.)

Prioritize your own needs and ask families to adopt your platform. Keep your own experience consistent.

## Prepare Your Space

- Keep your video shot uncluttered
- Keep out extra noise and distractions
- Bring energy and enthusiasm
- Dress professionally

## Prepare Your Sound

Make conscious decisions about all the things that can affect sound quality both coming from you and from your students:

- Device
- Platform / Platform Settings
- Accessories
- Acoustics
- Room Setup / Distances
- Internet Connection

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### Video Conference Sound Vocabulary

Spend some time getting familiar with the vocabulary of audio so that when you have problems or want to improve, you know how to ask the right questions:

- Echo Cancellation
- Original Sound
- Compression
- Source/Input
- Speaker/Output
- Transmit
- Receiver
- Mixer
- Interface

### Inputs: Mics Mixers and More!

Microphone Types:

- Lavalier clip: Discrete and good for video
- Headset: Good for voice
- Dynamic or Condenser mic on a boom stand: versatile for voice and music

Connection Options:

- Built in to computer
- USB Accessory
- Traditional audio connections (requires an interface)

### Output: Speakers or Headphones?

Ear buds (discrete, but uncomfortable)

Headphones (better sound, may also be uncomfortable for long periods of wear)

Speakers (don't always mix well with microphones!)

Connection options:

- Built in to computer
- USB accessory
- Traditional audio connections (computer headphones out jack or interface connection)

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## Mapping the flow of sound

Think of all the ways sound can come and go:



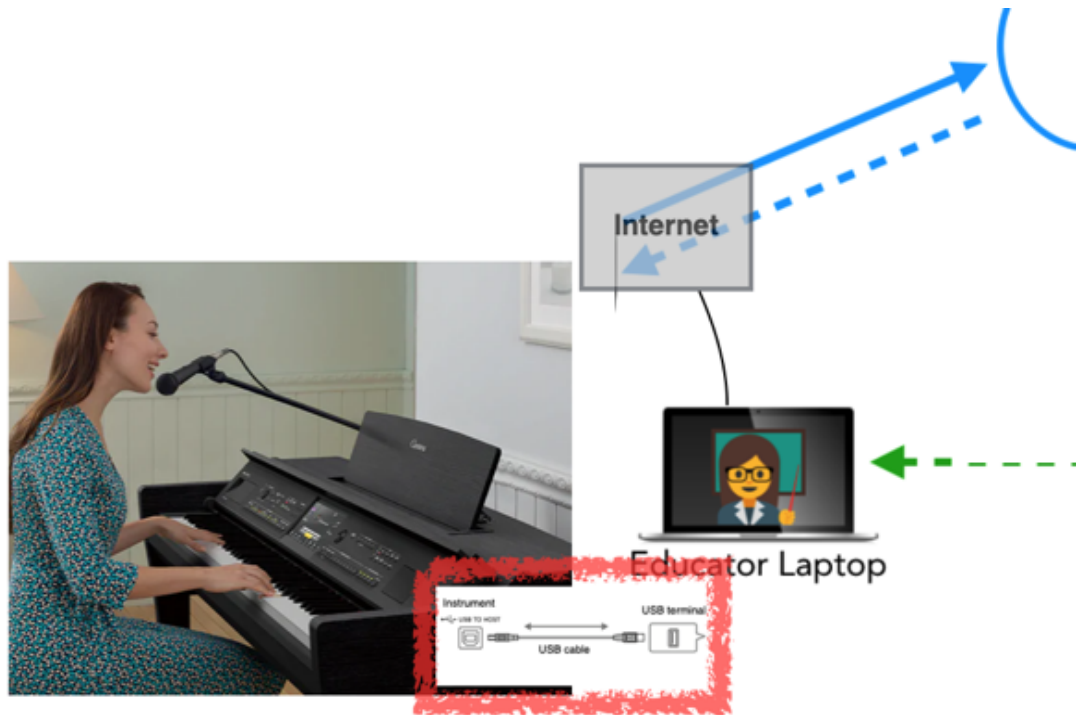
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## Advantages of a digital piano

Some digital pianos have a built in audio interface, and MANY digital pianos have an auxiliary output.



## Special Sound Connections

### MIDI Connections

- Internet MIDI ([timewarpotech.com](http://timewarpotech.com))
- Various “MIDI over RTC” websites, here is a very basic one: <https://glitch.com/~midi-rtc>

### Audio Connections Independent of the Conferencing Platform

- [Cleanfeed.net](http://Cleanfeed.net)
- [Jamkazam.com](http://Jamkazam.com)

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## Theory Online

- Pics of completed work
- Classroom Maestro ([timewarptech.com](http://timewarptech.com))
- SproutBeat ([sproutbeat.com](http://sproutbeat.com))
- YouTube ([YouTube.com](http://YouTube.com))
  - MusicalMindsOnline is a great example of single-concept scale videos

## Digital Scores

- IMSLP ([imslp.com](http://imslp.com))
- forScore (ios and Android app stores)
- MusicNotes.com (web, iOS, Android)
- PianoMarvel (web, iOS, Android)
- PianoMaestro (iOS)
- SuperScore (iOS)

## Communication with Students and Families

- Choose a method and stick with it
- Google Docs
- Google Forms
- Dropbox
- Email / Text

## Extended Learning Projects

- Creative projects—combine art and music
- Create silent film soundtracks (Library of Congress, here's a pre-made search: <https://www.loc.gov/film-and-videos/?fa=subject:silent+films%7Csubject:short+films>)
- Research projects that may also double as independent schoolwork

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## Put Your Skills to Work!

- Model good playing
- Model good technique
- Allow time for dialogue and exchange
- Give the student time to apply the concepts
- Break problems into small, digestible bits
- Plan your lesson time carefully
- Ask effective questions and help students become independent learners

## More Tips!

- Student with earbuds / mobile device? Wear a hoodie!
- Schedule stretch breaks and other wellness activities
- Change your seat height or stand periodically
- Have a backup plan
- Phone
- Share videos
- Make assignments and ask for video submission

## Even More Resources

- MTNA
- ClavierCompanion.com (Frances Clark Center)
  - Webinars
  - Tip Sheets
  - Magazine Archives
- YamahaEducatorSuite.com
- TeachPianoOnline.com