



CHAPTER 4

How to Teach Unforgettable Lessons & Classes

On Zoom & Google Meet

A Step-by-Step Guide for Educators

Here, you'll find everything you need to know to teach
amazing lessons online today.

Keeping Students Motivated

In an online learning environment, students have less opportunity to gather and share their work with friends and family, and fewer chances to celebrate their achievements publicly.

So, in an online environment, how can you keep your students motivated and inspired? When students are learning from home, how can you acknowledge their accomplishments so their achievements are memorable? How can you help them stick with their learning and keep them meeting their goals?

Helping Students Avoid Burnout & Stick to Their Goals

More students than ever are learning online, and many of these students are experiencing burnout. Hours of virtual school each day lead into extracurricular activities via video, and this constant overstimulation is exhausting for adults and children alike.

Let's take a look at a few ways you can help your students create and stick to their goals when learning online.

- **Work with students to set actionable & meaningful goals**

Talk to your students and listen closely to their specific goals, and build out plans to help them get there. If you're a language teacher and you have a student who wants to become fluent in Spanish, take steps to help them move towards that goal. If you have a student who simply wants to learn all the colors in Spanish language, shape their learning around that goal. Keeping lessons focused on where your students want to go will help them stay focused.

- **Create short term & long-term achievement targets**

Make sure your students have both short-term goals that they can achieve on a lesson-to-lesson basis, as well as larger long-term goals that they can work towards over time. Short term goals will help your students feel that they're moving in a tangible way towards the targets they want to accomplish. Long-term goals - like learning a challenging piece on piano - can be meaningful outcomes for students to work towards and a reason to celebrate their learning milestones.

- **Check in: again and again**

Without coming to your home studio each week or driving to a classroom for class, it can be harder for students to stick to their goals and get into the habit of learning. Students might also feel more isolated in their home learning environment, and that isolation can magnify challenges or roadblocks. Keep your students in the loop and follow up with them via email and text to make sure they feel seen, and to help them overcome any hurdles they might experience when practicing at home.

- **Switch up learning styles & break up lesson time**

If your students look like they're experiencing some Zoom fatigue, change up the focus of your lesson. If you've been focused primarily on technical skills like playing scales on the violin, take a break and take some time to listen to music together and learn how a professional violinist tackles a challenging aspect of a song. If a language student is feeling overwhelmed, switch gears from working on written language skills and work on conversation skills. Taking a break to stretch or play a learning game is ALWAYS an option.

Hosting an Online Recital

An online recital or student showcase can be a useful tool for helping your students gain performance experience, while also building a sense of community among your student base.

When you're hosting an online recital, you have two primary options. You can host a live online recital on a platform like Zoom, where students gather at a set time to share their work, or you can host a pre-recorded recital, where students submit videos of themselves playing, and then you gather together for a "watch party" to enjoy each others' work.

Let's take a look at both options:

1. Hosting a Live Online Recital Using Zoom

Live online recitals are a beautiful way to bring your students together, and are a great tool for motivating your students - young and old - to work towards a goal.

To host an online recital that's live, create a Zoom meeting by clicking the **schedule a meeting** button in the meetings section of your Zoom account.



Click **save** and then copy the invite link and share in an email with your students and their families.

Make sure to select **mute participants upon entry** so that audience members and students don't accidentally interrupt if they exit and enter the meeting room during a performance.

Mute participants upon entry

Automatically mute all participants when they join the meeting. The host controls whether participants can unmute themselves. 



Next, make sure you **disable participants annotation**, so that your participants don't accidentally draw or write on the screen during a performance.

Annotation

Allow host and participants to use annotation tools to add information to shared screens 



Allow saving of shared screens with annotations 

Only the user who is sharing can annotate 

Organize your recital in the same detailed manner you would an in-person showcase. Create a program, and distribute the program to participants and audience members via email before the performance date. Of course, students can rehearse introducing their piece and bowing to their audience, just like an in-person show.

During the recital, make sure your students know who's "on-deck" and allow students to mute and turn off their camera before they get started if they'd like to spend a few minutes warming up for their stage time.

During each students' turn, make sure you spotlight and pin that student so they're in the large view throughout their entire performance.

TakeLessons partner and cello instructor, Claire Mehm also recommends encouraging participants to share their applause for students in the chat, since it won't be possible for audiences to applaud in the way they normally would.

She recommends that, "If people that are attending want to give feedback, encourage people to do that in the chat. Kids love seeing those comments come in on the chat saying you did such a great job,"

By encouraging students to perform, bringing families together online, and supporting students by having audience members put their congratulations in the chat - you're creating a community even that students and their families will remember.

You can also record your online recitals, and keep the recording online for your students to view later if they wish. To do this, go to the meetings tab of your Zoom account, and click on the scheduled meeting for your recital. You'll see two options at the bottom of the page:

1. Automatically Record Meeting to Cloud
2. Automatically Record Meeting to Computer

Choose the option you prefer, and recording will automatically start when you begin the recital. Keep in mind that your recital video will likely be a large file, and so recording to the cloud may be a better option for data storage purposes. Lastly, it's always important to ask parents and students permission before recording the performance.

2. Hosting a Pre-Recorded "Watch Party" Recital

While a pre-recorded watch party doesn't have the same "live" excitement as a livestreamed show, it still gives you a chance to bring your students together so they can showcase their work.

To host a pre-recorded watch party, simply have each of your students record their performance piece, and then upload their piece to YouTube as an unlisted video, and schedule a time for everyone to gather on Zoom.

Then, you'll share your screen and watch through the submitted videos, with breaks to introduce the next student. You can encourage students to cheer each other on by dropping notes in the chat, and you can even have a little celebratory gathering after the watch party is over, where students can talk and mingle over Zoom - just like a traditional gathering.

3. Creating Video Footage With Your Students

A live or pre-recorded recital may not be for everyone. Another option is to simply have your students record themselves playing or demonstrating their skill, and send in the video to you at the end of the semester or session.

Creating a video gives your students something to work towards, and can be particularly valuable for students who are prepping for auditions. “With older students, I’m kind of making them do mock auditions because they’re a little bit more ready and able for that,” says Claire Mehm, “Some are planning on going into music and kind of giving them that same feeling is important, because they’re still going to have those auditions. In fact, many college auditions are pre-recorded videos this year, and may be next year as well.”

Consider having your students record their end-of-year or end of month pieces, and then have them upload their pieces to YouTube as unlisted videos. This is an ideal monthly, or end-of-year assignment that your students will likely love to work on.

In an Online Learning Environment, You’ll Need to Stick With Your Students Every Step of the Way...

In an online learning environment, you’ll need to put a little more energy into helping your students stick to their learning goals. Remember that your students may be feeling overwhelmed, nervous, or fatigued from video learning, and that your dedication to their learning success will go along way in helping them continue to hit their desired outcomes.

Hey... You Got This!

Teaching online can be challenging. But with a little preparation, you can create an education experience that’s rewarding for both you and your students.

If you haven’t already, now’s a great time to start teaching with TakeLessons, and if you’re looking for more resources for teaching and learning online, check out the TakeLessons Blog.