

Assessment

Students that effectively practice will notice when they do not understand something or when they are having difficulty learning a particular skill. The ability to react by choosing, modifying, and adapting one's performance based on feedback obtained while performing is essential to effective practice. To help students improve their ability to assess themselves, work with them to develop their sense of beat and meter as well as their tonal center. Students need to know their music extremely well so that they can hear the piece in their head and anticipate mistakes.

Parental Support

Communicate with parents about scheduling a regular time for practice. The best time for practice is when minds are fresh and receptive. Discuss with parents about establishing a location within the home for students to practice. A quiet room, adequate lighting, appropriate ventilation, and comfort are all important. Also discuss with parents about buying students a good music stand and chair to use during their practice. Stress to parents the need to keep all instruments in good condition. Communicate with them, however, that musical instruments need to be serviced by a trained professional and that they should not fix it themselves. This frequently leads to further damage. When in doubt tell parents to always bring the instrument to the teacher and ask for advice on how to best service it. Additionally, students may need to have accessories for their instruments such as valve oil, the proper sticks or mallets, cork grease, and a good reed. Encourage parents to listen to their children and not to use practicing as a punishment.

Summary

Musicians who have a strong, positive self-belief are likely to be more motivated to persist in developing performance skills. Students must be provided with opportunities where they can be successful and in which they can develop the confidence to continue developing skills in deliberate practice. Students must be provided with a safe environment free from harsh criticism where they can be allowed to experiment in making decisions and controlling their own learning without a high fear of failure. This experimentation with concepts that have already been developed under more direct supervision fosters creativity and allows the student to develop a personal relationship with the information and skills.