



# HOW TO USE VIDEO TECHNOLOGY IN YOUR MUSIC STUDIO

by Noreen Wenjen

*I recently had the honor of presenting “Zoom! Text, Tweet! Interacting with Today’s Music Students through Videos, Websites and Technology” at the MTAC Convention in July of 2016. Due to the peaked interest in the use of video, this article will focus on ideas for incorporating videos technology into your daily lessons.*

## BENEFITS OF USING VIDEO

- Precise lessons reviews
- Accommodates auditory and visual learners
- Ensemble practice

Recordings can benefit every level of student, from the very beginning students through advanced levels. Some students may have perfect pitch, but they do not have perfect memory. Recording lessons will help students make the most out of their lessons by recounting and working through troubling passages in the exact manner suggested by their teacher, all week long!

## CORRECTIONS

Teachers can use recordings in their everyday lessons with students. Record a short phrase or passage to help a student hear the correct phrasing, articulation, tempo or notes. Students often like to run through an entire piece in hopes of correcting just one measure. When they finally get to that problematic measure, they play it as they have memorized it, through muscle memory and auditory memory. This usually

includes the mistake. Students often tell me that they are unable to make corrections as quickly at home as they do during their lesson. The irony is that during their lesson, we spent more time working on just one little section, in a multitude of ways, than they usually do at home. It just doesn’t feel like a longer timespan when someone is actively guiding them. During lessons, students are patient with themselves when we are patient with them. Show students how to work through a difficult passage step-by-step, by recording the process on video, and have them practice with the recording. They will find the same level of success at home, as they do during their lessons.

## ENSEMBLE WORK

Use videos to record an accompaniment to a duet, duo piece, or concerto. If this seems too time-consuming, record this during the student’s lesson time. Encourage the student to play through it without stopping to correct errors. Record with a metronome ticking to help the student keep a steady tempo, count rests, and practicing entries with the orchestral accompaniment.

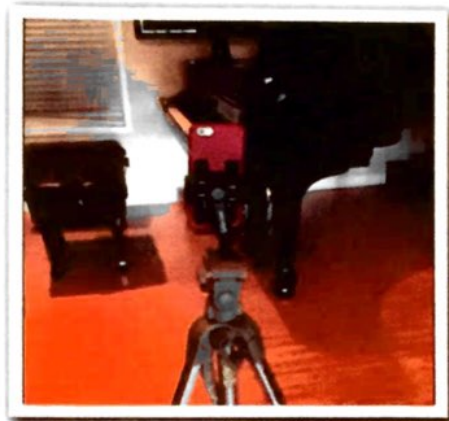


## THE EQUIPMENT

Oversized speakers, bulky recording camera equipment and synthesizers are now outdated. Just a few pieces of quality recording equipment, or perhaps even your existing cell phone, could provide you with nearly everything you need to create quality recordings for your students.

Use what you already have: Mobile Phones.

Cell phones such as an iPhone or Galaxy have great audio and video recording capabilities and may be used to record short snippets and passages. You can use an adapter called Square Jellyfish or any tripod mount. I like the Square Jellyfish stand because it can be attached to my tripod or used separately on top of my piano. There are many types of cell phone and tripod mounts available on Amazon for around \$12.



## TEXTING SHORT VIDEO CLIPS

Record short video clips of students playing at their lesson. Work on something specific, like hand position, and text the video to the student or parent. The students get really excited to make a special video of their progress for their parents. Limit the video length to less than a minute long or delete them after you have shared them.

Technique items such as scales and cadences are also easy to record individually and text. I like to then assign students to email or text me individual scales or cadences of their problem after they have made the needed corrections with notes, rhythm, or fingering. It's best to have them identify each scale or cadence before they play them, in case they are trying to play a harmonic minor scale, but it ends up sounding like a natural minor scale! Surprisingly, the students actually enjoying texting me these accomplishments, and it only takes a second for me to reply with either a note or fingering correction, or just a 😊.

*continued*

## WHAT TO USE OR BUY

### Minimal

- Cell Phone with high quality video capability (iPhone, Samsung, Galaxy, etc) or iPad
- Phone/iPad adapter stand or micro-tripod mount

### More high-tech

- Zoom video camera
- Full sized tripod
- SD memory card



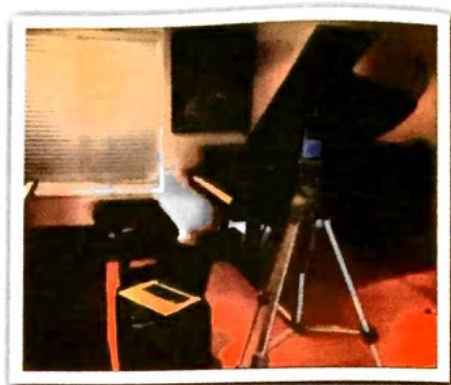
# VIDEO TECHNOLOGY IN YOUR MUSIC STUDIO

## DURING THE LESSON

- Set up expectations of practice goal, learning or memorization target with the student.
- Text the reminder to the student during their lesson.
- Ask student to take the initiative and follow up by replying to your text and sending back a video when they have completed their learning target. My goal with my students, as with my own children, is to teach them, empower them with skills and confidence, and create responsible, independent thinkers. Generation Z students (those who are ages 5-18 today), are more responsive and responsible if you make a slight shift to their preferred communication (texting, using apps, and technology).

## ZOOM VIDEO/AUDIO CAMERAS

If you want to buy dedicated video recording equipment, then I highly recommend the Zoom Q8 with x/y stereo recording, with interchangeable mic capability. This is also great for video for podcasts and short videos for a blog. I have been using an older model of the Zoom camera for the past seven years. My students bring in their own tiny SD card, the same type used for regular video cameras. I have the Zoom camera set up on a tripod and plugged in with an adapter. The student records the entire lesson. After the lesson is finished, the student ejects the SD card and takes it home to play back in a laptop.



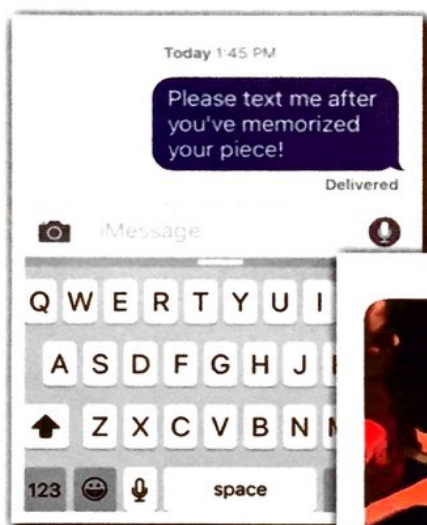
## CLOUD-BASED STORAGE

- iCloud
- Dropbox
- YouTube

If you are worried about using up all of your phone memory or computer storage with student videos, back up

your videos to a cloud-based storage option, like iCloud or Dropbox. iCloud users get 5 GB of free storage, and can be upgraded to 50GB (gigabyte), 200GB, 1TB (terabyte), or 2TB with a monthly fee plan from .99 to \$19.99 (Sep. 2016 pricing). I have the 200 GB iCloud storage plan and all of my pictures, videos and documents from my computer, iPad, iPhone, and iWatch, automatically back up onto my iCloud storage. I also have a secondary hard drive “Time Machine” storage, which wirelessly backs up my computer onto a physical hard drive, for extra safekeeping.

A Dropbox basic account is free with up to 2 GB of space. Dropbox Pro includes one terabyte of storage for \$9.99/month or discounted annual pricing. Investing in a better camera with an external storage device can alleviate the need to purchase cloud-based storage.



◀ I texted this student and asked him to send a video after he had worked through the entire piece to the end by a given date. He made his timeline, and practiced until 10:28 PM, and you can tell by his note, he will work on his piece and send another video after he improves his piece.



YouTube is a great way to share videos with individual students, your entire studio, or the world, if you think anyone out there may be interested. YouTube may be opened in a browser at [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) or you can download the YouTube app on your mobile device. I would use YouTube to upload a single piece of music that you are working on during the lesson, but not the entire lesson. The default time limit to upload videos is 15 minutes, although you can click on the bottom of your YouTube video, and click “increase your limit” and receive a verification code to extend the time limit.

#### SAFEGUARDS

- Student/Parental Permission of video use
- Set privacy settings on YouTube
- Do not use detailed student information publicly
- Extra protection against liability issues (adult alone with a child)

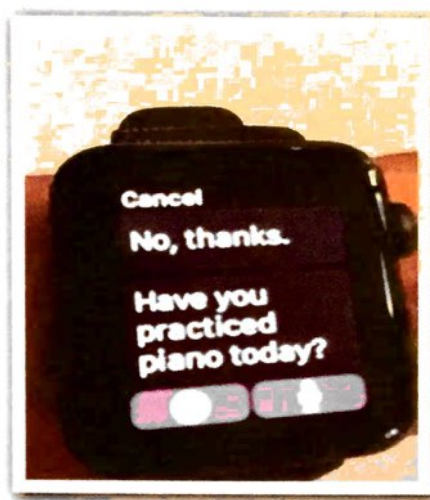
It is important that you have a signed statement from your studio parents to allow Student/Parental Permission of video use of recordings,

images, or statements. I have a detailed clause in my studio policy that gives me permission to post videos. My students and their parents trust that I will use my best judgment to protect their privacy and the privacy of minors. Don't use the student's last names when posting videos. Any video, which is not a public performance and intended for private work between my student and myself, is set on the “private” setting. Recording and archiving lessons is a good means of liability protection for teachers who allow minor students to attend without their parents present. Videos should not be stored in lieu of business liability insurance.

#### IWATCH TEXTING

- Get text messages when students are running late without interruption
- One button text answers
- Can call or answer calls from watch
- iPhone must be nearby and connected via Bluetooth

My family gave me an iWatch for Mother's Day. I wasn't sure if I actually needed it. I have grown to love this



watch, for its discreet means of informing me when a student texts that they will be running late, so it does not interrupt my lessons. The one-button text replies are great when a student or family member needs a quick “yes” or “no” answer. You can also create your own answer options, such as, “Have you practiced the piano today?”

I hope that this article helps you see how easy it is to use technology to engage your students. Your students will thank you for using videos, texting and motivating them to work harder. ■



**Noreen Wenjen**, NCTM received a BM from U.C.S.B. and is the President-Elect of the California Association of Professional Music Teachers (CAPMT). She presented *Zoom! Text, Tweet! Interacting with Today's Music Students through Videos, Websites and Technology* for the 2016 MTAC Convention. Her 2015 MTNA Conference presentation, *Two-year Wait List: How to Build and Maintain a Recession-proof Music Studio*, will be published in a book. She maintains private studios in Torrance and Seal Beach, California and can be found via her website: [www.wenjenpiano.com](http://www.wenjenpiano.com).