



# Music Teaching Matters

October 28, 2025 - No. 75

Welcome to **Music Teaching Matters:** where music teachers inspire our students to explore the music that inspires them.



When I recently asked my teen student Peter to share his thoughts on “getting out of the comfort zone”, he explained it’s a phrase his hockey coach and band director frequently use that means it’s time to try something new. Something that’s not just a copy of what we’ve always done. Something that pushes us in new directions. Sounds easy enough doesn’t it? But getting out of the music teacher comfort zone can really make music teachers uneasy. Read more [HERE](#).

Let's keep music alive in every lesson!

*Merlin Thompson*

*Creator & Founder of Teach Music 21C*

## Why Students Don't Practice

Here are three themes that focus on how music teachers can shape our teaching, so that practicing fits in with what students want to do.

#1. With beginner students, avoid starting with reading-based method books. Instead incorporate Ear Before Eye strategies and explore the music that's inside students' ears.

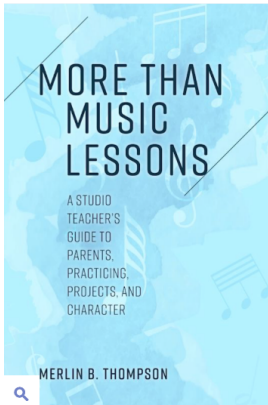
#2. Remember that a steady diet of method books repertoire may not be satisfying for all students. Instead, be prepared to skip pieces and change things up with students' own choice.

#3. Don't be surprised when teen students indicate they're not interested in learning harder repertoire or moving to the next level. Instead help them to explore their musical interests with their current

skillset.

**Note to self - Music teachers can't change how our students feel, but we can change what WE do to make things possible.**

## More than Music Lessons



**Appendix A in More than Music Lessons** is packed with ways for music teachers to incorporate Challenges into our students' practice routines. Tone challenges, visual challenges, tempo challenges, and creativity challenges are just some of the categories.

**This may be a great week to revisit this chapter and inspire your teaching.**

"More than Music Lessons" is available [HERE](#).

## Idea of the Month Webinar

**Ear  
Before  
Eye**

### **Set the date - October 30 - Idea of the Month**

Would you like to know more about Ear-Before-Eye music teaching? Did you know there are two reliable sources for Ear-Before-Eye music teaching - Suzuki Method and E. Gordon's Music Learning Theory? Join the October Idea of the Month to find out more about this very practical music teaching approach. You won't want to miss it! Register [HERE](#).

## Lifelong Music Makers

Music teachers often promote the vision of our students as lifelong music makers. But what does that mean?

1. Is it someone who chooses music as a professional career?
2. Is it a student who continues to play on their own as an adult?
3. Is it someone who integrates making music into their social life?

Clarifying our vision can help music teachers figure out what we need to include in this week's lessons and what might not be all that important.

**What will you do in this week's lesson to support your**

## students as lifelong music makers?

### TM21C Podcast



#### **The Versatile Music Teacher**

This outstanding podcast is an exploration of the various aspects today's music teachers take on. You'll examine "getting out of students' way", "getting a grip on fear", and more in this insightful podcast. At 46 minutes long, it's well worth the investment of time. Enjoy! [Listen HERE.](#)

### Teach Music 21C Certification



#### **Fall Certification is here!!**

- Monday mornings - Our November Cohort meets November 10, November 17, and November 24

Register for Certification and join our community of forward-thinking teachers. Together, we'll explore practical strategies, innovative tools, and new perspectives to empower your teaching.

👉 [Click here to register.](#)

### Ear Before Eye

Did you know that prominent educators and musicians throughout history have consistently advocated for learning to play by ear as the first step in music learning? According to Swiss educator Pestalozzi (1746-1827), educational processes should always proceed from

"known to the unknown" and that direct experience is the basis of all education. Here are a few benefits of Ear Before Eye music learning:

1. Students explore their own experiences of pitch, beat, and rhythm without having to decipher written information on a page.
2. Students make fewer mistakes because they can hear when things don't sound right.
3. Students often feel more comfortable with memorization processes

because their musical understanding is grounded internally. They play from what's inside.

## Upcoming Dates

**October 30: Idea of the Month.** Join this free webinar to learn more about Ear Before Eye. Register [HERE.](#)

**November 5: "Parental Involvement that Works".** Presentation for Edmonton ARMTA.

**November 6:** Presentation for UBC music students.

**November 7: "Dr. Suzuki's Pioneering Mindset: Fuel for 21st Century Teaching".** Presentation for Suzuki Music Teacher Conference.

**November 10:** Start date for November Certification. Click [HERE](#) to register.

**November 14:** Online workshop for Vernon music teachers.

## Questions, Thoughts

What topics are on your mind?  
Is there a question you'd like to ask?  
How about chatting with Merlin Thompson?

SEND me a message at  
[Admin@TeachMusic21C.com](mailto:Admin@TeachMusic21C.com)  
and we'll get together!



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