

Set Your Studio Apart On and Off the Bench

Opening Apps: *Quizlet* and *Heads Up*. Find them here: <http://88pianokeys.me/ipad-apps-for-your-studio/music-terminology/>

Are you considering technology?

Updating your approach to teaching music will involve using technology to some degree. Are you ready? Can you afford it?



What's your bottom line?

To make ends meet, you need customers who hire you as a teacher. The best way to attract customers and to retain them is to set your studio apart.

What can set your studio apart?

To stand out, you may need to broaden your approach and create an identity that is markedly different from the other teachers in your area.

A toolbox packed with innovative resources including an iPad and apps coupled with your enthusiasm *will* retain students.



Strong student family retention means more referrals will come your way.

Think of it as an equation.



A well-stocked tool box
A plugged in teacher
A studio set apart



More students
More income

What do you fear?

Perhaps you understand the math but are still hesitant about that “plugged in teacher” element —integrating savvy tools like the iPad into your lessons. Most likely your hesitancy boils down to a fear of four things.

#1 Technology

Fear

The learning curve is steep and this mobile generation is way too savvy and device-dependent. They will know way more which will make it difficult to connect with them.

Solutions

- Technology is becoming more intuitive and fewer steps are needed to succeed and connect.
- Your students are able and willing to help when you run stuck.

#2 Time

Fear

There's already too much to fit in a lesson and no room to add anything more.

Solutions

- Add more time with an *Off-Bench* addition to your lessons.
- Save time by planning *Off-Bench* time with studio-wide themes.



#3 Cost

Fear

Devices, apps and the appropriate accessories can add up.

Solutions

- Cut the cost of technology by purchasing a recent iPad model with at least 64G and *no* cellular and begin with free apps.
- Cover the cost of your new technology by a slight increase in your lesson rate.
- Within a year you will recoup the expense with extra to spare for more apps, another iPad and even out-side-of-the-studio expenses.

#4 Space

Fear

A private studio space is tight and there's usually not a spare room to use in the house.

Solutions

- Designate a small area for *Off-Bench* activities within your studio space.
- Keep the work area close by so you can keep an eye on the student on the bench as well as the one off the bench.

What is *Off-Bench* Time?

Off-Bench Time is a 15-30 minute session added to a private lesson or *On-the-Bench Time*. Two students arrive together and while one works with me at the piano for 30 minutes, the other completes assignments on the iPad, worksheets or the computer. Then the two students switch.

Advancing high school students spend 45 minutes with me and 15 minutes reviewing concepts with iPad app drills, listening to repertoire or completing theory worksheets.

Learn more here: ipadpianostudio.com/, <http://88pianokeys.me/what-is-music-tech-time/>

What are Some Ideas for Off-Bench Time?

A simple way to design activities is to first decide on a studio theme that lasts around a month to 6 months—your choice. This theme will help you:

- Plan specific assignments
- Stay organized
- Generate studio unity
- Guarantee progress.

A studio theme can be simple or as complex as you prefer.

- **Bass Clef:** Since this clef is the “stumper” for most, create various ways for students to brush up on bass clef note recognition and reading.
- **Rhythm:** Isolate this essential element away from the bench with assignments that help students recognize note values, count, and read rhythms. Here’s a resource with all the plans made for you: [Rhythm: Make It Count!](http://88pianokeys.me/fresh-ideas/rhythm-make-it-count/) Find it here: 88pianokeys.me/fresh-ideas/rhythm-make-it-count/
- **Baroque:** Not many students will ask to play repertoire from this rich style period so creating assignments around this period will enlighten and inform young pianists of important music composed centuries ago. Check out this series of posts about my “Baroque Bash” at 88pianokeys.me.
- **More Ideas:** Visit 88pianokeys.me for a continual feed of Off-Bench themes, activities and how to use apps.



Example: *Rhythm Swing, Rhythm Lab, Rhythm Solitaire.*

Find them here: <http://88pianokeys.me/ipad-apps-for-your-studio/rhythm/>

What Resources are Available for Off-Bench Time?

Once a theme has been chosen, take stock of your present studio inventory. What books, websites, board games, flash cards, devices, apps, etc., do you own or have access to that could contribute to your *Off-Bench* assignments?

How are These Resources Implemented?

#1 Zero Technology Required

- Assemble and decorate practice pouches.
- Highlight dynamics and other details in a score. Yellow highlighters are part of my students’ practice pouches and are reserved for dynamics only.
- Select a YOYO piece and grow their 30-piece challenge list.
- Read information about composers, style periods, the piano, etc.
- Take a peek at the stash I collected for my [Baroque Theme](http://88pianokeys.me/fresh-ideas/go-baroque-with-these-timely-resources/). Learn more here: 88pianokeys.me/fresh-ideas/go-baroque-with-these-timely-resources/
- Complete theory books and worksheets.



Examples: Practice Pouch, Rhythm on a Roll. Find them here:

<http://88pianokeys.me/fresh-ideas/turn-practice-into-progress-with-power-tools/>

<http://88pianokeys.me/fresh-ideas/new-game-reinforce-note-values-with-rhythm-on-a-roll/>

#2 Limited Technology Required

Use a *Flipped Classroom* approach. Learn more about it here: <http://88pianokeys.me/flipped-in-classroom/>

- Utilize online instruction to teach theory and technique.
- Use music theory sites that offer instruction and reinforce with free drills.
- Search *YouTube* and locate appropriate videos of students' repertoire.
- Correlate your on-bench lesson plans with publishers like *Alfred's Premier Piano Course*, *Daniel MacFarlane*, *Piano Safari*.
- Inspire your students with performances of world-class musicians.

Examples: *Understanding Intervals*, *Full Scoop On Chords*, *Get Inspired!* Find them here:

<http://88pianokeys.me/product/understanding-intervals/>

<http://88pianokeys.me/product/full-scoop-on-chords/>

<http://88pianokeys.me/get-inspired/>

#3 Unlimited Technology

If you've been collecting devices and apps for a while, *Off-Bench Time* is the place to use them!

Apps for First Time iPad Owners

- **Piano Maestro** reinforces reading skills, assists teachers preparing homework between lessons and so much more.
- **Flashnote Derby** helps students master pitch names on the grand staff within a horse-race setting. Watch video
- **Simply Piano** guides students through a series of sequential lessons with the help of hip tunes.
- **Tenuto** has the ability to customize exercises and covers just about every theory concept and ear training drill you can imagine.
- **Notability** and/or **Sproutbeat** are both the perfect substitute for worksheet hard copies and neglected theory books. You'll definitely need a stylus for this app. I recommend an
- inexpensive stylus like [this](#).
- **ForScore** allows you to download and read PDFs of scores from the iPad and turn pages with a bluetooth pedal.
- **Super Metronome Groovebox** or **iReal Pro** both provide hip backing tracks that have far more appeal than the tick of a metronome.



For links to these apps and for my "A-List of Apps," follow this link: <http://88pianokeys.me/an-a-list-of-apps/>. *Simply Piano*: <https://www.joytunes.com/simply-piano>

Thank you for inviting me to share ideas with you!

Inspire your lessons plans, unlock your creativity and reboot your studio.

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