# Getting Started with Better Practice

**Teacher's Guide**

V2.0

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# Introduction

*Practice is critical for everyone's success, but a teacher's influence into what happens at home is limited. Better Practice increases odds for success.*

You see the same students come by week after week, obviously not practicing in between lessons which leads to lack of improvement. They lose interest, you get frustrated, and eventually, they quit.

You may notice some students coming in week after week with little to no improvement between lessons. You know who they are – the ones that don't practice between lessons, so improvement is slow, and interest begins to wane...

All you can do is see them once a week. *What happens in the other 6 days away from lessons?* Students are always busy - they have other things to do than practice like homework, extracurricular activities, and just being a kid! Also, if the parents are not musicians (which is most often the case), they don't really know how to support their child in practice. Everyone is expecting the child to go through the list of what was covered in lessons, play and improve.

*Doesn't it seem like the odds are stacked against the student and you, the teacher, to be successful?*

Better Practice boosts your odds of success by guiding students through a structured practice and provides an experience where students make the most of and, more importantly, *enjoy* practice.

And when their practice improves, you start to see their playing and enjoyment improve, and you'll be able to enjoy teaching even more.

## Formula For Success

Better Practice utilizes proven learning techniques and behavioral science to address the most difficult challenges of traditional practice. Each student is unique and is motivated differently, thus we've devised a unique formula that puts each and every one of your students in a position to be successful.

Any of our features alone can be beneficial, but working in concert within the app, they produce incredible results.

### Make Practice Easier

One of the first things we do is make practice as easy as

*The easier it is, the more likely it is that someone will do it.*

possible to do. Have everything the students need to practice in one place, organized - so all the student has to do it open the app and go down the practice list. On every item, you can add **sheet music, assignment notes, backing tracks, videos, and a metronome**. The student is also able to send questions directly to the teacher. This means if they have any questions during practice, they don't have to wait until the next lesson and waste the rest of the week practicing unsurely. Better Practice removes all the typical excuses.

## Make Practice Fun

Today's students are growing up with engaging and interactive experiences, where feedback is immediate and friends are connected. On the other hand, traditional practice is solitary and relatively speaking, limited.

Without much effort on your part, Better Practice seamlessly integrates music pedagogy and the materials you teach into a modern experience. Now the student can see friends who are also practicing every time they log in. They will also see who's won the daily award for "Most Songs Practiced", "Longest Practice", and "First to Practice" - or all three. There are facilities to utilize rich media like videos and audio tracks that can be slowed down to match each student's playing level.

## Make Practice Smarter

The final component is a real differentiator. We all know how busy kids are these days, as you also are. Better Practice utilizes advanced learning techniques and persuasive technologies and embeds them into the practice experience.

For example, we use a method called Spaced Repetition to organize your assignments for the most. Basically, this means we throw in previously learned songs every once in a while (using a very calculated method) for most efficient learning. It's repeatedly been proven that spaced repetition is the best for long-term retention - so skills stay fresh and what happens in lessons *doesn't just disappear after the recital.*

# See Immediate Results

It is not unusual to see results after the very first lesson. Here are some testimonials from our teachers immediately after introducing Better Practice into their music studio:

*Better Practice is the easiest and fastest way to get the results you want.*

*"I have a 10 year student that I was about to lose but as soon as he saw the app, his attitude changed. This app saved this student."*

*"My biggest challenge kept losing sheet music, notes, and had a very short attention span. He just sent me a message saying 'Awesome App'. I got him. Thank you so much!"*

*"I only signed up this student 3hrs ago and she has already practiced 40 songs tonight!! Wow I love this app!"*

You can have your whole music studio up and running in a matter of minutes and introduce it in your lessons tomorrow.

# Set up a student in seconds

To start, you will be creating accounts for your students and setting them up with their current assignments.

## Creating a Student Account

Here are the steps to create an account for your students:

1. Go to the Students page by tapping on the Students tab on the main navigation bar at the bottom of the screen.
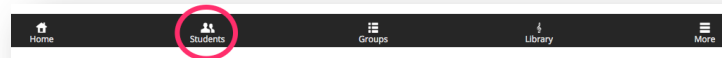


2. Once on the **Students** page, tap on **Add Student or Instructor** at the top.
3. Fill out the form, and then tap **Add**. A welcome email will automatically be sent to the student with instructions on how to use Better Practice.

*Tip! It is best to add your whole studio at once to get the complete effect of the social experience. This will generate a lot of excitement.*
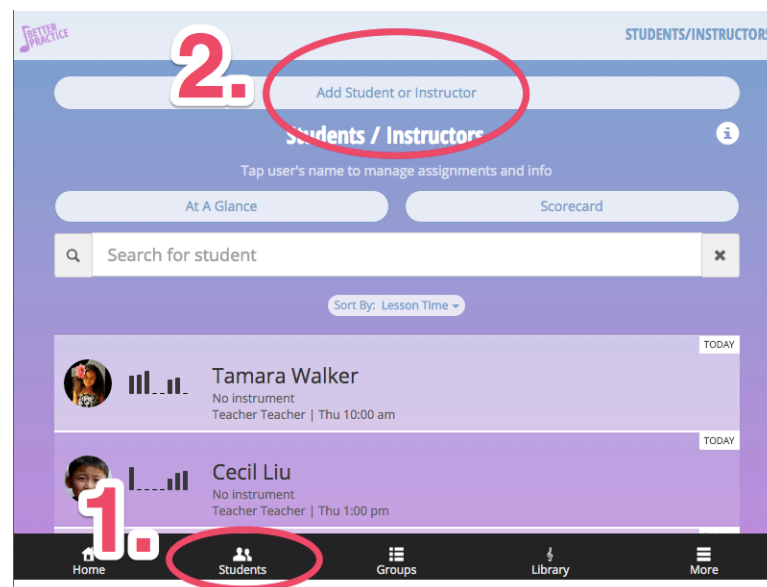


**Important**: You will create a username and password for each student and then give him/her this information at the next lesson. For security reasons, the welcome email will not provide your student with the password to log in.

## Adding Assignments

After creating a student account, you are ready to add the student's current assignments:

1. Start on the **Students** page and tap on the student's name. This will take you into the Students account.
2. The very first page is Practice History page, where you will see a detailed view of their week of practice. We want to add assignments so tap on the **Assign** tab to go to the assignment page.
3. On this page, you can add assignments by
   a. Typing an assignment name into search bar that says **Add an Assignment…** and choosing from our list of predefined assignments or select **Add Custom,** or
   b. Choosing the assignment from the **Guide** which provides a visual roadmap for easy selection. *See Make Assignments Even Easier* below.
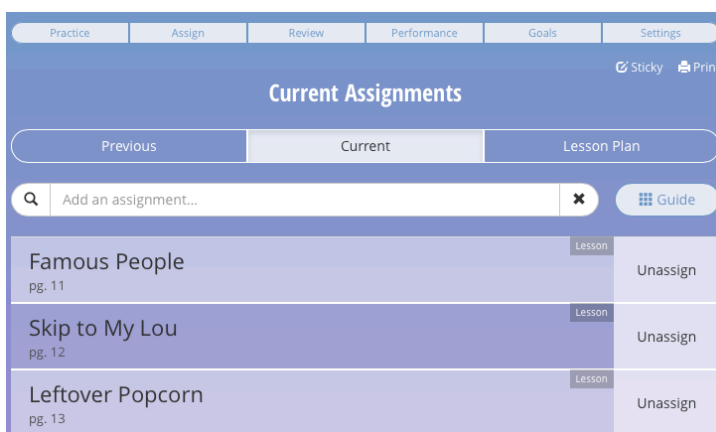


*Tip! Our research shows that the more guidance you provide in assignment notes, the more students practice. Don't worry! You can save long notes using Saved Notes so you don't have to rewrite it each time.*
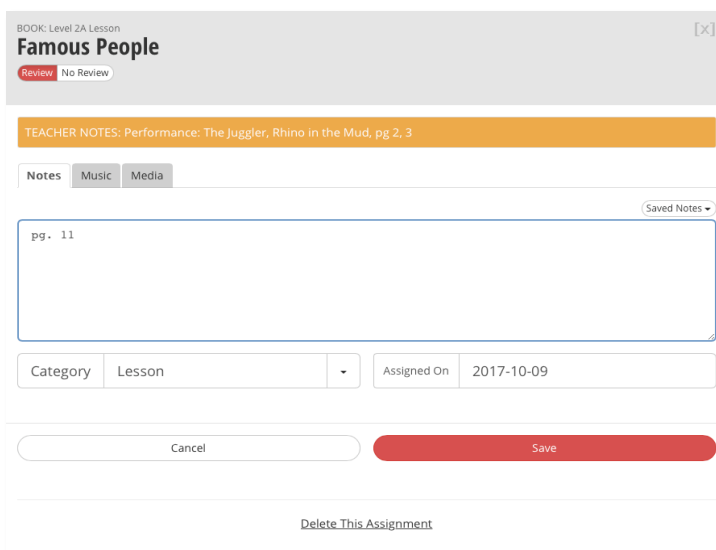
Above is what you would see when entering an assignment.
Under **Notes**, you will add your assignment notes.
Under **Music** you can select sheet music from your Music Library or link to an external file hosted online.

Under **Media**, you can add videos. After all is done, tap **Add Assignment** and the assignment will automatically be added to the student's daily practice list as a **Current Assignment**.

That's it! You can now introduce Better Practice in your next lesson.

## Smart Practice List

One of the most powerful features of Better Practice is the review engine that creates smart review lists personalized for each student. This review engine uses the following factors to determine what to suggest:

> **How you last rated your playing +**
> **How long ago you last played +**
> **How complex the assignment is**

Recommendations are then given using a technique called Spaced Repetition that has been proven to accelerate learning and improve retention.

*When you **unassign** a song, it will no longer show up on the current assignments, i.e. on the daily practice list.*

This rotating practice list is perfect for études, scales, arpeggios, and maintaining repertoires. Because the engine takes care of keeping skills fresh, muscles strong, and repertoire items ready, you simply need to focus on what the student is learning.

*When you **move a song to No Review** a song, it will no longer be recommended in the engine.*

Here's how to work with the engine. Each assignment is either set to **Review** or **No Review**. A current assignment will always show up each day regardless of whether **Review** or No Review is set. Once the assignment is unassigned, then Review items will go into the practice rotation. **No Review** items will not.

You can set this in the assignment at any time. Or you can also set it in the Repertoire tab

| Practice | Assign | Review | Performance | Goals | Settings |
|----------|--------|--------|-------------|-------|----------|

🖶 Print

# Review List

Review: 15 item(s) | No Review: 4 item(s)

🔍 Filter by name, book                                                    ✖

Review | No Review

**Note Reading Guide**                                                    Lesson
Level 2A Lesson
Practiced: time(s) | Last:  ~--                                         Move to No Review

**Get Ready for Take-off! (Level 1 Review)**                              Lesson
Level 2A Lesson
Practiced: time(s) | Last:  ~--                                         Move to No Review

# Smart Guide

## Make Assignments Even Easier

When you're ready to dive into the app a little deeper, you can start by using the Smart Guide for your assignments. Instead of typing in the next assignment each and every time, you can develop a lesson plan or curriculum for your student. This plan will show up as a roadmap of what has been completed, what is currently being worked on, and what is scheduled for the future, like this:

*Tip! You can now have 'substitute' teachers cover for you. With the Guide, they can easily review the student's history and step in without missing a beat.*

*If Better Practice does not carry the book you use or you want to create your own book mixing and matching your own projects, you can use Custom Books or let us know and we can find a book for you.*
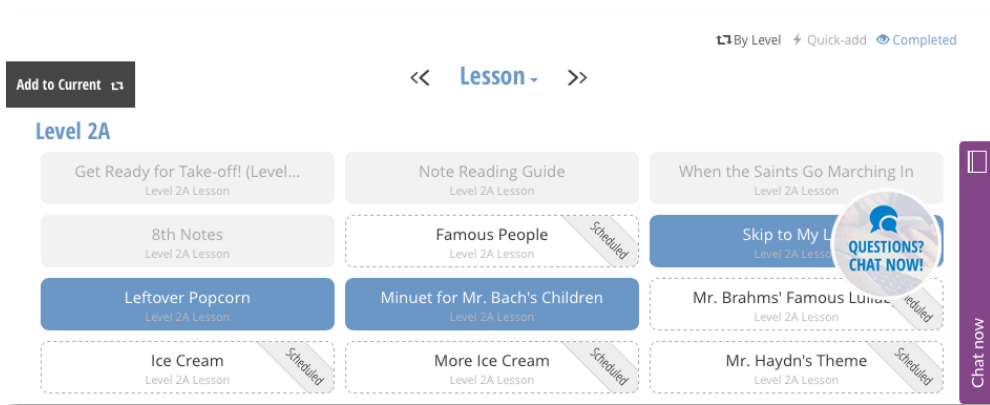


So if you follow a method strictly or like to mix and match with students diverging in different directions, the Assignment Guide ensures that you stay organized and know what each student has covered and where each student is.

To build the curriculum, you simply add the books that the student is currently using, the Assignment Guide dynamically puts the assignments together by level and by skills category.

1. Go in to the student's guide and tap on the **Books** tab.
2. Tap on **Add Books**
3. Add all the current books he/she is using. They should show up like the following:

4. Now, go back to the **Guide** tab and all the assignments from the added books are available for you to choose from. You don't have to enter a new assignment every time!

# Teaching in Groups

## Forming Groups

*Managing groups has never been easier.*

If you teach in groups, you'll love Better Practice's group capabilities. It makes managing groups of all sizes a breeze. You can easily create a group and make assignments to everyone or only select members. If students in groups advance at different paces, not to worry, you can unassign for some and not all. Better Practice does the heavy lifting and keeps you organized
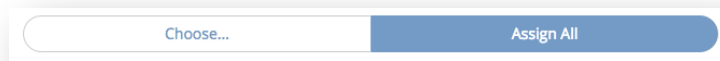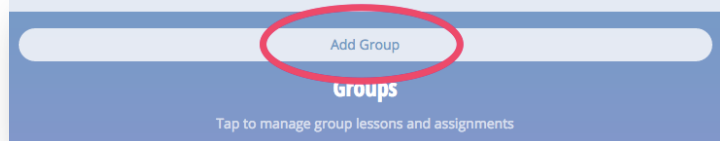


To add a group:
1. First, go to **Groups** screen by tapping on the tab at the main navigation bar:
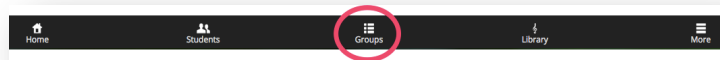


2. Similar to adding a student, tap **Add Group** at the top.



3. In the pop-up window, enter the Group name. It may be useful to put the lesson time in the name, but the students' names will automatically show up underneath the group name.
4. Choose the students in the group, and then see your new group in the list.
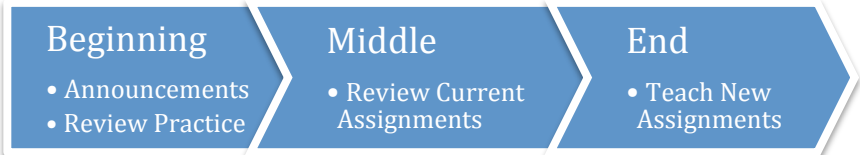
When you tap on a group, you enter into the group account. A group account is similar to the student account. Go to **Assign**, to manage assignments, **Chat** to send group messages, and **Settings** to add additional details like lesson times.

# Using Better Practice In Lessons

Teachers generally use the app in lessons so they have access to the information they need as well as the ability to create assignments and jot down notes.

## Lesson Flow

Better Practice was designed to match the flow of a typical lesson: at the beginning of the lesson, you want to review what has happened the past week during practice and assess how well the student has progressed on current assignments. If the student has completed an item to satisfaction, then new assignments are given to the student.

| Beginning | Middle | End |
|---|---|---|
| • Announcements<br>• Review Practice | • Review Current Assignments | • Teach New Assignments |

When you enter into a students account, you land on the Practice History screen with the **Practice** tab. This screen gives you a detailed look into exactly what the student has accomplished over the last week. It shows each item that the student worked on, how long, and how well. Also, **icons** show what practice aids were used during the practice such as the metronome or videos, etc. This makes it easy to zero in on problem areas and ask better questions. **Here is a legend for practice tool icons**:

*Tip! If you teach back-to-back-to-back and have little time, some teachers simply make assignments during the lesson and then come back later to add additional assignment notes.*
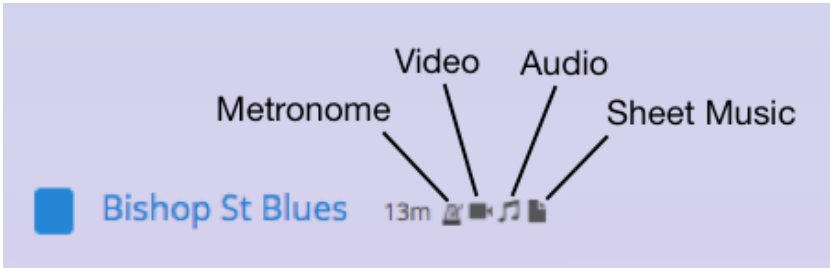


Then you move over to the **Current** assignments on the **Assign** tab to review what the student has practiced. If you are satisfied with an assignment, you can simply tap on **Unassign** and the assignment is instantly removed. If the assignment was set to **Review** then it will be added to the review rotation.

Next, if you lesson planned and scheduled some items, you can

move over to the **Lesson Plan** tab also in Assign and choose which one you will teach next. Simply tap on **Assign** and it is immediately added to **Current** assignments. You can also add in assignment notes at this time if it wasn't added previously.

It only takes seconds!
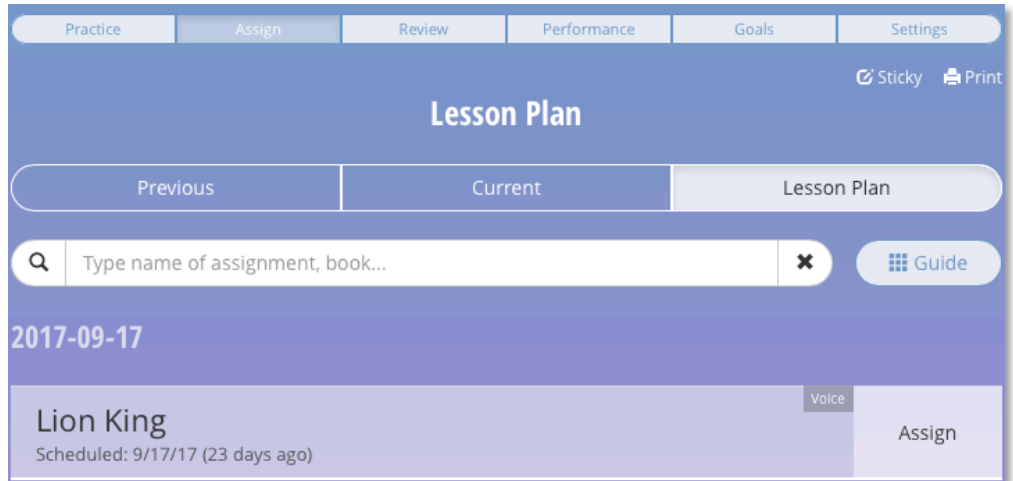
# Using Better Practice day-to-day

## Staying Prepared

### Daily View

For each student or group, you can add in their lessons times into Better Practice. When you do, Better Practice will be able to help you prepare for your lessons. On the Home Page, you will see whom you will be teaching to that day. If you also plan ahead and schedule assignments, you will also see what you have planned for the next three days.

### Lesson Planning

Some teachers like to prepare options as to what to teach next based on what is going on in the next lesson. Maybe the student's motivation is low and so a fun assignment should be given next. On the flipside, the student is feeling confident from a recent accomplishment, so this is an opportunity to squeeze in a difficult challenge.

You can **schedule unlimited assignments** ahead of time and have them available for assigning. You can also add a Scheduled date. To do so, follow these steps:

1. Go into the students account and tap on **Assign**
2. Tap on the **Lesson Plan** tab
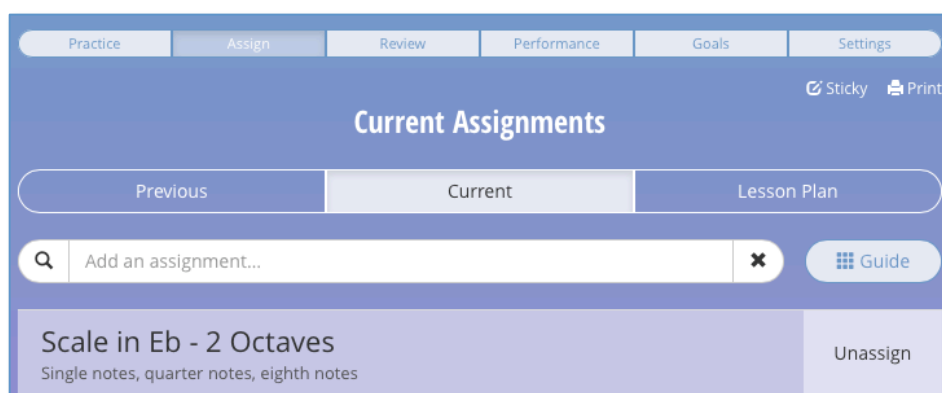


3. From here, you can add assignments as you would for a current assignment, and you can add a date to schedule it on.  Some teachers who follow a strict curriculum plan out their whole year, so all they have to do in lessons is tap **Assign** when the time comes.

## Staying Connected

### Midweek with Chat

One of the most popular features of the app is the chat feature, which allows you and your students to communicate throughout the week. This is important for capturing questions that your students have when they come up.

1. Go into the **Students** tab, click on a student, and tap on the **Chat Icon** button (at the top next to their name) to access the conversation.
2. Type in your chat message and tap **Send.**



*Tip! Chat can be used for more than questions. Send encouragements proactively! If you see a student who usually doesn't practice, shoot him a quick message of encouragement.*
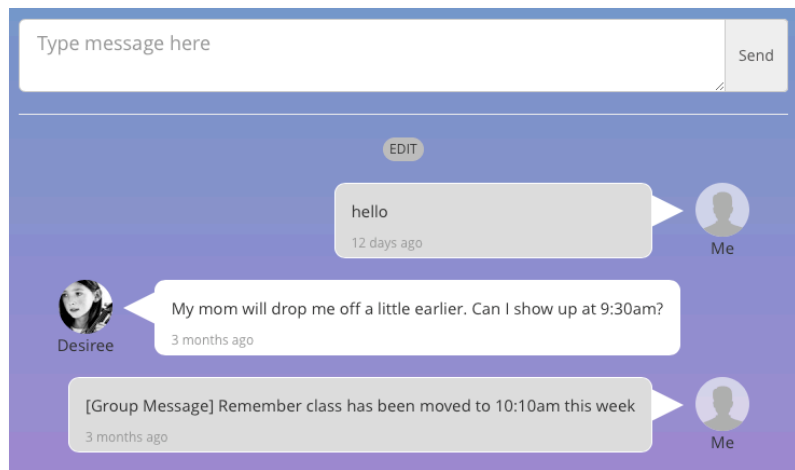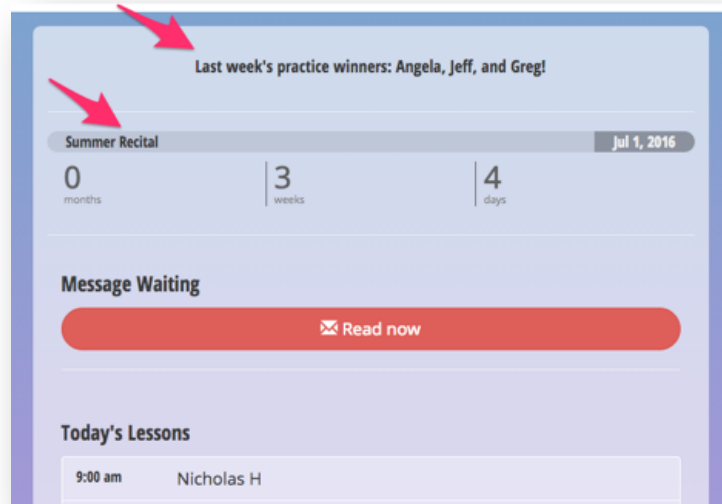
You can message a student directly here, and see your chat history with them. They can send you general questions, or a question directly from a song they are practicing. The latter is indicated by the song name in brackets preceding the message (like the second message in this image).

If the student makes changes to the account that affects what the student practice for example changing the recommendation frequency, Better Practice will also send you a message through Chat, so that the student can see it as well. It will appear as **[Auto-generated]**.

You can also send messages to Groups.

You can set **studio-wide announcements** and **event countdowns** for all of your students to see on their homepage. Announcements can be administrative, but some teachers like to recognize achievements and practice leaders with announcements. Also, announcements and countdowns bring a studio together and give the feeling that although the students practice separately; everyone is working toward a common goal!

To set the announcement and/or countdown, follow these steps:

1. Just go to **More** on the main navigation bar, then **Studio Settings**
2. Enter the announcement message in the text box or countdown details.
3. Tap **Save**. Next time students log in, they will see the new message.
4. In cases where there is an urgent announcement, you can also email it to all the families by tapping on the **Email to All Students** button. This will create an email message for you populated with all the students emails and the message embedded.
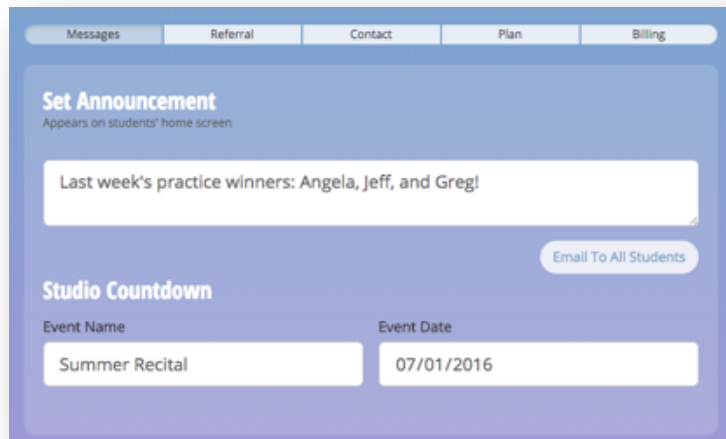
## Gain Insights:
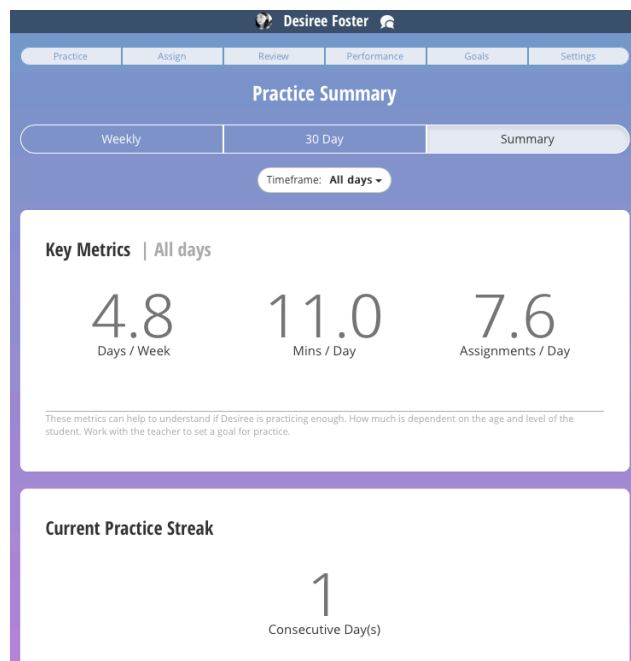
### Practice Analytics
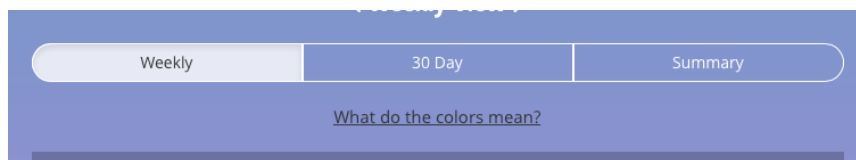


Upon tapping "Summary" from the main student page, you will be directed to this:

This page includes a variety of powerful analytics tools you can use to see how the student did over the week.
**Key Metrics** outlines the averages for the student, so you can see if they are practicing *enough* or if they are not.

*With the "Practice by Days of Week" chart (shown here), you can point out things like "Hey, you seem to miss practice on Tuesday and Friday a lot. Let's make an effort to practice on those days this week".*
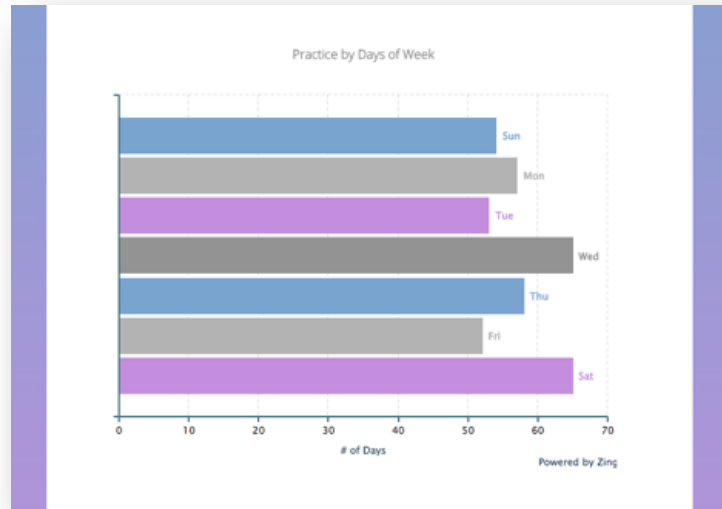


As you scroll down, there is an option to see what days they usually practice most, or even a view of the past year, so you can **track improvement over long periods of time**. You can sit down for a lesson, open this up, and see what you should expect in terms of improvement, or talk through what happened if they didn't practice for multiple days.

# Rolling it out studio-wide

It's easy to add Better Practice to your studio! All you have to do is add all of your students and their assignments. Then introduce Better Practice in the coming lessons. Since the app is accessible from any device with a web browser, whether they have Apple, Android, phone, computer, tablet, practically every family is ready to go today!

## Communicating with Families

When you introduce Better Practice, you can follow these basic steps:

1. Let them know that the studio is moving to a state of the art practice management tool that will make **practice more fun and lessons more productive**.
2. Share with them our introduction video or play it in class at [URL]
3. Give the student his/her username and password.
4. Provide him with the link/printout of the **Student Guide**. If the student is young and the parents are involved, also provide them with the link/printout of **Message to Parents** too. For handouts, you can staple the message on top of the Student Guide.

> **Important**: we highly encourage that Better Practice is rolled out as a mandatory studio tool. It will be how your studio will operate. We have had several teachers who tried to roll it out as optional and regretted it. They see how important the tool becomes for them and but then end up having to support 15% of the students who don't want change or dislike the increased accountability. Now they require all new students to use it.

## Pricing Strategies

The way billing works is that we bill the studio at the beginning of the month based on how many students are enrolled. As students are added or removed, they are automatically prorated.

This is a materials cost not unlike a notebook or a practice aid, so we encourage that studios pass on the cost to the students. There are several ways that our teachers have had success:

1. Raise their monthly tuition by $5 USD.

2. Charge a monthly $5 materials fee.
3. Charge an annual $60 materials fee.

## Jumpstart with a Contest

*Psychologists say it takes 21 days to build a habit, right? Hold a 30-day challenge to get people started on and excited about Better Practice.*

When rolling out to existing students and for new students, put them on a *30-Day Challenge*. See if every student can practice everyday for 30 straight days and reward those who succeed. The goal here is habit formation for practice.

You can use the tool to track the streak of each student. This makes it easy to see who is still on the streak. You can also combine this with an award for whoever practiced the most or longest during the 30 Days.

Continue to hold contests periodically, maybe 2-4 times a year and vary the prizes. This makes it fun for the students, children and adults alike.

# Growing Your Business

Not only will Better Practice help you retain existing students, it is also designed to help you grow your business. Here are a couple of easy marketing tools for you:

## Student Referrals

We make it very easy for your families to refer other families using the app. Parents are often sharing child-raising war stories and learning from each other at activities like soccer practice.

If one of your families wants to quickly refer you at times like these, they can now open his/her phone and tap 'refer a friend' and an email message will pop-up with all of your studio's information pre-filled. They simply need to type in the recipient's email address and tap Send. You'll get a copy of the message too!

To set up this message, go to **More** and then **Studio Settings**. Near the bottom of the first page, you'll see an area to type in the referral message.



## Website Badge

To help your studio stand out, put on your website a badge that you're a Better Practice studio. Not only does this help to distinguish your studio from the other studios in your area, but also it helps other Better Practice families who are moving from a Better Practice teacher to a new area transfer their information to you. These families will likely choose a Better

Practice studio over one that doesn't use Better Practice.

You can find the badge on our website here:

```
http://betterpracticeapp.com/images/powered-by-bp.png
```

Or add this tag to your website:

```
<a href="http://betterpracticeapp.com"><img
src="http://betterpracticeapp.com/images/powered-by-
bp.png"></img></a>
```

If you do not have a website, we have a website package that can get you a presence on the Internet in no time.

## Closing With Better Practice

When families are choosing a music teacher, it is often helpful to demonstrate that you understand the challenges of learning music and will use the best tools available to help the students learn. Similar to how you communicate with your families when you rollout Better Practice, you can follow-up a similar process with prospects. Talk about the tool and show them the video.

We'd also be happy to help answer any questions your prospects may have as well.

# Additional Resources

## Contact Us

Online Chat: in the app

Phone: (949) 558-2288

Support: in the app, go to More > Help

Tutorials: in the app, go to More > Help > Tutorials

## We're Here to Help

We recognize that you provide a professional service and so we're here to make sure you and your customers are provided top quality support.

If you need anything like a free orientation, or 1 on 1 basic training, or even help getting your studio set up, please let us know.

If you or your families run into any problems, please contact us immediately and we'll work with you to get it resolved as soon as possible.

We're happy to help you.