Teaching Online Voice Lessons
(for dummies)

Let's get the nitty-gritty out of the way.

You might be worried about equipment. Let's look at that first.

Camera: If your laptop or desktop is less than 10 years old, it almost certainly has a camera and microphone built in.
If you haven't ever used the camera or mic that's built into your computer, you may need to enable it. (There's probably a nice young man on youtube who will show you how to do that.)

Microphone: The one built into your computer will work just fine..

Lighting: Nobody else will tell you this, but I will. Overhead lighting makes you look bad. That might be okay by you, but if it's not, arrange the lighting so that you're lit from the front. If you don't have that kind of lighting available, there are cheap lights online. Search "lights for video."

Students Camera & Microphone: Same for them. They can use their built-in camera and microphone. (If they're using a table they may have to plug in an external mic.)

Platform (i.e., the manner by which these lessons will occur): It lives on the internet. Free to both you and your client. You'll need to sign up prior to teaching.

How to connect:

Platform: You're going to use a platform called Zoom. You could use Skype or Facetime, but Zoom offers the least lag time of these options. The sound is equally fabulous-and-challenging between all options.
If you click **THIS LINK,** it will take you to a YouTube video that is one minute long and that gives you instructions on how to set up a Zoom account.

Once you have a Zoom account...

...go to your "my account" page (click on the words "my account" in the upper right corner when you log in). It will look like this:
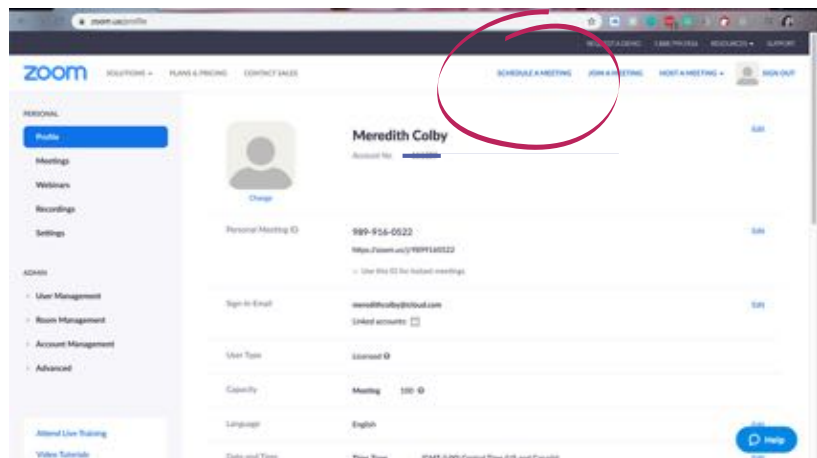
To schedule a lesson: click the blue words "Schedule A Meeting" in the white area at the top right of the page (indicated in previous picture). That will bring you to this screen:
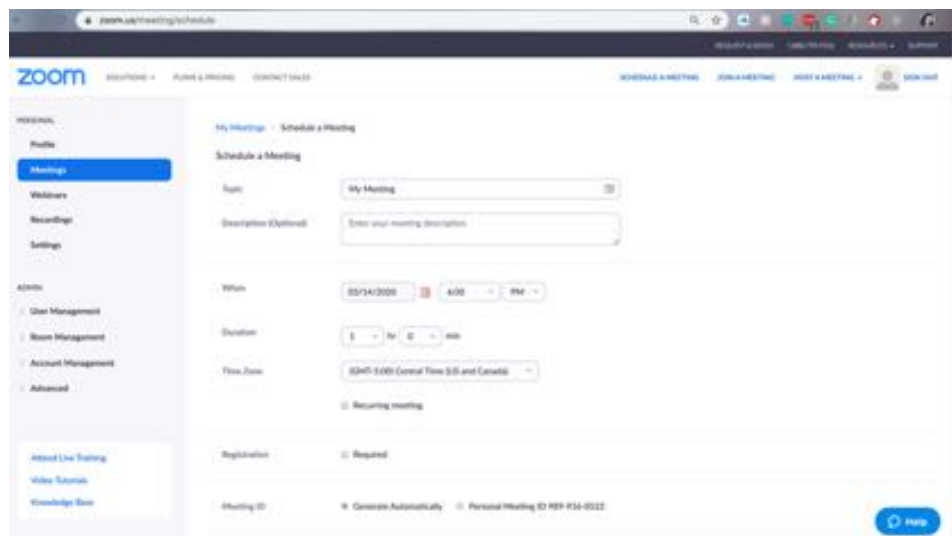
*You're not scared of some silly little computer! Go get 'em!*

Schedule a Meeting

First, you fill out the form. You can leave blank the fields not noted here.

Topic:	Student's name, and a date or other designation.
When:	Date and time
Duration:	Duration
Time Zone:	Time Zone
Registration:	This should NOT be selected (no check mark)
Meeting ID:	Generate automatically
Meeting Password:	If this box is checked, uncheck it.
Video:	Host: On, Participant: On
Audio:	Both
Meeting Options:	Select "Record meeting automatically", then "on local computer". This will let you share it with your student later if they don't or can't record it.

Now click the blue "save" button at the bottom of the page. This will bring you to this page:
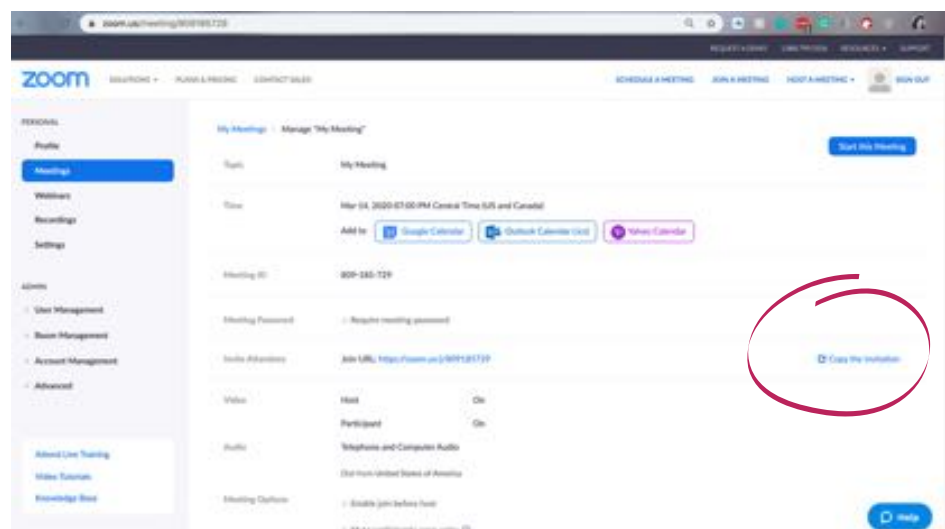

The more confident you appear the fewer cancellations you'll have!

Like my Facebook page!! @MeredithColby.NeuroVocalMethod

Now you have your meeting I.D.: You'll see the words "Copy the Invitation" . (indicated in previous picture.) Click those words. When you do, you'll see this screen:

Click the blue "copy meeting invitation" button. While you're on this screen, please notice where your meeting link is. It's under the words "Join Zoom Meeting." I'll refer to the meeting link in the next section.
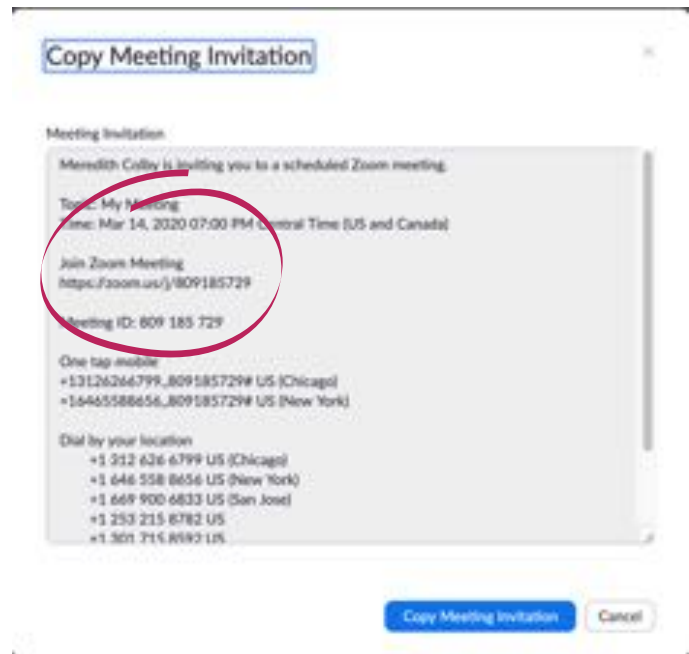
Write your email.

Between 24 and 48 hours prior to the lesson, send an email to your student. If your student is young, you may want to text them to let them know you've sent it.

In the email, tell your student

- that you're SUPER excited to see them, and to try this new way of connecting!
- They will need to download the Zoom app to their computer from Zoom.us (you can give them the same link I gave you).
- they will need to copy and paste the link you've sen them to their browser.

- their view of the computer screen should allow them to stand (or sit) as straight as possible. (People tend to hunch over their screens.)
- their computer should be in a private room for their lesson.
- they'll need a way to play pre-recorded accompaniment (youtube, karaoke, pianotrax, etc.) for whatever song they're working on.
- Optional: If you sense that a student is very anxious about this change, you could offer to have a "practice session" with them (5 minutes for you).

Now paste the Zoom invitation into the email. Remember when you clicked the blue "Copy Meeting Invitation" button? Now it's time to paste it into that email. (In my own personal friendly and reassuring email I tell them that the link is below my signature.)

Remember when I pointed out that Zoom Meeting Link in the "invitation" you copied?

Please find that in the email you just wrote and into which you copied the invitation. Highlight it. Make the font bigger, bold, and a different color. Make it impossible to miss.
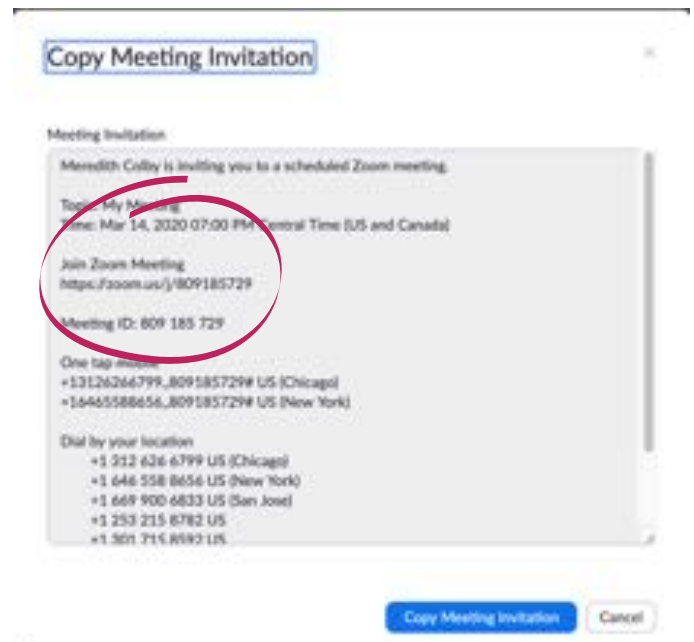

*Look at you! Just like those fancy Broadway voice coaches!*

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Prep for the lesson.

Set up your computer so you can see the screen, your camera can see you, and you can access your piano. Now would be the time to adjust your lighting, turn off any fans or other white noise, kick your cat out of your studio, etc. (If possible, try to adjust your camera so it's looking DOWN on you, not UP at you. Trust me on this.) Have the student's stuff for this lesson handy.

Go to Zoom.us and log into your account. Once you log in, you'll see this screen. Click "Meetings" in the left grey bar.
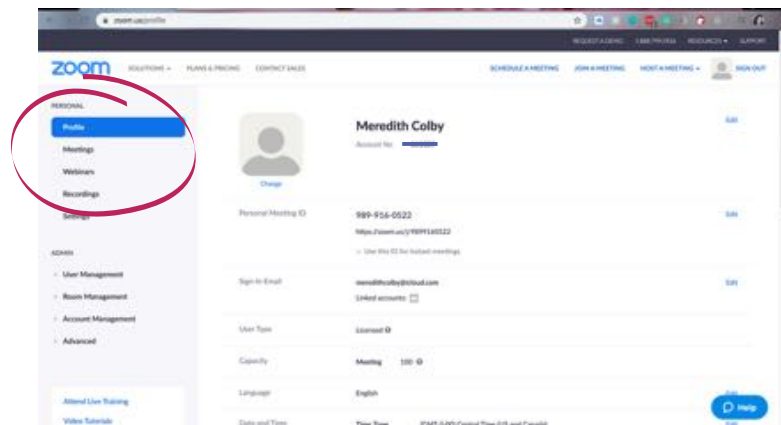
That will bring you to this screen. The name of your meeting (or student) will be in blue, and the "start" button is on the right.
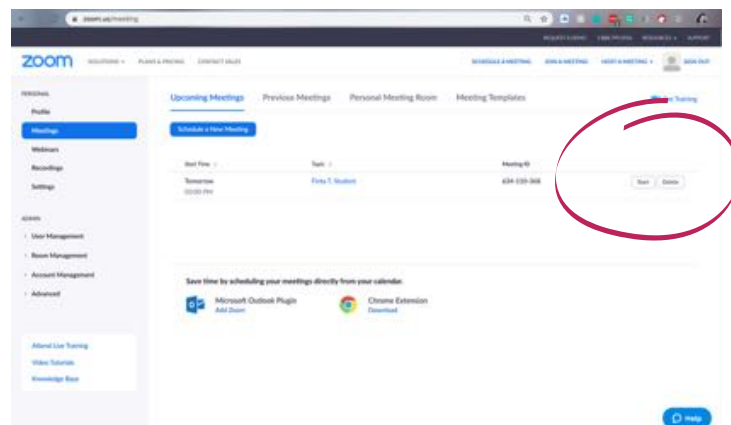

It's all about your attitude!

Aaannnd...Curtain!

Once you click that "start" button, a dialogue box will pop up and prompt you to "Open Zoom.us". Do it.

Then you'll see this. Only it will be you. And you'll be dressed MUCH more professionally than I am here. Notice that my "student" (i.e., smart-aleck husband and pets) is in a window off to the side.

Click and hold that black bar at the top of the pictures on the side to drag and reposition them on the screen. You'll probably want to put the students image just under your camera so it appears you're looking at them.
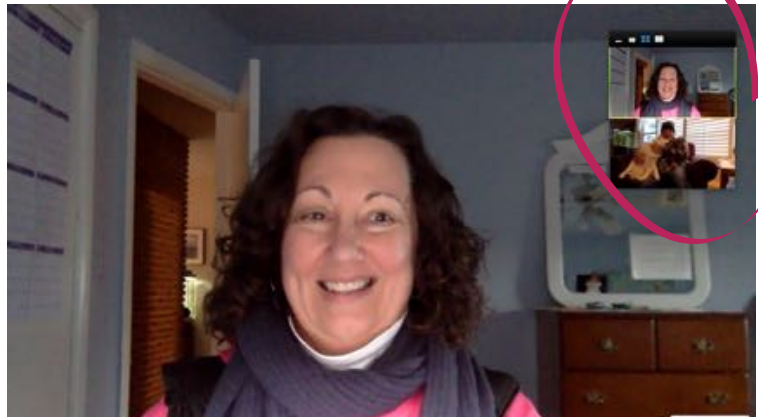
Float your curser near the bottom of the window and you'll see the control bar.

Click this when you're done with the lesson.
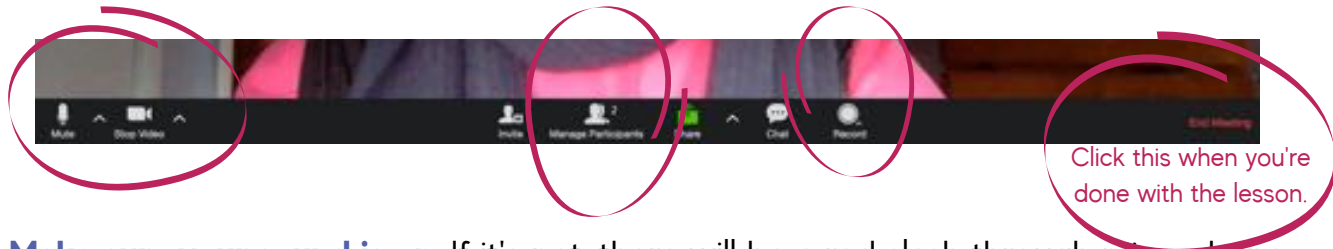
Make sure your sound is on. If it's not, there will be a red slash through microphone icon on the left. Just clicking on it will turn on your sound.

When your student is there, you'll see a "2" next to "manage participants". Tell you student you're going to give them permission to record. They have that same "record" button that you do, so once you give them permission, they can click that button and record to their computer. (One less thing for you to remember!)

You have SO got this!

To give them permission, click the "manage participants" icon. You'll then see this window come up:

Select "More." You'll then The drop-down menu will give you the option to let them record. Click that. Then click the red circle in the top left, and you're done. They are now in charge of recording their lesson.
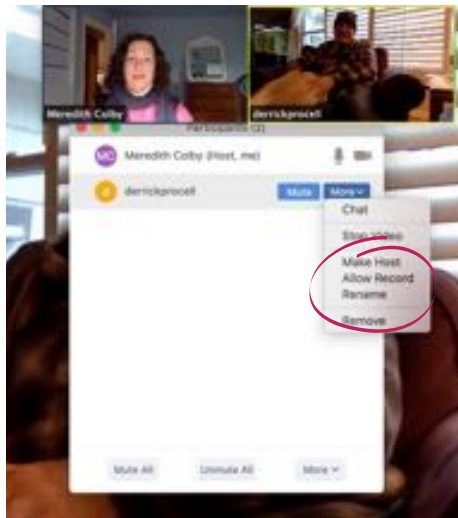
The screen will show the person who is making sound. You'll If you want just your student on the screen, double click on their image in the "participant view"...the little pictures. That will pin them as the main view.

Learning new stuff keeps you young!

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You will be much happier if you embrace this reality: Online lessons are not the same as in-person lesson. They are their own thing.

Things that are different from Real Live lessons:

The sound only goes one way. You have to take turns making sound. So, for instance, in a Real Live lesson you would play the exercise pattern along with the singer vocalizing on the pattern. In an online lesson, you'll establish the pattern and objectives and then simply play a starting pitch.

To that end, you may want to mute yourself. If the student is singing you will get less distortion and more chance of hearing higher frequencies if you mute (bottom left of your screen). You may want to break songs into shorter bites of 2-8 measures to work a song.

Higher frequencies will almost certainly distort or disappear. Sorry. That's just how it is for now. As you read this there are people trying to solve that problem, but it won't be fixed tomorrow. So smile at your student. Use your amazing ears. Say something smart.

You won't accomplish as much in an online lesson. Because of the back-and-forth inherent with the one-way microphone, everything takes longer. So lower the bar. You may not be able to have as much "personal time" as your students have become accustomed to. Be clear about your objectives.

Your student is responsible for their own accompaniment. For teachers who are used to using pre-recorded tracks, this won't be a big change. For teachers who are used to accompanying their students, this will be huge. It will also mean a bigger time investment for both you and your student. You'll have to do research ahead of the lesson to find an appropriate and good-quality accompaniment track.

You're beautiful! You're smart! You got your mojo workin'!

For more awesome teaching stuff, tune in on Mondays to Facebook!

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