

SO YOU WANT TO LEARN HOW TO GIVE A PVI (Personal Vocal Instruction)

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The most important thing you can employ is tender loving care (TLC). The singer's voice is a very personal part of who she is and we must be willing to validate as well as teach. If your director has asked you to learn how to give a PVI then she believes you have the talent and ability to help others.

*A 45 minute appointment is suggested. Ask the singer to arrive 10 minutes early to her appointment. It takes 5 minutes to welcome her and it takes 5 minutes to recap the session. Having access to a keyboard and a full length MIRROR is highly recommended. Tell the singer well ahead of her appointment that you'll be asking her what SHE wants to gain from the PVI.

*She should record the session (audio AND visual if at all possible). This helps her to "buy in" to new concepts and it will be an excellent future reference. She should arrive with a healthy voice and be fully warmed up. Bringing chorus music is recommended. She should bring her own water. What does SHE want to accomplish during the appointment?

*Put the singer at ease before asking her to do anything

*Alignment (or "posture") and breathing are the BASIC needs for most singers. Work on these first. The singer may not even get to the singing part in her first PVI.

*Ask permission to touch the singer if you need to use that as a teaching tool. Male directors may elect to have another person in the room.

*Sing along with the singer at the beginning to put her at ease. Have her sing something she really LIKES to sing. Familiarity will allow her relax and sing better.

*Use your EYES and your EARS to evaluate.

*Give praise often.

*Understand the power of one on one instruction. Many singers just need to talk about their singing issues.

*Use a check sheet to write notes and make comments as future reference for you and the singer.

*Teach only what you understand and can demonstrate. (This is critical.) If something isn't working, drop it and try a different technique or move onto a different skill.

*Provide the singer with exercises that will help her improve.

Give the singer no more than two or three new concepts to work on.

* Allow time for questions and clarification as needed.