

Advise for Teaching Beginning Guitar:
10 Things that will Make Your Life Easier

1. Learn to play the guitar! Get a copy of Modern Guitar Book 1 & 2 by Mel Bay and learn the 18 notes in first position. Learn to play with a pick, learn a handful of chords, and learn some basic finger style.
2. Have a classroom guitar with a strap, and be able to model each technique that you teach.
3. Practice with your students.
4. Embrace the advantages of teaching guitar:
 - a. Only one type of instrument in the classroom
 - b. Only one clef
 - c. Once tuned, the guitar plays in tune
 - d. By nature, the guitar is rather soft in relation to many other musical instruments
 - e. Students can make a decent sound on the instrument immediately
 - f. The class can move forward rather quickly
 - g. The guitar can be a melodic instrument as well as an accompaniment
 - h. Students can play guitar and sing simultaneously
5. Music students enrolled in band, choir or orchestra typically do not leave these classes to join a guitar class. Students who join guitar class would not be attracted to band, choir or orchestra. This is a different type of student. Embrace these students and know you can and will make a difference in their lives. What are some of the differences? Guitar students:
 - a. Like to wear black clothing
 - b. Can visualize themselves on stage playing guitar in front of a large crowd
 - c. May have never belonged to anything larger than oneself, i.e. scouts, sporting teams, church groups, school clubs, etc.
 - d. Are loners by nature (independent)
 - e. Are attracted to the guitar because it is capable of being a solo instrument as well as an accompaniment
 - f. Are technically savvy
6. Guitar students have a desire to be current with their music. Be flexible and open to teaching current styles and skills. Include power chords, complex strumming patterns, improvisational patterns, tabs, etc. as rewards.
7. Guitar students will frequently make suggestions for ideas of songs to learn in class. Most of this stems from the vast availability of tablature available on the internet.

8. Guitar students get ideas from watching YouTube videos. YouTube can be your friend in the classroom. Many videos are helpful in teaching guitar. Many will help you be a better player and will help your students be a better player.
9. "Free Music on the internet" is not always the best choice of materials for your classroom. While "free" is a great price, the content may not (most often is not) the best selection of materials for your classroom.
10. The guitar classes that you are (or will be) teaching are providing you with a regular pay check. Guitar classes save jobs! If you have been asked to teach guitar, chances are the numbers in your orchestra have dropped to the point where you will have to teach other classes to fill your schedule. If you are teaching guitar in the classroom, remind yourself, you are employed!