

Arts Assessment For Learning

MUSIC — 4TH AND 5TH GRADE

HOW TO: RECORDER TECHNIQUE WITH RUBRIC

[Below is an approximate time period. Students who have had no musical training may need a bit more time, as might a teacher new to integrating formative assessment in their practice of teaching music.]

Lessons 1 & 2

- Introduction and practicing of basic recorder skills

Lesson 3 & 4

Step 1: Engaging Activity

- Remind the students that they will be learning an excerpt from Ludwig Van Beethoven's 9th Symphony called *Ode To Joy*.
- Have the students briefly share where they have heard this song before or if they have ever played it. If applicable, have the students perform the excerpt on the instrument in which they can play it (keyboard, xylophone) or invite them to bring in the instrument for the next class.
- Make sure the students have all necessary materials (recorder, score, rubric, pencil).

NOTE: I copied the rubric onto the back of the student's scores so that the rubric was always kept with the score.

Step 2: Introducing the Melody

- Model: Play the piece on the recorder for the students to re-familiarize them with melody. (Students just listen)
- Play the piece again, asking the students to follow along with the score on the board. (You may want the students to point to the notes as you play and/or work with a partner. This can help students who are having difficulty following the notes gain familiarity with following notes on a staff)
- Play the piece again for the students and have them follow the notes on their own copy of the score.
- Sing the melody using the pitch name, focusing on pitch accuracy. (Be sure to use the recorder to find the starting pitch).
- As needed, repeat singing the song with pitch names, as some students are not comfortable enough to join the first time, until it sounds accurate.
- If the pitch continues to be inaccurate, invite the students to sing while you play the piece on the recorder, or layer the students' singing in as you play.
- As the students gain accuracy and fluency in singing the melody line while focusing on pitch, start to point out the rhythms that seemed challenging or were inaccurate. Students may help read the rhythms to the class or they may work in pairs to figure out the rhythms. As the students continue to sing the piece, remind them of the rhythm.

Step 3: Reviewing Fingerings on the Recorder

- Ask different students to demonstrate the fingering on the recorder, review the notes that are used in the phrases that the students will be focusing on in these lessons. (B, C, D, A, G)

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- Practice the first phrase measure by measure, putting the measures together as the students gain understanding and fluency.
- Once the first phrase is completed, add the second phrase measure by measure.

Step 4: introducing the Rubric (One Criterion-at-a-Time begin with “Fingering”)

Model the process of using the rubric:

- Show the students the rubric, showing only the first row for the criterion of “FINGERING”.
- Look at the different levels of progression (4→1), starting with the best (4). *NOTE: As opposed to conventional rubric models that begin with 1 and move towards 4 at the far right of the rubric, this rubric begins with 4 so as to motivate students to achieve what is in the first box (4), since this box is read the most.*
- Discuss each descriptor listed in the box. Explain to the students why the rubric may seem backwards (4→1 rather than 1→4).
- Make sure that the students are only focusing on the criterion they are being asked to assess (fingerings). Emphasize that while the students know what the melody sounds like (since they have already sung and played it) they should only be listening for correct notes (not rhythm, sound, or phrasing, as these will come later).
- Explain to the students that they are going to assess *your* playing of the first phrase. Have the students quickly review the four descriptors (4-1) listed on the rubric on their own.
- Next, have the students turn to the score and find the phrase you will be playing. Instruct the students to have a pencil in hand and as you play, very quickly draw a slash over any note(s) they hear that are played incorrectly. *You may have to model this process.*
- Play the first phrase – but be sure to make a few mistakes in pitch. *You should be able to see students following the score as you play and slashing the incorrect phrase.*
- Repeat playing the phrase, being sure to make the same exact mistakes. Again, remind the students that they are only listening for pitch accuracy and looking to see if you are playing the correct fingering.
- As a class, discuss the mistakes the students heard in your playing. Make sure the students have put a slash through the notes you played incorrectly on their own score.
- Have the students look at the rubric and discuss with their partner which descriptor (4-1) best fits the playing that they just heard.
- Come back together as a class and discuss what the pairs have determined is the best descriptor (4-1).

Step 5: The Process of Revision

- Continue to serve as the model.
- Invite the students to work together to quickly come up with a few suggestions or helpful ways to improve your playing. They may suggest that you write down fingering next to the notes that were incorrect, separate out a few notes in a pattern to practice slowly, draw a picture of the fingering to help remind you what it looks like, play it slower, etc.
- Taking the students suggestions, play the phrase again with some improvement.

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- Discuss as a class whether or not they heard/saw that the pitch accuracy/fingering improved.
- Explain that improvements may take some time. Not all improvements can be made instantaneously. Remind them to continue working and not to give up.

Step 6: Practicing & Revising

- Invite the students to being working with their assigned partner to assess each other's playing.
They will be listening to each other play, marking their partner's music for incorrect notes and fingering only, offering suggestions for improvement, and then listening to their partner play again to see if the playing does, in fact, improve. Encourage the students to give a compliment before offering suggestions (wish).
- Give ample time for both students to go through the process of performance and revision.
- Check in with the students to see if they have any questions and if they are following the process correctly.
- After discussing with their partner, make sure the students are each marking their music and rubric with any adjustments, comments or notes they might need in order to improve their playing.

Step 7: Goal-Setting

- The student will articulate a "goal" derived from the rubric feedback as well as the compliments and suggestions made by the student's partner. The goal is what needs to be worked on and should come directly from the language in the rubric. For example, "My playing was not smooth, so I will sing it and practice a few notes at a time until it sounds smooth".
- The students should record their goals on the rubric and include the date so that progress can be tracked.
- As a class, ask students to share their goals.
- These goals will help to focus the students at-home practice. They are what the students should be working on at home, and where you should see significant improvement during the following class.

At Home Self-Assessment

- Students will take their music home and work on improving their playing performance
- At home, students should be focused on the goal that has been set with the help of their partner.

Progressing through the Rubric

- In subsequent lessons, the same procedure will be followed for each of the remaining criteria (rhythm, sound, phrasing).
- During the assessment of rhythm, students will slash incorrect rhythms, similar to what they did for fingerings. For sound, students will highlight in yellow any squeaks or where their partner ran out of breath. For phrasing, students will highlight in green any parts of the piece that do not sound smooth.
- The lessons will consist of explaining any musical or educational terms, teacher modeling, student modeling, performances, critique, revision, goal setting, and practice and self-assessment at home.

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TIPS: RECORDER TECHNIQUE WITH RUBRIC

- DON'T assume anything. If you want it learned, TEACH IT!
- Even if the students say that they understand what a rubric is, model your understanding for them - explain what it means to YOU and how you developed your rubric.
- Take the time to go over it SLOWLY.
- If it is the first time the students are using a rubric with you, take extra time to make sure that the students understand EXACTLY what you mean. The first few rubrics that I wrote were not clear to the students.
- Remember this is probably very new to them. What is clear to you isn't always clear to a child.
- Keep your rubric positive.
- Don't clutter the rubric with words. Leave spaces so it is more eye-catching and less intimidating.
- Be mindful of your English Language Learners. They MAY be doing what you are asking of them, they just may not be able to express themselves in words.
- Always clarify if you see some students not doing what you are asking of them. Since this is new, they may not understand the instructions.