

# Arts Assessment For Learning

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MUSIC — 4<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

## REFLECTION: IMPROVING RECORDER TONE

### **Without judgment, describe what you did. Just the facts:**

I created a checklist with the students, based on their prior knowledge of good recorder playing. I placed a chart paper on a chart stand in front of the room. I asked “How can you sound good on the recorder?” They gave answers such as starting the sound with the tongue, not squeaking, playing soft, and covering the holes. Through further discussion and experimentation (kids tried ta, hoo, du), we determined that tonguing properly with a *du* sound will make it crisp, clear, and soft. Keeping your elbows up will help your hands stay in good position to cover the holes (after students slouched, their fingers slipped off the holes). Pressing firmly also helps cover the holes, since the right and left edges of the holes are recessed due to the recorder being round. Some instruments like flutofones have chimneys on the holes to make them flat and easier to cover.

### **What went well?**

Students remembered and suggested the criteria.

### **What was so-so?**

All students in this class returned the permission slips, after a period of time, making photo and video possible.

### **What was the most challenging part of trying this?**

In our school, it is very hard to see students out of class for assessments or video-taping. Teachers are not able to release students for this work. All work must be done during regular class time. This class takes place last period, so there is time lost for pack-up. In my school, we follow a 7-day prep cycle, so I only see this class two or three times a week.

### **What was the impact of this strategy on student learning? (specific examples)**

Students were motivated by the intrinsic reward of receiving positive peer feedback, and earnestly tried to improve their recorder playing.

### **What new insights or understandings are forming as a result of this experience?**

I had to make a separate chart specifically for this class, so they would know the mechanics of creating and using an assessment tool.

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## **How do the results of your action plan inform your inquiry question?**

In 2014-2015, I made one additional change. I noticed that students were just checking off the checklist, but I wasn't sure that they were truly giving honest assessment to their partners. I wanted to have a verbal feedback time (accountable talk), so that students could discuss their playing. This resulted in a ladder of feedback. I used this ladder in grades 2-5.

1. How do you think you practiced (Students are given a chance to self-assess before being assessed by peers).
2. I like the way (to maintain morale, students are required to find one good thing before criticism is given. The checklist was used for reference)
3. I notice that (this is where students refer to the checklist to tell which item to work on. If all items were good, then students were told to keep up the good work in all of the items).
4. Why don't you try: (This is where students had to know how to fix a problem. Squeaks could be fixed by covering the holes, holding the recorder at a correct angle, or tonguing correctly. )
5. Again, I like the way: (The positive is reiterated).

## **Documentation to bring (student work, photos, writing, teacher journal, etc.):**

- Video and photos of lesson where students created checklist.
- Video and photos of students using checklist.
- Photos or videos of checklists.