

# Arts Assessment For Learning

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MUSIC — 3<sup>RD</sup> – 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADES

## **ACTION PLAN: BEGINNING STRINGS TECHNIQUE**

### **Who (the class or group I will focus on):**

3-5<sup>th</sup> grade students who are learning string instruments.

### **Inquiry question:**

Does a process of peer assessment improve students' achievement in building and applying violin technique?

### **Student learning goals:**

- Students will be able to hold their violin parallel to the floor with their left and right hands in the appropriate places.
- Students will be able to pluck the appropriate string using their pointer finger, while keeping their thumb on the fingerboard and looking at the music.
- Students will be able to pluck quarter and rest patterns on the appropriate strings while following a steady beat.
- Students will be able to play with proper left hand technique, keeping their fingers curved on the fingertips.
- Students will be able to identify and play the notes D, E, F#, G and A with proper left and right hand technique.

### **Identify indicators from the *Blueprint* aligned with the student learning goals:**

- Students build and apply vocal and instrumental technique.
- Students identify music notation

### **What formative assessment strategy I will put into practice:**

Students will use peer assessment rubrics to engage in peer feedback.

### **Why this strategy will help my students achieve or improve the above goals:**

I hope this strategy will help engage my students acquire better practice techniques. As they become aware of mistakes they are making, this strategy will help them recognize how to fix what is needed.

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## How I plan to implement this assessment strategy in my practice and/or lessons:

### Step 1: How to Hold the Violin

- Students will begin by putting the violin out in front of them with the scroll at the top, turning it upside down, and putting it on their shoulder.
- Students will be advised to keep the violin parallel to the floor, with their scroll facing forward.
- Students will then make a backwards “L” with their right hand and place their right thumb on the edge of the fingerboard, plucking with their pointer finger. Students will identify the D and A strings, and practice plucking various four beat patterns.
- The students will be given many opportunities to practice this step.

### Step 2: Simple Rhythm and Bowing Practice

- Students will begin practicing examples 1-9 in *Essential Elements for Strings Book 1*.
- Students will be advised to practice the rhythm by saying the words ‘quart’ for quarter notes and “shh” for rests.
- Students will be advised to remember looking at the book, instead of their fingers on the violin.
- Students will sing the D and A patterns with the correct rhythm and then play it on the violin.
- Students will be given many opportunities to practice these examples.

### Step 3: What is a Rubric!?

- The teacher will pass out the “D and A String Peer Assessment Rubric” with attached descriptive feedback prompts.
- The teacher will introduce the rubric to the students by asking the following questions:
  - What is a rubric?
  - What can a rubric be used for?
  - How can rubrics help us improve our violin playing?

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## Step 4: Determining the Rubric Criteria Levels

- The teacher will focus on the rhythm portion of the rubric and explain each level for the criteria.
- Students will read the criteria for “Take A Bow,” the teacher will demonstrate what the “Take A Bow” level would look and sound like by playing an example on the violin.
- The teacher will ask a student to read the “Standing Ovation” level and ask, “What is the difference between the ‘Take a Bow’ and ‘Standing Ovation’?”
- The teacher will then demonstrate the ‘Standing Ovation’ level by playing an example on the violin.
- A student will read the ‘Applause’ level, and ask the difference between ‘Applause’ and ‘Standing Ovation’, the teacher will demonstrate by playing an example on the violin.
- A student will read ‘Smiles and Nods’ and ask the difference between ‘Smiles and Nods’ and ‘Applause’.
- The teacher will demonstrate ‘Smiles and Nods’ by playing an example on the violin.
- The teacher will play an example of a level and ask students to decide the level that was demonstrated.

## Step 5: Peer Assessment of Rhythm Criteria

- Students will be given the opportunity to work with a partner to play an example, only using the rhythm criteria.
- Students will decide who will play first, and who will be watching.
- The first partner will play a specific example from *Essential Elements for Strings* Book 1 while the other partner observes.
- After they are finished playing, the person watching will circle one of the levels on the rubric that best matched what their partner played.
- The students will then be given an opportunity to discuss why they circled that level.

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- After discussing, the students will play the example again, and try to fix what their mistakes based on what their partner discussed with them. The partners will then switch.
- The person who was watching will now play, and the person who played will now watch.
- The students will play the same example, the person watching will circle the level and discuss why they picked that level.
- Students will be given an opportunity to play again and fix their mistakes.

## **Step 6: D & A String Criteria**

- The teacher will review the D and A string criteria.
- A student will read the “Take A Bow” level and the teacher will demonstrate what “Take A Bow” looks like while playing the example.