

Arts Assessment For Learning

MUSIC—3RD - 5TH GRADES

REFLECTION: BEGINNING STRINGS TECHNIQUE

Without judgement, describe what you did:

- Students were taught how to properly hold the violin, followed by identifying and playing the D and A strings with proper technique for three lessons.
- On the fourth lesson students were introduced to the rubric. Students read the criteria for the “D and A String Peer Assessment Rubric” and compared and contrasted the various levels related to the criteria.
- I then played three examples related to the criteria and students described my performance based on the criteria. Students were encouraged to explain their choices by using specific examples from the rubric.
- Students were sent to work in groups of two. One person played while the other watched and chose a level based from the rhythm criteria. The person with the rubric circled their level and discussed it with their partner. That partner had an opportunity to try again to see if their performance improved. The partners then switched.
- The groups then worked on the next criteria, which was D and A string and followed the same procedure.
- Students were introduced to the concept of using the left hand to play more notes. Students learned how to play the notes E, F# and G while keeping their fingers curved and in the appropriate time. Students practiced this for three weeks.
- Students were introduced to the rubric for “Fingering on the D string”. Students followed the same procedure for filling out the rubric. Students filled out the feedback

What went well?

Students were very successful with identifying the levels when they observed me play the examples. They were also able to give descriptive feedback based on the rubric.

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What was so-so?

The students were very concerned about the 'grades' they were giving their partner. Students were circling higher levels than their partner actually performed.

What was the most challenging part of trying this?

The most challenging part was trying to fit everything in one lesson. The classes are 45 minutes long, with many logistical things to consider such as getting instruments, setting up, and passing out papers and pencils.

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

Students were more aware of their own playing and were able to verbalize their strengths and weaknesses. Students were also able to speak and write using appropriate music language.

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

Peer assessment does improve students' violin technique and ability to speak about music. As part of my growing inquiry, I would like to continue using peer assessment as students learn how to use the bow. The peer assessment rubrics help students to build the music vocabulary necessary to speak about music. I would like to see whether self-assessment would help students be more honest about their playing

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

I was pleased with the improvements the students made because of the use of the rubric. Students were able to engage in their own learning and the learning of their peers in ways they were unable to prior to this implementation. The continuous use of vocabulary was very beneficial for their musicianship as well.