

ASSESSMENT IN THE INSTRUMENTAL CLASSROOM

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- I. Definition - To evaluate or appraise. (Webster)
- II. Traditional Types of Assessment
 - A. Individual
 1. Methods of Assessment
 - a. "Live" performance/playing test (student plays in class)
 1. Pro - immediate feedback for student
 2. Con - "down" time for remainder of class; wasted time; potential disruption due to students being non-directed
 - b. Recorded performances
 1. Video (actual visual assessment with sound)
 1. Pro - multiple use of time; encompasses audio and visual evaluations
 2. Con - time consumption to view and assess (teacher)
 2. Audio
 1. Pro - students can operate alone; mobile assessment (listen and do)
 2. Con - limited scope with no visual (bow hold, posture, position, etc.)
 - c. Solo & Ensemble MPA
 1. Pro - adjudicated and assessed by someone other than teacher
 2. Con - infrequently administered (once per year)
 - B. Group
 1. Methods of Assessment
 - a. Sectional
 1. Pro - multiple assessment observations in class period
 2. Con - weaker players can "hide"
 - b. MPA (Music Performance Assessment)
 1. Pro - provides multiple feedback from adjudicators; audio tape
 2. Con - dependent upon quality of instruction delivered by teacher (students perform in the manner that they were taught - posture, intonation, tone production, etc.)
 - III. Alternate Types of Assessment
 - A. Collaborative Individual
 1. Students collaborate and create rubric for evaluation and assessment (class)
Beginning Version:
 - a. Teacher Plays (or demonstrates Bow Hold)
 - b. Students respond verbally to what's wrong/what's right
 - c. As a class, assessment forms are filled outNote: For this level, the rubric would probably only have "scores" of 1, 2 and 3
 2. Students are linked with a partner
 3. Students evaluate each other's performance; determine strengths and weaknesses; outline a plan for mastery of skill
 4. Using the Practice Skills Bank (see below) students make up to 3 "withdrawals" for implementation of their plan
 5. Students implement "plan" (time period is given - either in class or at home)
 6. Repeat Step #3
 7. Students share a two-part summary with the class and answer questions
(Two-part summary includes player and assessor)

- a. Pro - builds “teamwork”; students develop a keen sense of observation; experience “ownership” in their own success
- b. Con - time investment (are teachers willing to take the time?); must have clear directions and steps (suggest taking class through a “practice” first)

B. Collaborative Group

- 1. Students collaborate and create rubric for evaluation and assessment
- 2. Determine **specific items** to assess (tone, intonation, articulation, etc.)
Note: Limit assessment to **three areas** of concentration at one time for clarity
- 3. Each student playing test is scored by every student in the section
- 4. Documents are turned in at end of class and compared to teacher scoring
 - a. Pro - students develop a more discerning attitude; accountability;
 - b. Con - what do teachers do with the “rest” of the class?
(Ideas: Read a book, practice with fingers alone (no sound); shadow bow; theory worksheets; work on development of rubric for their particular passage or assessment area)
- 5. Concert MPA
 - a. Students listen to other ensembles perform; fill out blank adjudicator’s forms; share with class upon return to school; turn in papers
 - b. Students listen to audio/visual of their own performance and fill out blank adjudicator form; compare their comments with those from adjudicator for similarities/differences

IV. Assessment Tools

A. Practice Skills Bank (PSB) - visual tool in classroom; located in front of room on bulletin board; students make “deposits” and “withdrawals” as needed.

- 1. Deposits - suggestions from students on methods of practice for specific problems
- 2. Withdrawals - students “withdraw” items to use for practice for specific problems

B. Contents

- 1. Isolate the problem (string changes, bowing articulation, fingering, shifting, etc.)
- 2. Reduce the tempo
- 3. Clap the rhythm
- 4. Insert a rest
- 5. Change the rhythm (more/less difficult)
- 6. Alternate measures (for use with a partner)
- 7. Alternate notes
- 8. Delete a pitch
- 9. Say the notes in rhythm (reduced)
- 10. Say the notes/finger the notes
- 11. Sing the notes
- 12. Shadow Bow
- 13. Echo (playing and singing)
- 14. Pizzicato
- 15. Play correctly 5 x (reduced tempo)
- 16. Increase tempo
- 17. Insert back into music

Note: These are only a few of the items in the Practice Skills Bank. Students/Teacher may make “deposits” at any time! Be creative!!

V. And what about the rest of the class?

A. **Students must be directed at all times** - otherwise, they will “find” something to do!

1. Read a book - most schools are focusing on reading time and students keep a reading log
2. Read an article - prepare (in advance) handout with questions from the article
3. Participate in the Assessment for other students (fill out the Assessment Form)
4. Prepare to deliver their own comments on the performance(s) (including possible “withdrawals” from the PSB that may be of help to solve the problem(s))
5. Written evaluations to turn in at the end of class (helps to determine if the students can detect problems and/or inconsistencies with performances)
6. Theory - prepared theory lessons that students work on while others are testing
7. Listening Assignments - check out cassette or CD players from your Media Center; students listen to assignment and answer questions (form, time period, characteristics, key, time signature, tempo, etc.)
Note: Forms for this activity must be prepared in advance or written on the board
8. Computer Assisted Theory (CAT)- if you have a computer(s) in your classroom, CAT may be used at this time to remediate or accelerate student musical skills
9. Design a Lesson Plan
Students select a particular skill and design a lesson plan to teach the skill to the class. This may be done individually or in groups. Presentations may be written or oral (or a combination of both)
10. Peer Mentors
Students may use this time to mentor another student. (Note reading, rhythm, bow hold, playing)
Again, teachers must plan and prepare for this in advance: Who works together? What do they work on? Where do they work?
Some things may be done in the classroom, others may involve sending students to the Media Center/Library.
11. Design program for upcoming concerts (students work on layout & design)
12. Students write an essay from a written prompt on the board (FCAT PRACTICE!!)
13. Musical math problems (requires pre-requisite of in class preparation/practice)
Students either “work” musical math problems provide by the teacher OR
Students “create” musical math problems (for future use by teacher as bellwork)
Note: For problems created by students, students must solve the problems and provide the solution
14. Rhythm patterns and phrases (requires pre-requisite of in class preparation/practice)
Same as above, only with rhythmic patterns
15. Writing melodies (requires pre-requisite of in class preparation/practice)
Students write melodies within certain parameters (outlined by teacher) such as key signature, time signature, number of measures, form (for longer assignments), notes values to be used, etc.)