**Figure 26.1. Sample Methods Book Comparison Assignment and Chart**

(a) Make a table with the categories and specify what you mean by some of the terms

(b) Make a rating scale. You can weigh the categories differently.

(c) Include a TOTAL

(d) End with a short list (3 bullet points) of strengths and weaknesses

(e) Include what you would need to supplement if you were to use this book.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Categories** | **Points** | **Name of Book #1** | **Name of Book #2** | **Name of Book #3** |
| Instrument Care | 5 |  |  |  |
| Teaching Position | 5 |  |  |  |
| \*Music Literature included, and diversity of genres/ composers | 30 |  |  |  |
| Sequential pedagogy/ music literacy/pacing | 35 |  |  |  |
| Visual Appeal/Picture of students | 25 |  |  |  |
| Music History | 10 |  |  |  |
| Music Theory | 10 |  |  |  |
| Improvisation | 10 |  |  |  |
| Composition | 10 |  |  |  |
| Terms Defined | 5 |  |  |  |
| Fingering Charts | 5 |  |  |  |
| Accompaniment/  Teacher Manual | 25 |  |  |  |
| Excellent Recordings/ Online Supplemental  Materials | 25 |  |  |  |
| Total | 200 |  |  |  |

\*Music literature could include varied genres/repertoire, music that might interest students of that age, good arrangements, more challenging and simplified options, solos and ensembles, etc.

**Strengths** **Weaknesses**

-Good layout/well organized -Poor instrument care and posture sections

-Great fingering charts -Lack of rhythm practice

-Wonderful theory and ear training exercises -Not varied in repertoire nor improv/comp.

Identify supplemental materials you might use with each methods book. Examples:

* Practice Journals
* Improvisation and composition assignments
* Literature of diverse genres and diverse composers
* Music history information
* Listening examples

**Table 26.1: Making Teaching Decisions**

Before you read what I think, consider the following choices you have to make.

First, what are you goals for the first day of class?

What do you want your students to think, feel, know, and be able to do at the end of the first class?

What are your goals for the first year?

Then, what do you think about:

1. using finger markers and/or harmonies to help with intonation
2. using shoulder rests (Violinists and Violists)
3. sitting or standing when playing (Violins, Violas, and Basses)
4. singing before you play. a. If you sing, do you sing on letter names, finger numbers, solfege, scale degree numb., etc.?
5. beginning with rote or note (develop aural skills before music reading skills, simultaneously, or focus more on music reading skills?)
6. playing with the bow on the first day, first week, first month, or wait until after the first concert
7. teaching bow hold as having specific places for each finger (marks on hands), using bow guides, or teaching a more general bow hold
8. beginning by playing open strings with accompaniment as first songs learned or something with a melody
9. assessing students individually (regular playing tests) a. If so, do you hear them alone in-person, through technology, or have them play alone in class in front of their peers?
10. including all types of genres in your class or just a few specific ones? a. How do you feel about teaching popular music students hear on the radio, fiddle tunes, jazz, folk, holiday music, “classical” music, world music, modern music, music from diverse composers, etc.?
11. including improvisation and/or composition in the beginning string classes? a. If so, how often and how?
12. How do you initiate student playing? (examples, cuing, counting two beats, counting four beats, etc.)

**Table 26.2. Highlighting a few String Pedagogues**

**Dr. Sinichi Suzuki (1898-1998) Japanese**. Established Talent Education in 1957. Tenets of the Suzuki Method include beginning students at a young age using the “mother tongue” approach, parental involvement, listening, repetition, encouragement, learning with other children, graded repertoire, and delayed music reading. Clifford Cook (Oberlin), John Kendall, William Starr, and Anastasia Jemplis (Eastman) were all instrumental in bringing the Suzuki method to the United States of America in the late 1950s and 1960s. The Suzuki Association of the Americas’ mission is to aspire “to improve the quality of life in the Americas through Suzuki education. We seek to create a learning community, which embraces excellence and nurtures the human spirit” (<https://suzukiassociation.org>).

**Professor Elizabeth Green (1906-1995). American.** Pedagogue, performer,conductor, composer, and author of 11 books, Elizabeth Green first taught strings in the Ann Arbor Public Schools and then became a professor at the University of Michigan. Jacquelyn Dillion-Krass, Elizabeth Green was an early advocate for teaching strings in groups in public schools, she believed that non-string players could be successful string teachers and, she was a role model for women conductors and directors (Feigelson, 1995).

**Dr. George Bornoff** **(1907-1998) Canadian, also taught at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York.** Established Foundation for the Advancement of String Education (FASE) in 1978. He is well known for establishing finger patterns but also, “His approach skillfully sequences and integrates bowing technique, fingering, positions, shifting, double stops, harmonics, vibrato and more, and through the use of meaningful repetition, nurtures emotional maturity, and creative and technical flexibility, firmly grounded with sonorous tone production and artistic phrasing.” (https://fase.org/about-bornoff/). He was also one of the founding members of American String Teachers Association in 1946.

**Professor Paul Roland (1911-1978). Born in Budapest, Hungary but moved the to the USA in 1938.** He taught at the University of Illinois and helped found the American String Teachers Association. He filmed Suzuki’s first visit to the USA and explored his methods, adapting the methods for American classrooms. He also co-authored *The Teaching of Action of String Playing,* emphasizing “freedom and ease in playing, and the use of good motionpatterns free from excessive tension” (Lin, 2012). https://precollegestrings.wordpress.com/2012/01/12/paul-rolland-and-the-university-of-illinois-strings-research-project/

Feigelson, J. (1995). Elizabeth A. H. Green 1906 – 1995. *American String Teacher*, *45*(4), 21-25.

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**Table 26.3. Sample Lesson Plan for First Day of Teaching Homogeneous Groups: Violins**

This assumes you have **at least 35 minutes** of teaching time and it is aimed at students in grades 4-7.

Students sit in chairs in a semi-circle with case closed, flat on the ground, case clasps facing them. No music stands.

**Quick Introduction** Hi. My name is Dr. Pellegrino and I am so excited for you to learn how to play the violin today!

**Parts of the Violin (and how I will refer to them)**

Scroll, to point towards me

Tuning pegs and fine tuners, “We will learn to use these later in the year”

4 Strings (pluck and say), Eency weency “E”

Awesome “A”

Dawgawn “D” (Dinosaur “D,” Dragon “D,” Etc.)

Giant “G”

Fingerboard, for your fingers to dance on top of

Neck, to gently lift your instrument

Bridge, to protect because it is not glued in place but it holds \_\_\_ tons of pressure from the

string tension

Chin rest, for your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ “Actually, we’ll use the side of the jaw.”

Button

Back (where shoulder rest/sponge goes. Show how to attach, frowny-face when scroll faces up.)

F Holes—sound comes out of these

Open case. Lift violin by neck and button. Stand up.

**Rest Position**, Wave right hand to wall, violin under right arm with string facing the wall, arm

protects the bridge

**Add shoulder rest**. Make it look like a frowny face, wider part of shoulder rest underneath chin rest. Shoulder rest arm on side of instrument, slide other side onto violin until secure.

*4:00* **Playing Position**

Hold violin in front of you (scroll on top and button facing floor)

Hold violin sideways (scroll to left and button towards right wall)

Lift over your head

Sway like a palm tree until you find your center of balance

Bring down onto left shoulder

(“Even though I don’t want a whole class of arrogant students, we’ll just pretend”…)

Sniff a sniff of arrogance, turn your head in disgust, and drop the side of your jaw/chin in the

chin rest.

Move feet/body until the scroll is pointing at me. Return to rest position. Repeat.

3rd time: swing arm underneath the violin so you strum strings with pinky

4th time: fingers dance on the fingerboard

5th time: Have a student lead

6th time: Have student lead and then, make L with thumb and first finger.

Thumb against fingerboard.

First finger reaches to farthest string. Sing and pluck G 4 times.

Relax arm and finger to next string. Sing and pluck (D, A, E) 4 times.

“What do you hear?: (Silently lay violin in case.) Have students do that. If noise, have them do it again. (Respect for instrument)

*11:00* Show Students **Parts of the Bow**

Frog, tip, hairs, stick, screw

Students gently remove bow from case.

Turn screw six half turns to right until stick and hairs are pencil width apart.

*12:00* **Bow Hold**

Pick bow up at balance point with left hand, frog facing right

Tighten screw until hairs are a pen or pencil’s width away from stick

Left arm in front of body

Lightly grab your arm with right hand (thumb underneath arm)

Look at the spaces between your fingers

Slide second knuckle of fingers over hand and onto stick over the frog

Thumb is bent and under frog. It won’t always live there but just for now.

Poem: Four little frogs swimming in the pool, (Celloists and bassists stop here)

Violinists & violaists, The little one gets out and sits on the stool. (Click your pinky on top of stick)

Take out rosin and hold in left hand. Land bow on rosin at frog and count to six (half bows, back and forth

or up and down). Full bow to tip and count to six (half bows, back and forth or up and down). Repeat.

Tip up, ALL: show me your bent thumbs, Violinists and Violists, click pinky again

*15:00* **Modified Playing Position**

Begin with instrument at your right side, left hand on fingerboard, right hand holding bow,

tip towards ceiling, use side of hand above wrists for a two handed up and over head, onto left

shoulder.

Point tip of bow toward ceiling, double check bow hold.

*16:00* **Bow to Violin**

Landing silently half way between the bridge and fingerboard on the \_\_\_ string.

Relax your shoulder and arm.

Push and pull.

Repeat on each string.

Rest position.

Silently lay bow in case

*18:00* **Left Hand Playing Position**

Fleshy part of thumb above last knuckle feels the seam between fingerboard and neck across

from first finger.

Fleshy part of the side of the index finger above last knuckle against neck near nut.

Placing fingers on fingerboard & finger numbers—0, 1, 2, 3, 4. Pluck four times each while

singing the finger numbers. Open, open, open, open, 1, 1, 1, 1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 3, 3, 3, 3, 4, 4, 4, 4

Repeat on another string and tell students they can play this on each string.

*23:00* **Teaching Rote Song: Hot Cross Buns**

Sing with words

Sing with finger numbers

Place fingers on the fingerboard/pizzicato

Play Hot Cross Buns with bow (review bow hold + landing)

Give verbal reminders (Walk up: 0 1 2 2.

**Sing, 2 (Lift up your 2) 1 (Lift up your 1) 0 (put your 1 and 2 down)**

*30:00* Review Instrument care:

Loosen bow, rosin bow, keep in safe place—never leave in car or in front of heater or air conditioner, etc.

*32:00* Tell students **Practice Expectations** and give concrete suggestions for how to achieve them:

Find a quiet place to practice,

Find a consistent time to practice (1/2 before or after dinner?),

Review what to practice and give handouts with expectations. (Sample on next page)

**Instrument Care**

**1. When packing up**: 1. Loosen bow, 2. Make sure the bow is held in place in case. Take shoulder rest off. Fit in case, if you can, or bring with you. Clasp or zip your case shut.

**2. Storing Instrument: keep in safe place—never leave in car or in front of heater or air conditioner!**

**Practice Expectations**

* Find a quiet place to practice
* Find a consistent time to practice (1/2 before or after dinner?),
* Review what we learned in class:
  + Rest position
  + Playing position
  + Bow hold
  + Bringing bow to instrument
    - click your pinky and bend your thumb,
    - land silently half way between the bridge and fingerboard,
    - relax your shoulder and arm, push and pull.
      * Repeat on each string.
  + Left hand fingers on fingerboard
  + Hot Cross Buns. Look at handout with reminders about each of these practice items
  + Also, do one of these a day:

1. Show a family member or friend rest position and playing position. Teach them how and take a picture.

2. Show a family member or friend how to hold the bow, modified playing position, how to bring the bow

to the string, and how to push and pull the bow on one string. Teach them how and take pictures/video.

3. Show a family member or friend playing position, the name of the four strings and pluck (pizz.) each

string four times while singing the name, rest position. Teach them to do it and submit a video.

4. Show a family member or friend playing position, how to bring your left-hand fingers to the fingerboard,

pizzicato (pluck) four times each: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4. Submit a video.

5. Perform Hot Cross Buns for a family member or friend and submit a video.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Student Name: | | | | |
| 2 Pics: Rest and Playing Position | 4 Pics or video: Bow hold…pull/push bow | Vid: Sing and pizz open strings | Vid: Teach Left hand notes and pizz. | Video: Hot Cross Buns |
|  |  |  |  |  |

* **Pic = Picture, Vid = Video**

**When practicing, think about the checklist before you play:**

* Land silently half way between the bridge and fingerboard
* Click Pinky (Relax shoulder and arm) (Violin and Viola)
* Pet Frog
* Bend Thumb
* Left elbow hangs toward floor
  + Neck sits on top of fleshy side of finger above biggest knuckle and thumb sits across
  + Thumb feels seam fingerboard and neck
* Put Egg in Place
* Knuckles **over/above** strings

**Table 26.4: Sample Lesson Plan for First Day of Teaching Heterogeneous Strings Groups**

*This assumes you have 45-60 minutes. You can reduce activities to fit it into 35 minutes or repeat things and move slower so that you can use more time.*

**Objectives**:

* Students will be able to:
  + name parts of their instruments (scroll, fingerboard, neck, tuning pegs and fine tuners, string names, bridge, chin rest, f holes, end pin)
  + take care of instrument
  + hold instrument in rest position
  + hold instruments in playing position with excellent posture and position
  + pizz. open strings together while singing
  + put fingers on fingerboard in place
  + sing in tune
    - Open strings
    - Hot Cross Buns with words and finger numbers
  + hold bow
  + silently land bow on string half way between bridge and fingerboard
  + play Hot Cross Buns with excellent posture, position, with excellent tone, intonation, rhythm, and together.
  + Play and sing together (ensemble playing—begin with a single cue)
* Students will learn:
  + classroom procedures
  + musical expectations
  + behavior expectations

**Materials**:

* Finger markers of some sort
* Sponges or shoulder rests for violinists and violists
* Rock stops of some sort for cellists and bassists
* Practice sheet suggestions to send home with students
* Packet of music to send home with students
* Packet of information about instrument care, string names, posture and position, etc.

*(No more than 4 minutes. Students are seated with instrument cases closed so they can focus on you.)*

**Procedure**:

1. Introduce Teachers and Parts of the Instrument
   1. Students sit in chairs in a semi-circle with case closed, flat on the ground, with case clasps facing them.
   2. Go over the parts instruments
      1. Scroll, to point towards me
      2. Tuning pegs and fine tuners, will learn to use these later
      3. Strings
         1. Eency weency “E” (Violins) (Basses-Elephant “E”)
         2. Awesome “A”
         3. Dawgawn “D” (Dinosaur “D,” Dragon “D,” Etc.)
         4. Giant “G”
         5. Cello and Viola Colossal “C”
      4. Fingerboard, for your fingers to dance on top of
      5. Neck, to gently lift your instrument
      6. Bridge, to protect because it is not glued in place but it holds \_\_\_ tons of pressure from the string tension
      7. F Holes—sound comes out of these
      8. Violins and Violas
         1. Chin rest, for your ? “Actually, we’ll use the side of the jaw.”
         2. Button
         3. Back (where shoulder rest/sponge goes)
         4. Shoulder Rest: show how to attach, frowny-face when scroll faces up
      9. Cellos and Basses: endpins

*(No more than 4 minutes.)*

1. Rest Position
   1. Unpack Together
   2. Teachers sit at the front of the room, mirroring students and leading the unpacking process
   3. Case flat on the floor. Unlatch the case, open it
   4. Violins and Violas: Lift violin by neck and button. Stand up.
   5. Assistants (or previously) help Cellos and Basses unpack. Unzip or unlatch cases. Carefully remove the instrument and put cases behind chair or against wall. While they are taking care of their cases and laying their instruments silently on their sides…
   6. Teach Violins and Violas Rest Position
      1. Violins/Violas: Wave right hand to wall, violin under right arm with string facing the wall, arm protects the bridge
      2. Add shoulder rest: make it look like a frowny face, wider part of shoulder rest underneath chin rest. Shoulder rest arms on side of instrument, slide other side onto violin until secure.
      3. Cellos and Basses: Give instrument a bear hug, hands overlapped and on opposite upper arm.

*(No more than 10 minutes.)*

1. Playing Position [VIOLIN/VIOLA] **Body Format “Do what I do” (Limited talking)**
   1. Hold violin in front of you (scroll on top and button facing floor) ***(Do-no talking*)**
   2. Hold violin sideways (scroll to left and button towards right wall) ***(Do*)**
   3. Lift over your head ***(Do-no talking*)**
   4. Sway like a palm tree until you find your center of balance (Do **and say** d.-g.)
   5. Bring down onto left shoulder ***(Do and say)***
   6. (***Say:*** “Even though I don’t want a whole class of arrogant students, we’ll just pretend”…) Sniff a sniff of arrogance, turn your head in disgust, and drop the side of your jaw/chin in the chin rest. ***(Do and say)***
   7. Move feet/body until the scroll is pointing at me. Return to rest position.

Repeat. ***(Do and say)***

* + 1. 3rd time: swing arm underneath the violin so you strum strings with pinky
    2. 4th time: fingers dance on the fingerboard
    3. 5th time: Have a student lead
    4. 6th time: Have student lead and then, make L with thumb and first finger.

Thumb against fingerboard.

First finger reaches to farthest string. Sing and pluck G 4 times.

Relax arm and finger to next string. Sing and pluck (D, A, E) 4xs

Let students sit and rest, laying their violins/violas silently in the case, or let a student lead again.

1. Playing Position [CELLO]
   1. Have students find their sternum; show them which part of the cello (Top of body of cello) should align with the sternum
   2. Help each student find the right height for their cello by adjusting the end pin. Tell them the C peg should be near their left ear.
2. Playing Position [BASS]
   1. Adjust endpin so the student’s fingers barely touch the bridge when the bass is facing them
   2. Hold bass upright, at arm’s distance away.
   3. Point left foot at endpin
   4. Lean bass into body so that the back, right corner of bass is next to the hip bone (Body and lean towards the bass slightly).
   5. Bass leans into body at a slight angle while you play.
   6. Endpin height check: Left hand rests comfortably near the top of the fingerboard and the right hand can reach the bottom of the fingerboard.
   7. (See if you can balance your bass without your hands.)
3. Assistants put tapes on instruments and tune, if this has not already been done.
4. Lead all into playing position. All: Take right hand and wave at me. Make L. Thumb is on edge of fingerboard. First finger is free to land on any string. Cellos and Violas play and sing (model C C C C) Cue and have everyone sing with you and cellos and violas pluck and sing. Violins put your first finger on the string farthest away from your thumb, Violas and cellos, relax your arm until your finger touches the neighboring string. Basses, land on the string closest to your thumb. Sing and pluck MODEL: (G G G G) Cue all. etc. until you sing and pluck all strings.
5. **“What do you hear?**”: (Silently lay violin/viola in case.) Have students do that. If noise, have them do it again. (Respect for instrument). Cellos and Basses, lay instruments on their sides in safe place.

*(No more than 5 minutes.)*

1. **Bow Parts & Hold**
   1. Show Students Parts of the Bow
      1. Frog, tip, hairs, stick, screw
   2. Students gently remove bow from case.
   3. Pick bow up at balance point with left hand, frog facing right
   4. Turn screw six half turns to right until stick and hairs are pencil width apart.
   5. Left arm in front of body
   6. Lightly grab your arm with right hand (thumb underneath arm)
   7. Look at the spaces between your fingers
   8. Slide second knuckle of fingers over hand and onto stick over the frog
   9. Thumb is bent and under frog. It won’t always live there but just for now.
   10. Poem: Four little frogs swimming in the pool.
   11. Violins and Violas: The little one gets out and sits on the stool.
       1. Click your pinky
   12. Tip up
   13. Violins and violas: click pinky again
   14. Shake out bow hands and do the setup again: ask if a student would like to demonstrate. Repeat.
2. Take out rosin and hold in left hand. Land bow on rosin at frog and count to six (half bows, back and forth or up and down). Full bow to tip and count to six (half bows, back and forth or up and down). Repeat.
3. Tip of bow towards ceiling while you place your left hand on neck of instrument.
4. Bow to Instruments **Right Hand Skills and Knowledge**
   1. Modified playing position. Violinists/violists, begin with instrument at your right

side, left hand on fingerboard, right hand holding bow, tip towards ceiling but use side of hand above wrists for a two handed up and over head, onto left shoulder.

Have students pick up instruments, go through checklist: sit up or stand up tall, head over spine, strings parallel to floor, cello pegs aligned with ear, coke can hands, etc.

* 1. Point tip of bow toward ceiling, double check bow hold.
  2. Landing silently half way between the bridge and fingerboard on the \_\_\_ string. Relax your shoulder and arm.
  3. “Pull and push” after watching teacher model: up and down on the D string
  4. Repeat on each string
  5. Rest position. Show cellos and basses: hug instrument (and sway side to side.)

*(5 minutes.)*

1. Left Hand Playing Position **Left Hand Skills and Knowledge, Tonal Aural Skills & Ear Training**
   1. Violin/viola
      1. Fleshy part of the side of the index finger above last knuckle against neck near nut
      2. Fleshy part of thumb above last knuckle feels the seam between fingerboard and neck across from first finger
      3. Placing fingers on fingerboard & finger numbers—1, 2, 3, 4. Pluck four times each while
      4. Sing finger numbers. Open, open, open, open, 1, 1, 1, 1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 3, 3, 3, 3, 4, 4, 4, 4
      5. Repeat on each string (or at least one other string and tell students they can play this on each string.)
   2. Cello/Bass
      1. With the left hand, have students pretend to drink a can of soda or bottle of water. Show them the curved fingers they make while doing this motion, with the thumb is across from the second finger
      2. Place “coke can hand” against their cheek
      3. Place the “coke can hand” on the cello, thumb underneath fingerboard behind second finger.
      4. Fingers “dance” on the fingerboard and then place all the fingers down at once: CURVED, mountaintop fingers!
      5. The arm to wrist should be a straight line; no droopy elbows or collapsed wrists

All: **Land silently half way between the bridge and fingerboard on the D string.**

* Violins and violas, click your pinky and relax your arm.
* Sing and Play D D D D.
* Everyone place one finger on the D string, bring string towards the fingerboard so your finger touches the fingerboard but the string is almost touching it. Sing and play E E E E
* Violins/Violas, keep the first finger down and add the second finger on the D string, so your finger touches the fingerboard but the string is almost touching it.
* Cellos, keep the first finger down and add the third finger (ring finger) on the D string, so your finger touches the fingerboard but the string is almost touching it.
* Basses, keep the first finger down and add the fourth finger (pinky finger) on the D string, so your finger touches the fingerboard but the string is almost touching it.
* Sing and play F# F# F# F#

“There are many more notes you can play but we are just going to play these three notes today, although at home, you can do this on every string, even though the note names will change.”

Everyone goes into rest position.

* Cellists, hug your instrument and put bow on lap behind the cello
* Bassists, hug your instrument and silently place bow down in a safe place

*(10 minutes.)*

1. Hot Cross Buns
   1. **My turn, your turn. (\*You model, you cue them and they repeat what you did)**
      1. Sing with words**\*** 
         1. **Hot Cross Buns, Hot Cross Buns (Cue students)**
         2. **One a penny, two a penny** **Hot Cross Buns (Cue students)**
      2. Sing with finger numbers, hold fingers up on left hand while you are singing
         1. left hand leads violinists and violists 2 1 0 2 1 0
         2. right hand leads cellos 3 1 0 3 1 0
         3. bassist, you sing and hold up 4 1 0 4 1 0
            1. when cellist play and sing 3, you play and sing 4
         4. 0 0 0 0 1 1 1 1 2 1 0 V/V
         5. 0 0 0 0 1 1 1 1 3 1 0 C
         6. 0 0 0 0 1 1 1 1 4 1 0 B
         7. Whole song
      3. Place fingers on the fingerboard/pizzicato and sing (Review posture and position)
      4. Play Hot Cross Buns with verbal reminders
         1. 2 1 0 – (Vln, Vla, Place first finger on first tape and second finger on second tape)
         2. 3 1 0 – (cello)
         3. 4 1 0 – (bass)

f. Add bow and play.

1. Lead them in packing up (Loosen bow. make sure the bow is held in place by… Take shoulder rest off. Fit in case, if you can, or bring with you. Clasp or zip your case shut. Sit down.

*(5 minutes.)*

1. Closing
   1. Summarize what they have learned
   2. Tell students practice expectations and give concrete suggestions for how to achieve them:
      1. Find a quiet place to practice,
      2. Find a consistent time to practice (1/2 before or after dinner?),
      3. Review what to practice and give handouts with expectations.

Rest position, Playing position, Bow hold, Bringing bow to instrument (click your pinky

and bend your thumb, Land silently half way between the bridge and fingerboard, relax

your shoulder and arm, push and pull. Repeat on each string.) Left hand fingers on fingerboard, Hot Cross Buns. Give a handout with reminders about each of these practice items and maybe have them:

1. Show a family member or friend rest position and playing position. Teach them how to do it.

2. Show a family member or friend how to hold the bow, playing position, how to bring the bow to the string,

and how to push and pull the bow on one string. Teach them how to do it.

3. Show a family member or friend playing position, the name of the four strings and pluck. Teach string four

times while saying the name, rest position. Teach them to do it.

4. Show a family member or friend playing position, how to bring your left hand fingers to the fingerboard,

pluck four times each: Open , 1, 2, 3, 4 on each string. Teach them to do it.

5. Perform Hot Cross Buns for a family member or friend.

**Instrument Care**

**1. When packing up**: 1. Loosen bow, 2. Make sure the bow is held in place in case. Take shoulder rest off. Fit in case, if you can, or bring with you. Clasp or zip your case shut.

**2. Storing Instrument: keep in safe place—never leave in car or in front of heater or air conditioner!**

**3. Remind students of expectations for next class: Classroom Routine and Practicing Expectations**

**4. Have handouts for students about practicing.**

**Practice Expectations**

* Find a quiet place to practice
* Find a consistent time to practice (1/2 before or after dinner?),
* Review what we learned in class:
  + Rest position
  + Playing position
  + Bow hold
  + Bringing bow to instrument
    - click your pinky and bend your thumb,
    - land silently half way between the bridge and fingerboard,
    - relax your shoulder and arm, push and pull.
      * Repeat on each string.
  + Left hand fingers on fingerboard
  + Hot Cross Buns. Look at handout with reminders about each of these practice items
  + Also, do one of these a day:

1. Show a family member or friend rest position and playing position. Teach them how to do it.

2. Show a family member or friend how to hold the bow, playing position, how to bring the bow to the string,

and how to push and pull the bow on one string. Teach them how to do it.

3. Show a family member or friend playing position, the name of the four strings and pluck. Teach string four

times while saying the name, rest position. Teach them to do it.

4. Show a family member or friend playing position, how to bring your left hand fingers to the fingerboard,

pluck four times each: Open , 1, 2, 3, 4 on each string. Teach them to do it.

5. Perform Hot Cross Buns for a family member or friend.

**When practicing, think about the checklist before you play:**

* Land silently half way between the bridge and fingerboard
* Click Pinky (Relax shoulder and arm) (Violin and Viola)
* Pet Frog
* Bend Thumb
* Water bottle—“C” for Cello and Bass and thumb behind second finger in center of fingerboard
  + Shoulders level
  + The arm to wrist should be a straight line; no droopy elbows or collapsed wrists
* Violin and Viola
  + Left elbow hangs toward floor
  + Neck sits on top of fleshy side of finger above biggest knuckle and thumb sits across
  + Thumb feels seam fingerboard and neck
* Put Egg in Place
* Knuckles **over/above** strings

**Table 26.5. Beginning Strings Teaching Competencies for Teacher Preparation Programs**

**(Hopkins & Pellegrino, 2019, pp. 768-769) and Overview of Teaching String Students**

**Performance Competencies**

• Demonstrate a lengthened, relaxed, balanced, and mobile body posture (BF).

• Demonstrate correct left arm posture and balance, hand frame, finger shape, and finger placement

for all orchestral stringed instruments (LH).

• Identify fingerings within first, half, extended, and upper positions using finger patterns (LH).

• Produce a clear, centered, resonant tone (bow placement, weight, and speed are proportional to

each other; the bow is straight/parallel to the bridge) (RH).

• Play correct pitches in tune with instrument “ringing” and sympathetic strings vibrating (RH).

• Demonstrate detaché, legato, staccato, marcato, slurs, and hooked bow strokes (RH).

• Demonstrate pizzicato techniques (RH).

• Demonstrate the ability to select appropriate bowings (direction and style) (RH).

• Play in the same part of the bow as the teacher and other students (ES).

• Demonstrate the ability to tune all stringed instruments (TA).

• Play by ear (echo back patterns, learn a song by ear, etc.) (TA, RA).

• Demonstrate the ability to read in treble, bass, and alto clefs (ML).

• Improvise and compose music using stringed instruments.. (ML, CM).

• Perform music in a meaningful way, shaping phrases, varying tone color to represent moods,

feelings, stories, colors, etc., and to express oneself (EE).

• Perform a varied repertoire, which may include but is not limited to folk music, fiddling music,

popular music, classical music, holiday music, music from different cultures, etc. (HC).

**Teaching Competencies**

• Visually and aurally diagnose stringed instrument technique problems and prescribe corrective

procedures (BF, LH, RH, ES).

• Teach fingerings within first, half, extended, and upper positions based on finger patterns (LH).

• Identify intonation problems unique to string instruments and young performers, and prescribe

corrective procedures (RH).

• Demonstrate effective methods for teaching the development of tone, technical facility, bow

articulation, and rhythmic precision on orchestral string instruments (RH).

• Provide string-playing models with excellent posture and position, tone, intonation, rhythm,

sense of meter, and musicality/style on all orchestral string instruments (BP, RH, LH, TA, RA).

• Teach music reading/music literacy in a pedagogically appropriate way for beginning strings (ML).

• Teach pieces by ear for beginning strings (TA, RA).

• Lead improvisation, and composition activities for beginning strings (CM).

• Select literature and activities that are appropriate and engaging for beginning strings (HE).

• Knowledge of the varied repertoire for strings, which may include but is not limited to orchestral

repertoire of the 18th, 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries; orchestral arrangements of folk, fiddling, popular,

and holiday music; and music of non-Western cultures, as well as chamber and solo repertoire of varied

genres and eras (HE).

• Demonstrate an understanding of varied types of assessment tools and procedures for beginning

strings (EM).

• Demonstrate knowledge of stringed instruments, bows, and accessories.

**ASTA National Curriculum Categories of Skills and Knowledge** (Benham et al., 2011, pp. 18–19)

**Executive Skills and Knowledge**: Body format (BF), Left-hand skills & knowledge (LH), Right-hand skills & knowledge (RH)

**Musicianship Skills and Knowledge**: Tonal aural skills and ear training (TA), Rhythmic aural skills and ear training (RA), Creative musicianship (CM), Music literacy (ML), Ensemble skills (ES)

**Artistic Skills and Knowledge**: Expressive elements (EE), Historical and cultural elements (HE), Evaluation of music and musical performance (EM)

The items listed in Table 26.5 are the teaching and performance competencies that should

be addressed in teacher preparation programs’ string techniques, methods, or pedagogy

courses. Additional competencies needed to teach beginning strings can be addressed

elsewhere in the curriculum. For example, PMTs should be able to do the following:

• Provide a singing model with excellent intonation, rhythm, sense of meter, and

musicality/style;

• Ask leading questions;

• Demonstrate the ability to effectively plan and deliver instruction; and

• Demonstrate an understanding of music education advocacy, including strategies for

(a) recruitment and retention of students to the beginning strings program, and

(b) cultivating relationships with students, colleagues, parents, administrators, and

community members to build support for the strings program.

Hopkins, M., & Pellegrino, K. (2019). Teacher preparation for beginning strings. In C. M.

Conway, K. Pellegrino, A. M. Stanley, & C. West. (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of*

*preservice music teacher education in the United States,* (pp. 765-783)*.* Oxford

University Press.

**Overview of the First Year of Teaching String Students**

I have created a sample series of lesson plans for the first 14 lessons. I follow some of the pedagogical suggestions I made in Chapters 1 and 4 regarding the energy profile of a lesson. Simply put, 1. review and refine, 2. extend technique and knowledge, and 3. motivation, end on a high. Therefore, whatever you consider “2. extend technique and knowledge” will eventually be moved to the outer parts of a lesson to make room for new ideas in the middle.

    In addition, I refer to eleven curricular categories as defined by the ASTA curriculum guide (Benham, 2011) and offer suggestions about how to implement them consistently throughout the year.

**ASTA National Curriculum Categories of Skills and Knowledge**

(Benham et al., 2011, pp. 18–19)

**Executive Skills and Knowledge**

• Body format (BF)

• Left-hand skills and knowledge (LH)

• Right-hand skills and knowledge (RH)

**Musicianship Skills and Knowledge**

• Tonal aural skills and ear training (TA)

• Rhythmic aural skills and ear training (RA)

• Creative musicianship (CM)

• Music literacy (ML)

• Ensemble skills (ES)

**Artistic Skills and Knowledge**

• Expressive elements (EE)

• Historical and cultural elements (HE)

• Evaluation of music and musical performance (EM)

In order to lesson plan for the year, I have a few suggestions. First, think about your yearly goals and predict when you may want to introduce or focus on different literature and curricular goals. This may include when you will begin focusing reading music, making sure you have varied genres and music by diverse composers, and include improvisation and composition regularly. You should also think about when you will schedule projects and concerts.

Second, decide on the format of your lesson plans. Will they include: Objectives,

Materials needed, Procedures, Assessments, Summary of What they Learned, and/or Practice sheets/Handouts to Bring Home? What else?

Third,create an overview of groups of lesson plans at the same time.This may be five lessons at a time, eight, or ten, whatever works well with your schedule. This will ensure you address different curricular goals regularly.

I begin by deciding what I will address in every lesson. For me, when I teach beginners at the beginning of the year, this includes six of the eleven categories:

**Executive Skills and Knowledge**

• Body format (BF)

• Left-hand skills and knowledge (LH)

• Right-hand skills and knowledge (RH)

**Musicianship Skills and Knowledge**

• Tonal aural skills and ear training (TA)

• Rhythmic aural skills and ear training (RA)

• Ensemble skills (ES)

Then, I decide what I will include at least once every five or twice every eight-ten lessons. For example, you could have different objectives on different days of the week,

**Monday                Tuesday         Wednesday        Thursday        Friday**

Teach New Piece + Listening    Stretches           EE, HC         EM, ML        CM

assuming that you meet students every day. In Table 2., I include an example for how to split it up if you meet twice a week. Lastly, I create each lesson plan, building on what was taught and learned during the previous lessons. Again, this will not represent everything that is taught during each class and you should not confuse this Curricular Overview with a substitution for a lesson plan.

Here are a few additional ideas for thinking about addressing curricular goals within lessons. First, think in 5-minute segments with two longer segments (two 10-minute segments or a 10-minute segment and a 15-minute segment). This will help you keep your pacing up and be sure to teach efficiently. Also, younger students can only stay focused on one thing for a short

amount of time. This is a proactive classroom management strategy, also.

**Sample Assignment for Planning an Overview of Curricular Goals and Group of Lesson Plans**

**Lesson Plans for Beginners, 15-22**

**Create eight of your own lesson plans. Arrange lesson plans in this order:**

**Review and Refine, extend, leave on high note.**

**Include these in every lesson plan:**

* Play with excellent posture and position (Posture and Position (BF, LH, RH)
* Sing and Play in Tune (TA)
* Echo Teacher (Sing and Play) (TA, RA)
* Ensemble Skills (ES)

**Do each of these AT LEAST TWICE in the next eight lessons.**

* Listen and respond to music (EE, HC)
* Stretches
* Improvisation/Composition (CM)
* Review and Refine Pieces (BF, LH, RH, TA, RA, ES, EE)
* Teach New Pieces (LH, RH, TA, RA, ES)
* Record the group playing and have them analyze what they can do better at least twice before the concert (audio and/or video) (EM)
* Expressive Elements (EE)

**Make sure you prepare students for the Playing Test on Lesson Plan 19 when you will hear two new songs.**

**Begin by Creating an OVERVIEW OF EACH LESSON PLAN Add curricular ideas/objectives to this overview.** Example:

**Monday/Tuesday                        Thursday/Friday**

LP15          Review & Refine, Expressive Elements         LP16    Review and Refine

New Piece                        Creative Musicianship

Stretches

LP17      Practice Performances (Record)            LP18    Evaluation of Musical Performance

Expressive Elements, Stretches                Review and Refine

    Group and/or Challenge Piece, Music Literacy            Stretches

LP19    **Playing Test 3**                     LP20    Review and Refine

    Evaluation of Music and Musical Performance            Creative Musicianship/Music Literacy

LP21     Practice Performances (Record)            L22         Evaluation of Music and Musical Performance

    New Piece                        Historical and Cultural Elements

Expressive Elements                    Music Literacy

Stretches                            Stretches

**Outline each lesson plan.**

Second, you may wish to group objectives. This is not necessary but perhaps you stretch after every time you teach a new piece or before you improvise. You may wish to group a

listening activity with expressive elements (EE) and/or historical and cultural elements (HC).

Third, you may assign certain objectives to certain days. For instance, perhaps you listen

and respond every Wednesday, teach music literacy every Thursday, and improvise and or compose (CM) every Friday. However, you may decide each lesson on an individual basis, like a puzzle. This will take extra work but it can be satisfying. Others like to offer unit plans.

I offer a reminder that many ideas will affect your lesson plans. First, your playing style and your overall teaching goals may be different than mine. For instance, I have violinists and violists make sure their strings (not instrument) are parallel to the floor. This helps the bow stay on one track on the string without fighting gravity and helps tone projection. I do not spend time playing open string pieces, giving parts of the instrument quizzes, or teach music reading from the beginning. I prefer to touch on objectives regularly, throughout the year. I also teach with a quick pace. Again, each thing you teach or do not teach is a choice and it has implications. Having autonomy as a teacher is a double-edged sword! Teaching is as creative and thought-provoking as we make it. Realizing that we have endless possibilities excites some and overwhelms others. Deciding on what your goals are and coming up with manageable strategies that work for you will help you keep track of your curricular goals and ensure that your students are getting a balanced musical experience.