

MULTICULTURAL INSTRUCTION IN THE
BEGINNER'S VIOLIN CLASSROOM

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by

Marisa Peña

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Marisa Peña

Thesis Supervisor:

Maneka Brooks, Ph.D.
Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Approved:

Heather C. Galloway, Ph.D.
Dean, Honors College

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I. INTRODUCTION

In my education and experience in the classroom as a student, observer, and teacher, I have come to believe that multicultural education can be defined as a teacher's conscious effort to be accepting of all of their students in addition to constantly seeking out information and real perspectives from students in order to check their prejudices and every action and decision in the classroom. Multicultural education, I believe, begins with a teacher who is a critical thinker.

In the typical violin classroom, teachers use songs that come from one culture or have no cultural tie to anything, and are used as skill builders. I see this as an opportunity to bring in a more diverse scope of songs through songs learned or videos shown of different types of groups with different instruments. These lessons could lead to discussions about the different instruments used in different genres or cultures, or how the violin itself is used in a variety of genres and cultures. Through this lens we could learn new vocabulary in other languages, and combined, the class would gain a broader perspective of the world and the various cultures within it and how they compare to our own.

Through my research I would like to dig further and see what kind of statement is being sent with that curriculum. I would like to find ways to overcome this bias by thinking about doing these kinds of lessons with my students.

This project will consist of 2 unit plans consisting of 3 lessons each for a total of 6 lessons. Each week, I will teach a lesson to a class of beginner violinists ages 9 to 10 in a local afterschool program I have been teaching in for 2 years. After teaching my lesson, I will do research into multicultural education and effective lesson planning to create a

basic lesson plan without elements of multiculturalism. In a weekly journal, I will discuss how I would expand that week's lesson to supplement multicultural education. These journals will also consist of a reflection from the lesson I taught and the research I have done for that week.

II. LESSON PLANS AND JOURNALS

Unit I, Lesson #1 – Taking Care of your Instrument

Objective: Students will be able to properly take care of their instrument and demonstrate procedures for beginning and ending a rehearsal.

Rationale: Students need to know how to take care of their instrument so that it sounds as good as it can and does not become damaged. Rehearsal procedures are new for students and are vital to smooth and successful learning.

Materials:

Teacher Materials

Violin case
Violin and bow
Rosin
Stand

Student Materials

Violin case
Violin and bow
Rosin
Stand
Music book

Lesson Set Up: Welcome to violin class! The first thing you need to know before you learn to play a violin is how to take care of it and how we will run class. Violin class is different from your normal classroom, so today we will walk through what you need to know!

Anticipatory Set

- *Hook:*
Ask/Tell students:
 - Raise your hand if you are excited to start learning how to play your violin.
 - Pay close attention so that after this lesson you can start to learn!

- *Background Knowledge:*
Ask/Tell students:
 - How does your teacher run class in your regular classroom? Is there a schedule? Procedures?
 - Have you ever had a toy that you had to really take care of before and after playing with it or using it so that it would stay in good condition and wouldn't break?

- *Purpose:* Tell students, “Today I am going to teach you how to properly take care of your instrument and we will walk through the process of having a rehearsal.”
- *Rationale:* Tell students, “Knowing how to take care of your instrument will keep it sounding great and keep it from becoming damaged. Rehearsal is a different kind of class just like art and PE, so you need to know my expectations to be successful!”

Input and Modeling

The teacher will tell students:

- Let’s start by beginning with the first thing you will do when coming into rehearsal. You will first need to set down your backpack and get your violin, stand, and music book. Then, you will need to get a chair and set it up in our set up with your stand and music book. Finally, you are ready to uncase your violin and take a seat, ready to go.
- To uncase your violin, you will need to know some important information to make sure you are handling it right! When we uncase our instrument, we always wipe it down with the dust cloth, and put on our shoulder rest.
- When uncasing your bow, you must make sure to never touch the bow hair because the oils on your skin will damage it. The first thing you will do is tighten your bow so that you could fit a pencil between the hair and the stick, and then apply rosin if you need it.
- Once everyone is ready, I will go around and tune everyone. Then, we will start class with warm ups and will then move on to the day’s lesson.
- At the end of class, we have to go through the beginning routine, but backwards! Loosen your bow and recase it, remove your shoulder rest and recase it and your violin, wipe down your violin with the dust cloth, close and return your case to the shelf or get it ready to take home. Collapse your stand and return it and your book to where they belong or take them home with you. Put away your chair and get in line with all of your stuff to leave.

Students will:

- Listen and watch the teacher.

Checking for Understanding

Ask students:

- What is the first step in getting ready to begin class?
- How were these steps similar to steps you have in your regular classes? How were they different?
- What was a step that surprised you?
- What are some ways we take care of our instruments?

Guided Practice

The teacher will:

- Tell students: Now that you know the routine of rehearsal and you know how to take proper care of your instrument, let's walk through it together! Let's all start outside.
- Walk through the routine with students, asking them what is to be done next at each point.
- Answer questions and correct students when needed.
Students will:
- Walk along with the whole class to each part of the room.
- Answer the teacher's questions and give the next step in the routine or way to take care of the instrument.

Closure: Tell students, "Today we learned how a rehearsal routine runs in comparison to a regular class. We also learned how parts of our instrument are delicate and we must treat them with proper care so that they sound great and don't break!"

Independent Practice

The teacher will:

- Tell students: Now that you know how to come into rehearsal and get ready to start, you are going to do just that. Starting outside the room, I would like for everyone to go through the steps we ran through today, take proper care of their instrument, and be seated ready to go! Then, once everyone is seated, we will run through procedures for ending rehearsal.
- Walk through the room helping students if they ask but mostly allowing students to run through the process independently.
Students will:
- Complete the steps from walking in the door to being seated ready to go for rehearsal.
- Complete the steps to pack up once rehearsal has ended.
- Ask questions of each other but only if they have thought about it first.

Assessment

Assessment Instrument: The student's ability to complete the routine without missing any steps for setting up or steps for taking care of their instrument.

Quality Standards: Students are expected to complete rehearsal setup and teardown with only one thing done incorrectly or forgotten from each process when done for the very first time. Mastery should be met but the third class meeting.

Resources

N/A

Journal #1:

Unit I, Lesson #1

Teaching this lesson always requires me to really think basic, to set students up for success by not assuming they know how to handle and care for their instrument and participate as a musician in a rehearsal setting. This lesson must be the first one done before students are even able to uncase or touch their instruments in order to avoid any mishandling of instruments or damage done. However, these students have been waiting since they found out they were going to be in the strings program to play with an instrument, and have a hard time focusing for such a rules-centered lesson. This is where I would like to reflect on research done for writing lesson plans and units that are effective and keep the end goal in mind, as well as some way to expose students to rehearsal as a culture, rather than a routine and arduous process.

The book, *Understanding by Design* by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe proposes the “Backward Design” approach to planning effective unit plans and experiences for students. I have planned to write my lessons up in this format. Backward Design initiates the planning process with the teacher identifying desired results, and for this lesson, the end result that I would like to see is students treating their instruments with proper care, and participating in rehearsal as student musicians. In getting students to this end goal, I wanted to give them an experience that would get them excited and interested in rehearsal which is why I decided to add walking through the process and completing the tasks as a class in this lesson plan. The best way to understand something is to experience it and interact with it, and this is true too about multicultural education. To further this concept in this lesson, I would improve this lesson by showing videos of rehearsals of different

sizes to discuss what the students notice was similar or different from their general classroom, while taking the opportunity to also show them different songs from different genres and cultures.

Unit I, Lesson #2 – Parts of the Violin

Objective: Students will be able to identify the parts of the violin and the bow by name as well as name their function.

Rationale: Students need to know the parts of their instruments in order to understand topics covered in class, ask questions in class, and take proper care of their instrument. Knowing the function of parts is important to understanding how your instrument works.

Materials:

Teacher Materials

Violin and bow
Labeled violin chart
Labeled bow chart

Student Materials

Violin and bow
Blank violin chart
Blank bow chart
Pencil
Blank paper

Lesson Set Up: Welcome to violin class! Please be seated in your chair with your instrument uncased and with you, your stand set up, your book out, and with a pencil.

Anticipatory Set

- *Hook:*
Ask/Tell students:
 - How many of you are excited to start learning how to play your violin?
 - Today we are going to learn all the parts of the violin so that you can all start to become talented musicians!
- *Background Knowledge:*
Ask/Tell students:
 - Did you know your violin has parts?
 - Does anyone play any other instruments that have parts they know the names of? What do those parts do?
 - Why might it be important for us to name the parts of our instruments, and to know the names of them as musicians? Why is it important for us to know the function of those parts? (to be able to fix them, to ask questions about them, to understand what the teacher is talking about in class or other musicians mean when they talk about them...)
- *Purpose:* Tell students, “Today we are going to be learning the names of all the parts on your violin and bow, and what they do. By the end of class you will be able to point out and give the names and functions of all the parts!”

- *Rationale:* Tell students, “Knowing the names and functions of the parts on your instruments is very important because it lets you ask questions in class and understand how your instrument works so that you can be a great musician!”

Input and Modeling

The teacher will:

- Hold up her violin and bow facing students and point to and name each of the parts (from the labeled chart) and talk about their function.

Students will:

- Listen and watch the teacher, following along by holding their instrument facing themselves and touching the parts of their violin as the teacher talks about them.

Checking for Understanding

Ask students:

- What were some of the parts we just talked about?
- What were the functions of those parts?
- Did you learn about any parts you didn’t notice before?
- Were you surprised by the names or functions of the parts?

Guided Practice

The teacher will:

- Tell students: Now you are going to match up with a partner and each of you is going to fill out this violin and bow chart with the names of each of the parts. Next to each part, you will write a little saying or draw a picture that helps you remember its function. Work together to remember the parts and if you can’t remember, raise your hand and I will help you.
- Walk around and listen to discussions about the parts and their functions. Help students if they need help. Correct misunderstandings as they are noticed.

Students will:

- Work with a partner to fill out the chart as completely as possible. Ask the teacher for help if they are both stumped.

Closure: Tell students, “Today we learned about all of the parts on your instrument and what their functions are. Now that you know this information, when we are in class you can ask questions and understand what we are learning about better!”

Independent Practice

The teacher will:

- Tell students: Now that you know the parts of the violin, we are going to have a quiz! I am going to shout out a part on the violin or bow and you are going to silently put your finger on that part.
Students will:
- Without looking at the others around them, students will point to the part on their violin that is being called out, with the violin facing the teacher.

Assessment

Assessment Instrument: The student's ability to point to the correct part on their instrument will be the assessment tool.

Quality Standards: Students are expected to correctly identify 90% of the parts on their instrument.

Resources

Essential Elements for Strings: Violin Book 1, page 2

Journal #2:

Unit I, Lesson #2

This lesson went really well in class today. The students really found it funny when I told them the names of some of the parts of their instrument, like the frog of the bow. They also made some really good connections between the names and functions that each part serves like how the f-holes look like cursive f's and the bridge even looks like a bridge but for their strings. I was very impressed by some of their observations and questions about the functions of some of the parts, and it was cool to bring up concepts like sound and vibrations that I know they have been talking about in their general classrooms.

After doing some reading in the book *Language, Culture, and Teaching: Cultural Perspectives* by Sonia Nieto, I have thought of some ways that I could add aspects of multicultural education or even modifications to help students who are English language learners or of different learning levels, in order to have equal understandings of what is being taught. Since learning about and how to play an instrument requires students to open their minds to completely new skills and knowledge in technique, language, and even the culture of a rehearsal setting, instructional tactics need to be intentional and purposeful for all students from the very beginning. For this lesson, this means that I need to add supplementation for all 3 types of learners: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Since I am still getting to know my students and their family structures and cultures, it would be beneficial for all students to provide them the names of the parts of their instrument in another language like Spanish. I would also like to have shown images, recordings, and videos of violins being used in different genres of music, playing music of different

cultures to establish an idea in students of the wide variety of music types their instrument can be used to play. We could even have a class discussion of the types of music they listen to at home or their parents and families listen to, and if they notice any similarities or differences from the videos showing violins used in different settings.

Unit I, Lesson #3 – Technique

Objective: Students will be able to practice and understand the importance of proper technique when playing their instrument.

Rationale: Students must consistently practice good technique when playing to produce the best sound and avoid fatigue and injury. Understanding why each part of technique is important helps students to become better players.

Materials:

Teacher Materials

Violin and bow
Essential Elements book, page 3

Student Materials

Violin and bow
Essential Elements book, page 3

Lesson Set Up: Welcome to violin class! Please be seated in your chair with your instrument uncased and with you, your stand set up, your book out, and with a pencil.

Anticipatory Set

- *Hook:*

Ask/Tell students:

- Today we are going to learn the last important piece of information you need to know before you can play your instrument.

- *Background Knowledge:*

Ask/Tell students:

- Does anyone play a sport or ride a bike?
- Did you have to learn a special technique to do those things? Like what?
- Why is it important to know those techniques? Could you perform the same without them?

- *Purpose:* Tell students, “Today we are going to be learning about how to sit, stand, hold your violin, and pluck the strings properly. This is all called technique.”

- *Rationale:* Tell students, “Knowing proper technique is important because it makes you sound better and keeps you from getting tired.”

Input and Modeling

The teacher will:

- Tell students: First we much know how to sit. When sitting and playing your violin you will sit on the edge of your seat, back straight, knees bent at a 45 degree angle, and feet flat on the ground.
- Show students what this looks like.
- Tell students: Seated like this, we use two positions, Guitar and Shoulder. Flip to page 3 in your books so you can see what they look like.
- Walk through steps for each position and show students what they look like.
Students will:
- Listen and watch the teacher, following along by looking at the diagrams on page 3 and reading along.

Checking for Understanding

Ask students:

- What are the main parts of posture to remember to sit properly?
- What are the steps to guitar position?
- What are the steps to shoulder position?

Guided Practice

The teacher will:

- Tell students: Now you are going to match up with a partner. Set up two chairs facing each other and one person at a time, practice guitar and shoulder position while the other partner watches and gives constructive criticism to correct their partner. Then switch roles. Work together to remember technique and if you can't remember, raise your hand and I will help you.
- Walk around and listen to discussions about technique. Help students if they need help. Correct misunderstandings as they are noticed.

Students will:

- Work with a partner to practice proper techniques.

Closure: Tell students, “Today we learned about how to sit when you play and how to hold your violin in two different positions. These techniques are so important to make sure you sound great and you don't get tired while playing.”

Independent Practice

The teacher will:

- Tell students: Now that you know posture techniques, we are going to do a quiz. Everyone will sit in a chair facing the front of the room and when I say to show me something, you do so without saying anything. For example, if I say “Show me how to sit in your chair with good posture” everyone will sit up at the edge of their chair with all the parts of good posture.

- Quiz students on sitting posture, guitar, and shoulder positions. Switch back and forth between positions. Cue students to remember elements of positions by saying: “Show me shoulder position, this time I’m specifically looking for elbows in the air.”
Students will:
- Without looking at the others around them, hold techniques for the teacher to check.

Assessment

Assessment Instrument: The student’s ability to display good technique.

Quality Standards: Students are expected to display an understanding of each term used to talk about technique, and correctly hold each position with 100% accuracy.

Resources

Essential Elements for Strings: Violin Book 1, page 3

Journal #3:

Unit I, Lesson #3

Technique is a very important concept for beginning violinists to understand and practice. While difficult and at times seemingly pointless, students need to practice good technique at all times in order to sound good, avoid injury, and learn new skills. For many students, as was the case this week giving this lesson, practicing good technique seems pointless, because the music is simple and, especially if the bow has not been introduced, it sounds the same when played with good or bad technique. Therefore, students argue that they are tired and do not need to do it. Tackling this struggle is a matter of being patient, empathetic, and really having a good understanding of why technique is important now and in the long run and having those conversations with students.

In continuing my research into *Understanding by Design* and Backward Design, stage two in designing lessons talks about how once you have decided what you would like the result to be, thinking about how students will prove they have achieved that result and what evidence they will provide. In planning this lesson, I thought a lot about how I would be assessing the objective of understanding proper technique, and decided that in this lesson, I would simply quiz the students to make sure they knew how to correctly set up each part of proper technique. However, this will need to be a continued pursuit, as students will need time to practice techniques and will struggle with maintaining them once they become tired. One thing I did not like about this lesson was the formality of it, and how difficult it was to present the information in any other way, especially through a multicultural approach. Of course, the students were getting a hands-on experience and

were able to try out the techniques physically, but there was no music involved or vocabulary words I could present. However, in thinking about technique and how physically demanding it can be for young students to persevere mentally, and consistently week-by-week, I thought about ways I could motivate them. This led my thinking to fables and legends, stories I could share with the class about characters from different cultures who showed discipline and perseverance to complete their conquest or job. Those characters could be referenced again in class, and a different story could be told when a new technique was learned. There are so many from so many cultures, there would be plenty to choose from that were relevant and new to students.

Unit II, Lesson #1 – Open String Notes and Rhythm

Objective: Students will be able to identify each of their open strings and read a basic rhythm pattern to be played on D and A string.

Rationale: Students must begin playing the violin by learning their open string notes and the basic building blocks and notes of rhythm. These can be practiced simultaneously, as all music incorporates notes and rhythm.

Materials:

Teacher Materials

Violin
Essential Elements book, page 4
Essential Elements Play-Along CD
CD player

Student Materials

Violin
Essential Elements book, page 4

Lesson Set Up: Welcome to violin class! Please be seated in your chair with your instrument uncased and with you, your stand set up, and your book out and open to page 4.

Anticipatory Set

- *Hook:*
 - Ask/Tell students:
 - Raise your hand if you are ready to start playing your violin!
 - Today we are going to start making some music with your instruments!

- *Background Knowledge:*
 - Ask/Tell students:
 - What have we learned so far in preparation to play the violin?
 - Name 5 parts on the violin.
 - Give 2 things we do to take care of our instrument.
 - Everyone show me proper posture, guitar, and shoulder position.
 - In music class you talk about notes, what do you know about notes?
 - You also talk about rhythm, what do you know about rhythm?

- *Purpose:* Tell students, “Today we are going to be learning the note names of each of your strings, and the rhythm patterns of two songs. By the end of class today, you will be able to play a song on each of your strings!”

- *Rationale:* Tell students, “Knowing the names of your strings is important so you know what to play and are able to follow along in class. Knowing how to read the notes and rhythm in your music is important so you can play different songs.”

Input and Modeling

The teacher will:

- Tell students: When you look at your instrument, the first string, the thickest string is G. Then D, then A, and then the last and thinnest string is E. All of these we call “Open strings” or “Open notes” this is because we can play them without having to put down any fingers on the finger board.
- Let students pluck open strings to hear what they sound like.
- Tell students: Open your book to page 4 and read the information in the orange box. (give students 2 minutes to read) Now, look at song number 2 on this page. This song is all on the open D string. We know this because of where the note is on the music staff. Each note is a quarter note. These get one beat of time. Each rest is a quarter rest. These get one beat of time as well, but it is a beat of silence. Students will:

- Listen and watch the teacher, following along by holding their instrument facing themselves and touching each of the strings as it is said.
- Read information in the orange box on page 4 silently when directed.
- Follow along when teacher is talking about song number 2.

Checking for Understanding

Ask students:

- What is the note name for each string? What kind of notes are these? (open strings/notes)
- What is a music staff? What are measures? What is a quarter note? What is a quarter rest?

Guided Practice

The teacher will:

- Tell students: Let’s learn this song together. When we learn a new song, first clap the rhythm. On every note, you clap. On every rest, do not clap. Let’s do this with song number 2.
- Play track number 2 on Play-Along CD. Walk around and listen to students clapping through the song as many times is needed for everyone to correctly clap the rhythm. Help students if the need help. Correct misunderstandings as they are noticed.
- Tell students: Now, let’s play it together. So, every time there is a note, pluck the D string. Every time there is a rest, do not play anything. While you are playing,

you may choose guitar or shoulder position but remember to focus on your posture and technique.

- Play track number 2 on Play-Along CD. Walk around and listen to students playing through the song as many times is needed for everyone to correctly play it. Help students if the need help. Correct misunderstandings as they are noticed. Students will:
- Clap along and play along when directed. Ask questions when they have them.

Closure: Tell students, “Today we learned about the four open strings and their notes, and how to play a song on the D string.”

Independent Practice

The teacher will:

- Tell students: Now that you know each of the open string notes and how to play song number 2, you are ready to learn song number 3 which has the same rhythm as song number 2 but is all on the A string.
- Play track number 3 on Play-Along CD. Walk around and listen to students playing through the song as many times is needed for everyone to correctly play it. Help students if the need help. Correct misunderstandings as they are noticed.
- Tell students: Now that you know song number 2 and 3, you can try this rhythm on the G and E strings as well.
- Clap beat while students play on strings G and then E. Walk around and listen to students playing through the song as many times is needed for everyone to correctly play it. Help students if the need help. Correct misunderstandings as they are noticed. Students will:
- Play song number 3 and the rhythm on G and E strings.

Assessment

Assessment Instrument: The student’s ability to play on the correct string with the correct rhythm for all four songs.

Quality Standards: Students are expected to play through the songs messing up 0-1 times, and jumping back in if they do mess up.

Resources

Essential Elements for Strings: Violin Book 1, page 4

Journal #4:

Unit II, Lesson #1

Unit II gets the students doing what they've been waiting for – making music! It is always so exciting for student to starts strumming their strings a reading music out of their book. The reinforcement of ideas in Unit I are vital for continued student success, and so this is one of the most stressful lessons for the teacher. However, simplifying the objectives and taking students through steps multiple times helps to keep students focused and combining all elements.

This week I focused my research on the article “Social Justice and Music Education – The Call for a Public Pedagogy” by Randall Everett Allsup and Eric Shieh. This article covers the idea of social justice in our schools and the responsibility teachers, and specifically music and arts teachers, have to students to guide their class and school society in a positive direction. What spoke to me the most while reading this article was the idea they present that in working for social justice, “A starting point, then: notice inequity. Name the inequity.” (Allsup, 48) Thinking in this way, I have started to think about the individual students in my classroom and will be working to notice moments of inequity and name the situations that give expectations or are based off assumptions that are biased. Additionally, this article notes that “It is important to recognize that while it is necessary to name injustices done to groups of people, this can also result in affixing labels to individuals, regardless of our intent... While it is our right to name ourselves, it is quite another thing to be labeled by someone else.” and to combat the cycle of labelling our students, we should just listen to our students (Allsup, 49.) Talking to my students and getting to know each one of them personally is a luxury I have in our violin class of

14 students, but not every teacher has this. I have experienced firsthand as a teacher how meaningful and important it is to listen to students, and will be continuing this to help me better be aware of inequities and notice them. Finally, a point made in this article that touched on the very reason I was interested in researching this topic, was that “The problem that bedevils many music educators is that we want to know what exactly social justice looks like in a music classroom or rehearsal setting, and how exactly it is implemented.” (Allsup, 50) To this question, Allsup and Shieh propose that this is not the case. In music education, it is not just a lesson that touches on a topic of justice, but rather a classroom environment focused on collaboration, shared power, “inclusion, fairness, and equal opportunity.” (Allsup, 50) To think in this way, is on the one hand, relieving, since coming up with specific ideas for multicultural lessons in a beginner’s violin classroom is very difficult, and the class can only be taken so deep into the conversation before needing to move on to learning the instrument. On the other hand, this means that the task at hand no longer has a concrete solution, but is a product of every encounter that the teacher and students have with each other and how those ideals of equality and inclusion are actively pursued by everyone, every day. This to me, is a better, yet more challenging answer to this question.

Unit II, Lesson #2 – Finger Pattern 1 on D string

Objective: Students will be able to identify notes E, F#, and G (in finger placement pattern #1) on the D string and play them correctly with good tone in a song.

Rationale: Students must learn notes in finger pattern #1 on the D string to begin to become fluent in reading music and begin to develop left hand finger dexterity.

Materials:

Teacher Materials

Violin
Essential Elements book, pages 6 and 7
Essential Elements Play-Along CD
CD player

Student Materials

Violin
Essential Elements book, pages 6 and 7
Essential Elements Play-Along CD

Lesson Set Up: Welcome to violin class! Please be seated in your chair with your instrument uncased and with you, your stand set up, and your book out and open to page 6.

Anticipatory Set

- *Hook:*
Ask/Tell students:
 - Last class we learned all about the open string notes and a song with a set rhythm. Would you like to learn some more notes and rhythms?
- *Background Knowledge:*
Ask/Tell students:
 - Does anyone play any other instrument with strings like a guitar?
 - What do you notice about a guitar's neck that is different from our violin's necks?
 - Guitars have frets on their necks which help the player line up their fingers to play notes. Our violins work the same way, we just don't have the frets.
- *Purpose:* Tell students, "Today we are going to be learning three new notes on the D string and by the end of class, you will be able to play a new song!"
- *Rationale:* Tell students, "Knowing the notes on the D string and how to identify them on the staff is very important to begin learning more complex songs."

Input and Modeling

The teacher will:

- Tell students: Look at the orange box on page 6. This diagram shows how to play notes E F#, and G with your first, second, and third fingers. Try hearing what these notes sound like by pressing the tip of your finger to the string against the fingerboard in the correct position for each note.
- Let students independently try playing each note.
- Tell students: Hold up your violin with all three fingers down. Notice how you have a space in between fingers 1 and 2 and how fingers 2 and 3 are touching. This is what we call finger pattern 1 because our fingers make this pattern when we play these notes.

Students will:

- Listen and watch the teacher.
- Read information in the orange box on page 6 silently when directed.
- Independently play each note to see how it feels and sounds.

Checking for Understanding

Ask students:

- What are the names of the notes we just learned on the D string?
- Show me with your violin in the air finger pattern 1 on the D string.

Guided Practice

The teacher will:

- Tell students: Now that you know the names of finger pattern #1 notes on the D string and where they are, let's practice finding them on a staff and playing them. Look at song 10 in your book. This song is entirely played with third finger G. Let's clap the rhythm.
- Play track number 10 on Play-Along CD. Walk around and listen to students clapping through the song as many times is needed for everyone to correctly clap the rhythm. Help students if the need help. Correct misunderstandings as they are noticed.
- Tell students: Now, let's play it together. So, every time there is a note, pluck the D string with three fingers down to play note G. Every time there is a rest, do not play anything. While you are playing, you may choose guitar or shoulder position but remember to focus on your posture and technique.
- Play track number 10 on Play-Along CD. Walk around and listen to students playing through the song as many times is needed for everyone to correctly play it. Help students if the need help. Correct misunderstandings as they are noticed.
- Repeat this process with song number 11 to practice second finger F# and song number 14 to practice first finger E.

Students will:

- Clap along and play along when directed. Ask questions when they have them.

Closure: Tell students, “Today we learned about three new notes on the D string called E, F#, and G. We learned that the way we place our fingers on the fingerboard to play these notes is in a pattern called finger pattern #1. We also learned how to read and identify these new notes on a staff. Now, let’s combine all that information to play a song!”

Independent Practice

The teacher will:

- Tell students: Now that you know finger pattern #1 notes on the D string and how to read them, we are going to learn song number 15 on page 7. First, Lets clap the rhythm.
- Play track number 15 on Play-Along CD. Walk around and listen to students clapping through the song as many times is needed for everyone to correctly clap the rhythm. Help students if the need help. Correct misunderstandings as they are noticed.
- Tell students: Now, say the note name that is to be played each time you clap.
- Play track number 15 on Play-Along CD. Walk around and listen to students saying note names through the song as many times is needed for everyone to correctly say the note names. Help students if the need help. Correct misunderstandings as they are noticed.
- Tell students: Now let’s try playing the song. Pay attention to your finger pattern!
- Play track number 15 on Play-Along CD. Walk around and listen to students playing through the song as many times is needed for everyone to correctly play it. Help students if they need help. Correct misunderstandings as they are noticed.

Students will:

- Clap and play along to number 15.

Assessment

Assessment Instrument: The student’s ability to correctly identify and play notes on the D string in song number 15.

Quality Standards: Students are expected to play through song number 15 with 0-1 mistake(s) and jump back in when they become lost.

Resources

Essential Elements for Strings: Violin Book 1, page 6 and 7

Journal #5:

Unit II, Lesson #2

This lesson begins students on using their left hand to press on the strings and make a variety of new notes. Again, students are thrilled to try something new and make new sounds, and again, they will need constant encouragement to persevere and stay focused on all elements of playing. This lesson went well in practice, but I notice some students becoming bored with the slow pace or are becoming tired after running through skill builders multiple times. Once I teach all of the basics, I will be able to differentiate for these students and will need to keep them engaged.

In writing this lesson, I looked into the third step listed the process of Backward Design from the book *Understanding by Design*. After deciding on your desired end result and what evidence you would like to see to support that objective, the next step is to do what many teachers do first and plan the actual instruction and learning experiences that will be done day to day to teach the objective and allow students to practice it. With such an important lesson, I felt that this was a good lesson to think about the actual steps I would take to help students learn and experience how to play a note that requires pressing down on the string, alongside previous lessons on technique and rhythm. It really is a lot to remember and focus on at once, especially at 9 years old. However, with the right objective, conscious reflection on evidence of understanding, and effective means of presenting and practicing the objective, students will find success.

Unit II, Lesson #3 – Finger Pattern 1 on A string

Objective: Students will be able to identify notes B, C#, and D (in finger placement pattern #1) on the A string and play them correctly with good tone in a song.

Rationale: Students must learn notes in finger pattern #1 on the A string to begin to become fluent in reading music and begin to develop left hand finger dexterity.

Materials:

Teacher Materials

Violin
Essential Elements book, pages 10 and 11
Essential Elements Play-Along CD
CD player

Student Materials

Violin
Essential Elements book, pages 10 and 11
Essential Elements Play-Along CD

Lesson Set Up: Welcome to violin class! Please be seated in your chair with your instrument uncased and with you, your stand set up, and your book out and open to pg 10.

Anticipatory Set

- *Hook:*
Ask/Tell students:
 - Last class we learned all about the finger pattern 1 notes on the D string and another song with a set rhythm. Would you like to learn some more notes and rhythms?
- *Background Knowledge:*
Ask/Tell students:
 - Remember last class when we talked about finger pattern 1 notes on D string?
 - What were those notes? Where did we place our fingers to play these notes?
 - Remember our conversation about how violins are like guitars with frets? So just like how you can play notes on all of the strings on a guitar, you can do so on a violin as well!
- *Purpose:* Tell students, “Today we are going to be learning three new notes on the A string and by the end of class, you will be able to play a new song!”
- *Rationale:* Tell students, “Knowing the notes on the A string and how to identify them on the staff is very important to begin learning more complex songs.”

Input and Modeling

The teacher will:

- Tell students: Look at the orange box on page 10. This diagram shows how to play notes B, C#, and D with your first, second, and third fingers. Try hearing what these notes sound like by pressing the tip of your finger to the string against the fingerboard in the correct position for each note.
- Let students independently try playing each note.
- Tell students: Hold up your violin with all three fingers down. Notice how you have a space in between fingers 1 and 2 and how fingers 2 and 3 are touching. Remember, this is what we call finger pattern 1 because our fingers make this pattern when we play these notes even though we are now playing on a different string.

Students will:

- Listen and watch the teacher.
- Read information in the orange box on page 10 silently when directed.
- Independently play each note to see how it feels and sounds.

Checking for Understanding

Ask students:

- What are the names of the notes we just learned on the A string?
- Show me with your violin in the air finger pattern 1 on the A string.

Guided Practice

The teacher will:

- Tell students: Now that you know the names of finger pattern #1 notes on the A string and where they are, let's practice finding them on a staff and playing them. Look at song 23 in your book. This song is entirely played with third finger D. Let's clap the rhythm.
- Play track number 23 on Play-Along CD. Walk around and listen to students clapping through the song as many times as needed for everyone to correctly clap the rhythm. Help students if they need help. Correct misunderstandings as they are noticed.
- Tell students: Now, let's play it together. So, every time there is a note, pluck the A string with three fingers down to play note D. Every time there is a rest, do not play anything. While you are playing, you may choose guitar or shoulder position but remember to focus on your posture and technique.
- Play track number 23 on Play-Along CD. Walk around and listen to students playing through the song as many times as needed for everyone to correctly play it. Help students if they need help. Correct misunderstandings as they are noticed.
- Repeat this process with song number 24 to practice second finger C# and song number 28 to practice first finger B.

Students will:

- Clap along and play along when directed. Ask questions when they have them.

Closure: Tell students, “Today we learned about three new notes on the A string called B, C#, and D. We learned that the way we place our fingers on the fingerboard to play these notes is in a pattern called finger pattern #1 and it is the same pattern we use on the D string to play notes E, F#, and G. We also learned how to read and identify these new notes on a staff. Now, let’s combine all that information to play a song!”

Independent Practice

The teacher will:

- Tell students: Now that you know finger pattern #1 notes on the D and A strings and how to read them, we are going to learn song number 32 on page 11. First, Lets clap the rhythm.
- Play track number 32 on Play-Along CD. Walk around and listen to students clapping through the song as many times is needed for everyone to correctly clap the rhythm. Help students if the need help. Correct misunderstandings as they are noticed.
- Tell students: Now, say the note name that is to be played each time you clap.
- Play track number 32 on Play-Along CD. Walk around and listen to students saying note names through the song as many times is needed for everyone to correctly say the note names. Help students if the need help. Correct misunderstandings as they are noticed.
- Tell students: Now let’s try playing the song. Pay attention to your finger pattern!
- Play track number 32 on Play-Along CD. Walk around and listen to students playing through the song as many times is needed for everyone to correctly play it. Help students if they need help. Correct misunderstandings as they are noticed.

Students will:

- Clap and play along to number 32.

Assessment

Assessment Instrument: The student’s ability to correctly identify and play notes on the D and A string in song number 32.

Quality Standards: Students are expected to play through song number 32 with 0-1 mistake(s) and jump back in when they become lost.

Resources

Essential Elements for Strings: Violin Book 1, page 10 and 11.

Journal #6:

Unit II, Lesson #3

This lesson really opens the scope for the students as far as what I can start teaching them now. The lesson itself is essentially a repeat of the second lesson in this unit covering D string notes, however, students still always seem to struggle with it. In past years when I had tried to move through this lesson quickly and in a simplified format, students became confused and frustrated, which is why it must be done with the same time as the previous lesson. In my opinion, this is because students are learning the new note names and the sound is different, and so it does not patter that the finger pattern and rhythm are the same, students till need adequate time to explore these new notes.

In thinking about all of the research I have done over unit plan design and multicultural education, I have begun looking at my class differently, and especially seeking out the inequities my students face individually and how that effects them in our violin classroom. Many of my students come from nontraditional family systems, and now that I have spent some time with them, I see how each student's situation in inequitable. While some are better off and find success in my class, others are struggling to get the supplies they need and support at home that sets a tone to value what we are learning in my class over other things that are going on in that family's life. These situations however, are out of the hands of the child, and that is okay. It is through the building up of our classroom environment, and conscious teaching and differentiation on my part to help meet each student's abilities, needs, and situation that all will find fulfillment and success in my class of varying degrees and in varying ways. For some, they will play every song every time and will go on to play the violin in the future. For

others, they will leave at the end of the year and never play another instrument again, but will have gained self-confidence and experience in a new situation. Through the addition of multicultural education all students would leave my class with a new understanding of the scope of music and the many instruments involved. They will know how music has changed over history to become what it is today that they listen to with their families at home. They will have experienced perseverance to remain focused and motivated to learn a discipline like those in old stories told around the world. After reflecting on all of the research and how it applies to my students in our violin class when working through these lessons, I think that there is room for additions like these and would love to try them out.

III. CONCLUSION

Throughout this process, I have been reflecting back on what my initial thoughts were on what multicultural education was and how I would implement it in a violin classroom. I really did not know what to expect, and thought that the extent of what I would be adding to lesson plans would be learning culturally diverse songs, showing videos or playing recording of songs from various cultures, or teaching terms in different languages. While all of these elements are ones that I still see as valuable, I now have realized the place that classroom environment, consideration of family structure, and effective lesson planning have in the discussion about multicultural education.

Multicultural education and instruction have taken a new form in my mind. From my interactions with students, research I have done into the topic, and my own personal experiences, I have come to the realization that as a teacher, it is not about the individual lessons taught or unfamiliar songs played in a music class. Rather, multicultural instruction is a mindset, not a set of tasks. Tasks can expose students to things they have never experienced, seen, or heard, and yes, it is important that we set up opportunities to discover like this in our classrooms. However, tasks and new information don't necessarily mean something to everyone. When teachers create a safe place that allows for new experiences to be shared or actively seek out injustice or bias and address them, the classroom can truly become a place where all are welcome and valued. This not only creates a space in which multicultural education is possible, but it serves as a model for what multicultural education is aiming to achieve.

Literature Cited

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