Guide to the teaching of string instruments in class

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A GUIDE TO THE TEACHING OF STRING INSTRUMENTS IN CLASS

by

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B. M. Montana State University, 1950

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Music

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

1963

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MAY 31, 1963

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer is indebted to Mr. Paul Enevoldsen and the late Mr. Julius E. Clavadetscher, both former Instrumental Music Instructors in Billings, Montana, Mrs. Herbert J. Wunderlich, Instrumental Music Instructor in Manhattan, Kansas, Dr. Joseph E. Maddy, National Music Camp, Interlochen, Michigan and teaching staffs in Flathead County High School, Kalispell, Montana, El Paso Public Schools, El Paso, Texas, and the Lansing Public Schools, Lansing, Michigan, for their kindness and help in accumulating teaching experiences.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

There are many string class method books published that are written with different approaches to the problems of string instrument teaching. How to select and utilize the most effective approaches is a problem the teacher must solve.

I. THE PURPOSE OF THIS PAPER

The purpose of this paper is to organize some information that might help make the teaching of string instruments in class more effective. It is assumed that there is no need to justify the existence of the music program or of the special role that the string program fills, or to make a resume of the history of string class teaching, or to prove that there is a need for improving class string teaching. This paper will be limited to the investigation of a method of group instruction that has been found to be an improvement over former methods used by the writer. It assumes that material accumulation and administrative details are well organized and accomplished with a minimum of confusion.

II. THE ESSENTIAL PROBLEM OF STRING TEACHING

One of the first problems to be met is that of method of
procedure. Method is defined as "a general or established way or order of doing anything, or the means or manner by which it is presented or taught."¹

An established manner of presentation in teaching is important. Vitality and innovation can be influenced by the teacher² but the general procedure should be clearly set since, "It is important to give the pupil definite aims or objectives and to inform him of success in reaching that objective."³ Therefore, the successful teacher has clearly in mind the necessary achievements of the pupil.⁴ Since art is defined as "the body of rules and methods for any department of work or performance,"⁵ the same achievements are necessary for each pupil.

Arguments against this statement may be drawn from the fact that not all pupils have the same goal in mind in mastering the art, .


nor are they all equally equipped mentally or physically to do so. Furthermore, James Mursell maintains, "The prevailing defect of too much of our current practice is that it emphasizes skill and knowledge as independent ends in themselves and thus deals only with externals, leaving the vital essence of the matter to mere chance." Thus, Mursell leads one to suppose that the exposure to music even without technical mastery, contributes favorably on the individual personality. A study commissioned by G. Leblanc Corporation continues in this vein when it asserts that parents of recruited children should be chiefly impressed with the value of music for improving social relations and developing social skill.

However, if music can be justified as an art, then excellence in individual skill and mass presentation is the only worthy goal. Of course, those not mentally or physically able to pursue the course of study should not be enrolled or if enrolled should be taken as far as they are able to master the essential technique. Social relations

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8 "Keep materials generally within the student's ability. A great fault of much music teaching in America is the attempted performances of material beyond the student's technical and intellectual grasp."

and social skills should be a by-product and not the chief aim.\textsuperscript{9}
Furthermore, the aesthetic values are also derived from the acquired skills.\textsuperscript{10}

In proceeding with the acquisition of these skills, C. C. Ross and Julian C. Stanley state, "It is a sound principle of teaching which holds that learning always begins where the learner's present knowledge leaves off."\textsuperscript{11} Before basing a method of procedure on this principle there is another important consideration to be made. Mr. Whitehead agrees that the order of learning should be arranged according to difficulty. Yet, he also reminds teachers that it's a good practice to build motivation by exposing the pupil to tasks beyond his ability level so as to broaden the student's concepts. He calls this stage of motivation building, "The Stage of Romance." Mr. Whitehead states, "In this stage knowledge is not dominated by systematic procedure."\textsuperscript{12} This idea has direct application to the teaching philosophy relating to the whole child introduced by the Gestalt school of psychology. Robert Klotman has shown a specific

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12}Whitehead, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 27.
\end{itemize}
application for string teaching when introducing the first efforts of tone production. He has stated, "It is better tonally to get a large sound in the inchoate stages and later refine than to begin with a small, confined tone and try to build to a larger sound." A related consideration is that involving the controversy over whether the whole or part method should be used in teaching. Louis P. Thorpe answers this in a way to include both methods depending on the material to be mastered. He states,

...the generalization can be drawn that under some circumstances, the whole method of learning music is productive of superior results, that is, when the extent or size of the unit of material or skill to be mastered is not too great and when it is appropriate to the maturational level of the learner. On the other hand, it follows that, as in the case of other fields of endeavor, a relatively large score of music or skill will tend to be learned most economically by the part method. Therefore, this writer attempts to use both of these means with an attempt to first communicate the concept of the whole and later to utilize constructs to build tasks on a gradual scale of ascendency so "that the learner has a maximum chance, because of increasing maturity, of succeeding in each successive task." 

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15Ibid., p. 174.
The general goals to be considered in a program of teaching strings are (1) that of building interest and motivation, (2) that of developing physical technique, (3) that of intellectual generalization, (4) that of musical interpretation, sensitivity and artistry, (5) that of developing the well-being of the individual in relation to society. These general goals are somewhat similar to the five principles mentioned by Thorpe. It is admitted that all of these processes take place simultaneously to some degree. However, the view of John Mueller when he states, "The spontaneity in expression is not an evidence of transcendent inspiration but rather the reduction of training to the level of second nature." leads the bulk of this paper to be concerned with these demands of technical mastery that are too pressing in their introductory phases to be soft pedaled or subordinated. An important stipulation must be added during work with the technical phase. This is brought out by Thorndike when he states that maximum results are obtained when practice is accompanied by success or satisfaction at each advance, and by Cook when he states that in each lesson there should be some moment of genuine musical

16 Ibid., pp. 191-193.


Thus, the essential problem of string teaching is one of balance, maintaining an awareness of the five general goals while balancing the immediate technical and esthetic realizations.

CHAPTER II

STARTING THE STRING CLASS

Since learning to play an instrument is a voluntary activity of students, enrollment is relative to the ability to sell the desire for the skill. There are various ways of promoting this desire and various ways of selecting students with favorable aptitudes, attitudes, and social adjustment.

I. RECRUITMENT

Various ways of "selling" the program may be listed as follows:

1. Presenting demonstrations of the instrument to the students by professionals, the teacher, or fellow classmates.
2. Appealing to the sense of importance by giving aptitude tests and soliciting those with high scores.
3. Demonstrating to parents at P. T. A. meetings.
4. Advertising by poster or announcement.
5. Preliminary vocal or pre-instrument training that builds the feeling of confidence and success.
6. Once the program is successful relatives and friends of present and former students enroll upon the former students' recommendation.

After experiencing the results of these various ways of selling
the program, it is the opinion of the writer that the present procedure followed by the Lansing Public Schools utilizing the first, fifth and sixth means on this list are most effective.

II. SELECTING STUDENTS

As a result of presenting demonstrations by the teacher or fellow classmates, Lansing Public Schools gather names of students who are interested. These students are then screened using the following criteria:

1. Classroom adequacy--whether the student can afford absence from classroom work.
2. Citizenship and behavior.
4. Permission of parent.
5. Passing an aptitude test.

Formerly, a written form was issued for each student, upon which the teacher and principal noted their opinions of the first three criteria. However, in questionable cases it was found that the teacher and principal were reluctant to condemn a student and nearly always added the phrase, "This might be just the thing the child needs." So the form was abandoned as an added paperwork burden that could be handled vocally, if need be.

The burden of screening most of the students falls on the aptitude test.\textsuperscript{20} The aptitude test proved a good indicator of degree

\textsuperscript{20}See Appendix A.
of success. Judging from a list of 124 students making good scores, one hundred one, or 81.5 per cent, were judged to be successful in the beginning class. The test was also used to measure the effectiveness of class teaching by comparing rates of growth in musical abilities between two groups. 21

Once the students are selected, the choice of instrument is determined by the desire and the physical structure of the child.

It need not be stressed that the learning attitude and degree of receptiveness the student employs is of great importance. In trying to select students with a favorable attitude the 1959-60 beginning and second year students were asked to fill out a questionnaire. 22 The results of the checklist section by the beginners listed leading reasons for desiring to play as the students wished (1) to play in a grade school orchestra, (2) to play in a junior high orchestra (3) to learn enough about music to write their own. The leading reason given was, "It's fun. I enjoy it."

The surprising result of the test was the large number of students who wished to compose music. 23 This would lead one to suggest that more stress be laid on this activity in music classes.

The preponderance of answers showing a desire for group playing points out that the social function of music is of great import.

21 Appendix A.
22 Appendix B.
23 Appendix B.
Parental approval, support and encouragement are of such primary importance that it might be suggested that an excellent success indicator may be found by testing the attitude of the parent instead of the child when selecting students. Parental involvement with the lessons is suggested by Melvin Schneider.24

The support of principals and administrators is imperative in scheduling, designating facilities and recognizing and encouraging students, parents and teacher.

Very little can be done until the group has recognized itself as a group with a purpose and with established relationships within itself and its surrounding community of social groups. Reaching the individual child through this maze of relationships is necessary if his musical education is to be accomplished. A sociogram of the string student might be drawn as follows:

![Sociogram of a string student](image)

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Social inter-relationship and its effect on enrollment and learning progress is not clearly understood though there is undeniable evidence that people's actions are bound to other people's actions. Some interesting, though inconclusive investigations are reported by John Pfeiffer.25

Musical education is very personal, and is emotionally and sensitively developed. Although complications, discouragement and lack of interest by parents, principals and teachers reflects upon the sensitivity of the child and upsets his receptivity to learning, the child finds it difficult to verbalize this disturbance.

A questionnaire26 was given to students desiring to drop their string class work. The prevailing reasons given for dropping were, "I am not interested." and "I do not like to practice." This leads one to explore the importance of clearly defining objectives and motivations and building what Madison calls "constructs" or teaching procedures to implement their realization.27


26 Appendix B.

CHAPTER III

DEFINING THE OBJECTIVES

If the objectives in instrumental music study are apparent, worthy, desirable and interesting enough, it is hoped that the students will be influenced to achieve them through their own will power and teacher guidance in spite of the possible hazards outlined in Figure 1, page 11.

Two types of objectives have been mentioned in Chapter I, that of technic and that of esthetic experience.

I. FORMULATING THE ESTHETIC OBJECTIVE

Esthetic experience does not necessarily occur for all people under the same stimulus. Degree of maturation and attitude of receptivity influences the communication of the esthetic expression, expression that has been defined by Susan Langer as human feeling, "... everything that can be felt, from physical sensation, pain and comfort, excitement and repose, to the most complex emotions, intellectual tensions or the steady feeling tones of a conscious human life." 28

Harry S. Broudy's impression is that aesthetics "leaves out the

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arrow but captures its swift glide."  

Variety and balance again prove to be the most logical way of increasing the possibility of more than one of the individuals in the classroom encountering a situation that is tailored for his own peculiar psychic. Some of the following stimuli may be suggested:

1. Performance by live artists of solos, quartets and orchestra music.
2. Performances by children in a social situation among themselves.
3. Rehearsals in student's own homes and in non-school situations so that good music becomes a pleasant part of living not concerned with required labors.
4. Private lessons.
5. Arranging or composing their own music.
6. Recordings.
7. Contact with well-known musical personalities.
8. Report on other school musical group activities.
9. Good TV, movie, or radio performances and discussions on such performances.
10. Personal communication from teacher.
11. Other members of the family performing music.

It is difficult to insert these means into a class situation when the time allotted for string activities is so limited and fully

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occupied with technical accomplishments. However, trying to communicate the esthetic objective is vitally important. As a chamber music player states,

... man needs art, needs it fiercely, insistently, repeatedly, the way he needs food. Art is exciting and man craves excitement, seeks it, sometimes, even to the gallow's foot. 30

"It is an old story, the power of music--music that can drive men to war, to love, to God... Sometimes it does not drive at all, but lays hands upon the troubled spirit, to soothe and to heal... Music speaks, and I reply. Slowly my cold blood warms; in my veins I feel it swell and quicken. Once more the heart leaps eagerly, once more I am blinded with the glory that surrounds me." 31

To help a teacher decide in what ways one may develop the esthetic concept, John Mueller has classified music in 9 basic types of natural excitation: (1) Song (2) Dance (3) Motion (4) Declamation (5) Drama in action (6) Motive and development (7) Architectural (8) Mathematical order (9) Pure harmony and pure timbre. 32 This concept of excitation might prove useful under certain conditions.

II. GENERAL TECHNICAL OBJECTIVES

In an attempt to make playing problems and their solutions a

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graduated process clearly understood. Achievements are hereby classified in a general way into beginning, intermediate and advanced divisions. Some beginning method books, such as *Bow and Strings*, cover the beginning phases in a generally satisfactory manner.

The intermediate phases, on the other hand, are not sufficiently covered by any one method book. One needs to collect numerous bits of information and music from many sources to cover adequately the subject of keys, more varied bowings, ear and finger training, scales and arpeggios truly encompassing an octave, good approaches to positions and a conscious introduction to vibrato.

The responsibility of the advanced phase for learning the remaining positions, scales, arpeggios, skillful bowing techniques, vibrato and fine literature, is chiefly left to private instruction. However, for the very reason that private instruction has not been able to supply enough beginning string players, the same reason exists for developing intermediate and advanced players through the class medium. Intermediate and advanced students should not be left to develop without guidance. Table I lists goals in progressive order.

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TABLE I

GENERAL TECHNICAL OBJECTIVES FOR STRING INSTRUMENT STUDENTS
ARRANGED IN PROGRESSIVE ORDER OF DIFFICULTY

Beginning string players should:

1. Learn to play rote songs with good position and full tone.
2. Learn to read all notes on four strings with four fingers. Cellists learn first, extended and second positions and basses learn half, first, second and third.
3. Learn easy rhythms.
4. Learn some easy songs.
5. Learn to compose easy rhythms.

Intermediate string players should:

1. Learn sharps and flats.
2. Learn basic bowings.
3. Learn seven scales and arpeggios in one octave.
5. Learn how to practice for vibrato.
6. Learn more difficult slow and lively tunes.
7. Play in ensembles.
8. Learn to arrange easy pieces.

Advanced string players should:

1. Learn second, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh positions. Cellists and bass players also learn tenor clef and thumb position. Violists learn treble clef and positions through seventh.
2. Play eleven scales and arpeggios in two octaves.
3. Master varieties of vibrato.
4. Master intricate bowing variations.
5. Play in concerts and programs, solos, sonatas and concertos.
6. Enter festivals and contests.
7. Compose simple music.
CHAPTER IV

PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED

There has been a great preoccupation with how to teach the instrumental technic. The traditional method of teaching in the past has proven unsatisfactory because of its neglect of the esthetic concept and the lack of specific development of student initiative in conceiving and finding solutions to problems. Beginning class method books have in general attacked technical problems in a direct manner. Nevertheless, there are still procedures that cause disagreement.

I. BEGINNING, ISSUES OF CONTROVERSY

There are controversies about the methods of proceeding with the beginning student. An older European method called "solfeggio" stressed sight-singing, note naming, and rhythmic responses before the introduction of an instrument. Another traditional approach has been to introduce note reading while simultaneously learning physical coordination. In recent years the trend has been to teach by rote until physical problems of playing are accomplished more easily. This procedure coincides with the principle of introducing one problem at a time so as to master abilities more efficiently and with successful results and not distract a student's attention or frustrate him with general random movements producing unsatisfactory results.
Shinichi Suzuki has demonstrated by his students' performances of his rote teaching that learning to read the music is not necessary to outstanding advanced performance. However, since most parents are not able to follow the children through in class and at home as Suzuki believes necessary, it seems that learning to read notes should not be forsaken at this early stage.

Some teachers condemn the practice of arranging a precise set of musical compositions according to technical difficulty since they say it does not allow for individual differences other than allowing for varying rates of progress. This point of view is similar to the problem of classroom teachers who have solved it by using one basic text, then utilizing supplementary material for the individual differences. Yet another possible solution lies in using a composite method with many different approaches to the same problems in the hope that at least one of these approaches will reach each child.

After teaching the manner of holding the instrument and bow there are three basic approaches possible: (1) play random bowing open strings notes to piano accompaniment, (2) play whole, half, or quarter notes, using whole bows and (3) play quarter notes using

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36 Ibid., p. 6.

whole bows and (3) play quarter notes using half bows. The preferred bowing introduction would seemingly be the random bowing since the teacher could then see which students most easily developed bow control and which students would need assistance.

Many string method books use the major scale approach coupled with an emphasis on the finger pattern concept. Advantages of the approach are said to be:

a. The child has only one finger pattern to learn for all the strings, at the time when he needs all his attention for maintaining a good position and bowing technique . . .

b. 'The child knows and hears the major scale pattern best to start with. . .

c. 'With the major scale approach, the child learns to play in several keys within a short time and does not develop a complex about playing in keys other than C. . .

This major scale approach with its emphasis on the finger pattern concept has a serious disadvantage. An insight into the importance of key signature is discounted since using the major approach does not vary the finger pattern. Consequently, when key signatures are introduced the subject seems traumatic to the student. Since the keys of D, A, and G, are so easy for a beginner to understand, why should they prove difficult for a student who has mastered the C major approach and who has the added understanding of the importance of key

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signature? As for the contention that the child needs all his attention for maintaining good position and bowing, it is obvious that the student should master these abilities before commencing with finger placement. One solution to this problem seems to be a chromatic approach to finger placement accompanied by a familiarity with the keyboard. Keller and Taylor touch upon this in their method when the student is led to play the same piece in a major and then a minor key. Early use of such pieces as "Spanish Dance," in Southwestern Suite with e flat and e natural, and the Valse Chromatique by Isaac are other examples. More material using an easy chromaticism in the very beginning stages would be more directly to the point of teaching the importance of finger spacing.

II. INTERMEDIATE, ISSUES OF CONTROVERSY

Many advanced books become filled with folk songs containing an uneven distribution of playing problems. There should be an attempt "to use a constantly higher quality of musical literature and an improving skill and understanding."

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^42 Merle Isaac, String Class Method Bk. I. (Chicago: Cole Publ.) p. 58.

Brammer in his conclusions found that there is a scarcity of materials suitable for work beyond the elementary stage. The Music Educators National Conference found that there was a need for beginning orchestra music which would correlate with the beginning books for strings, favoring keys easy for strings, and a need for one good general technic book which might be a compilation of finger studies, bowing studies, some shifting exercises, good two-and-three octave scales, and a few pages of standard orchestra bowings with practical examples, and a need for materials that would introduce shifting earlier than the conventional methods suggest.

The writer has found a need for (1) a collection of music for special holidays to coincide with vocal music for Thanksgiving, Halloween, Christmas, New Year, etc., (2) a first position collection of folk songs and words to play with singers, (3) technical studies which should be stressed from the standpoint of gymnastic fun and a series of technical studies concentrating on open strings, bow control, and creative rhythms, (4) folk songs in third position, (5) an adequate supplementary theory drill book, (6) supplementary primary music of good taste, (7) an approach for developing freedom, creativity and improvisational ability, and (8) more material using chromatic finger placement in the earliest stages.

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CHAPTER V

SUGGESTED APPROACHES

In order to reach as many students as possible, no single approach should be relied on exclusively. Many novel ways of presenting the same material would insure that each child would eventually understand the specific point to be learned at that time.

I. BEGINNING PROCEDURES

It is necessary for the student to know the names of the parts of the instrument and their function in producing high and low tones. This can be accomplished by assigning the task of constructing a home-made instrument. After constructing their own instruments the students develop an interest in the care of the instrument, the names of the parts and how to hold the instrument.

The first sounds made are pizzicato notes. Leaving out the bow at this time leaves the students free to become acquainted with quarter notes and rests and the problem of holding the instrument.

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47 Heinrich Roth, “Violin Making in Europe and Violin Adjusting in the U. S. A.,” (Cleveland: a film contribution by Educational Department of Scherl & Roth, Inc.)

The foundation for rhythmic reading can be laid at this point by using conducting frames, a swinging pendulum, and a metronome. The frames appear to be picture frames with three or four sides. The student guides a stick along the frame counting one beat for each side. The concept of a measure can be instilled by ringing a bell each time one point of the picture frame is reached. In reading simple rhythm patterns pizzicato playing can be introduced. The students can at this point write their own rhythmic patterns as homework or games.

Holding the bow is the next problem to master. Holding a pencil as one would hold a bow is a frequent approach to this skill. Mr. Lea Maples, String Instructor, El Paso Public Schools, next uses a drill that is effective for introducing familiarity with the bow and also conducive to wrist action and kinesthetic bow coordination. His drill would have the pupil hold the bow properly at the frog. Place the hair toward the body with the frog and hand at the nose level. Line the bow at a perpendicular angle with the tip towards the ceiling,

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then follow as closely to the body as possible an imaginary plumb line straight down to the point where the right arm straightens and up to the point where the wrist reaches eye level.

Bernard Fischer has other calisthenic drills that seem useful. One drill specifies the student hold the bow with a straight arm to the front and rotate the arm in pronation and supination position and check the thumb knuckle and finger positions for correct placement. Another drill would leave the palm facing upwards while holding the bow with the arm straight in front, then bend the elbow until the fingers holding the bow meet the nose. This second drill acquaints the student with the feeling of holding the bow and bending the elbow simultaneously. After the students feel familiar with handling the bow, the muscular coordination of drawing the bow across the strings of the violin should be mastered.

A method for learning this may be devised by covering the strings at the bowing area with a slip of paper held in place with two rubber bands that wrap about the waist of the instrument. Then the bow is drawn between the two rubber bands that act as visual and sensory guides to the moving bow. Complete attention can be directed

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to correct bowing by using this method. Another advantage is that the instrument need not be tuned for these drills. Keller recommends drawing the bow on the sleeve.\(^5^5\)

Another variation in procedure is apparent during the process of first drawing the bow. Some teachers prefer to use quarter notes and use only the middle to the tip of the bow. Others prefer to use the entire bow and play whole notes. Some, (for example George Bornoff and Gerald Doty) use the whole bow for quarter notes. Herfurth has made provision for this difference in his method book by having two beginning sections, one being optional.

Gilbert Waller notes the existence of a square formation with the bow resting at the middle point of the hair and on the strings. Three sides of the square are formed by the forearm, upper arm and body and violin with the bow forming the fourth side. Drawing the bow to the tip and back to the middle gives the student a consciousness of bow division and has the advantage of introducing the one problem of upper half bow movement.\(^5^6\) Then utilizing bowings from the middle to frog may be used and finally the whole bow may be used with string crossing by arm movements. Rote rhythm drills may be invented and written. Drills of this type may be composed by the youngsters who now begin to learn placement of open string notes on the staff and begin open string note reading.


It is important for the student to realize the visual limits of the staff along with the practical playing of the four strings so as to establish clearly the concept of high and low. The concept of high and low is, after all, an artificial concept to facilitate the writing of music. Evidence of this is found by Alan Lomax in his study of the Bantu tribe of British East Africa. The writer has discovered that children with very little formal musical background conceive of treble notes as being small instead of high and bass notes great instead of low. One way of possibly making the high and low concept more meaningful is to build home made instruments using strings and experimenting with tension, thickness, and length and relating these to the adjectives high and low.

Slight differences of position on the staff while playing on one string are difficult for the children to discern at first, whereas the open string leaps and placement are more easily recognizable. Leopold Auer has thought this phase of beginning the student so important that he has devoted an entire book to drills on reading and playing open strings. The Unione Violinisti Italiani La Tecnica Del Violino also suggests early slurs and open string double stops.

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This method also inserts many rests between notes. This seems a good procedure so that mind and muscle can consolidate themselves.

Placing the left hand fingers on the string is next to be accomplished after good bow movement is assured. Frequently, a banjo position is used in holding the violin for the first attempts to press the string. At this point previous ear-training experiences are very apparent. So often students have had very little contact with rudimentary ear-training and most method books do not stress an efficient procedure other than the matching of tones by the singing aspect. Little children often have difficulty controlling pitch with their voices so this method has disadvantages. George Bornoff has espoused the finger pattern idea. This method has the advantage of quickly enabling a student to play easy rote tunes but it has the disadvantage of confusing the conception of key signatures. Since Mr. Barbakoff's book at no time uses musical notation this disadvantage is side-stepped temporarily. Barbakoff's Fiddling by the Numbers book and procedure is recommended for fourth graders and those students whom the teacher judges to need extended coordination preparation with number reading. Another method that uses one finger pattern also has the added disadvantage of introducing at a late date the G and E strings.

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61 George Bornoff, Finger Patterns for Violin, (Toronto: Gordon Thompson Ltd., 1949).

Used as an aptitude test but also an excellent experience for ear training of unisonal pitch and finger placement is the following procedure devised by Benjamin Stuber and described by Jones, Dasch and Krone.

The teacher sits at the piano with his violin in position. The student stands at the teacher's left, holding the scroll of the violin with his (the student's) left hand. The teacher draws the bow over the A string, and shows the student how to slide the top of his (the student's) finger up and down the string to raise and lower the pitch. The teacher plays B on the piano with his left hand, and draws the bow on the A string with his right. The student slides his finger along the string until he thinks he has matched the piano tone. The same thing is done with C and D. If the student has much difficulty, try him on another string.

Another type of ear training for octaves still further developing physical ability and note reading skill is exemplified in Appendix C, page 49. The theory behind this approach is to present a means of checking pitch and finger placement while simultaneously learning the theoretical structure of music. Too little practical application of the scientific aspect of music is made for the beginner under the assumption that it is too difficult or obstruct for the beginner. If the usefulness of the knowledge can be introduced at the proper point in ear-training, it would seem that it would be welcome knowledge for the beginner.

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Samuel Barbakoff recommends using scotch tape frets. Some teachers have become interested in gut frets but their use is by no means novel. Reference to their use on early cellos is made by Van Der Straeten. Dr. Knute Finney has devised special fingerboards with raised indicators but this has the disadvantage of extra expense since the fingerboards must be substituted. These mechanical means sidestep the real problem of training the ear and mind. This is actually not so difficult if persistence and patience are used.

After the physical reactions become more smoothly coordinated more emphasis should again be placed upon music reading. A suggestion by Carabo-Cone and Royt relates the staff to the body and stresses the lines only at first since "the lines serve as anchor points for the eyes and can be most speedily recognized."

— Figure 2. —


They suggest various games establishing the relationship and building up of physical reactions to the positions to the lines of the staff. Other recognition drills are One-red-line Flash Cards and a Bean-bag Game.\(^1\)

Opposed to this emphasis on lines and later spaces is an approach utilizing the musical alphabet and piano keyboard by E. McIntosh.\(^2\) A keyboard puzzle and game mentioned by Carabo-Cone and Royt would fit nicely into the approach.\(^3\) Transferring these experiences to violin can be done by utilizing a musical Pegboard Tablet\(^4\) or similarly using cards one and a half inches wide with placement of notes drawn on them. Traditional note naming on paper and workbooks can also be used.

Whether the student should learn the names of all the notes or just one note and one finger at a time seems dependent on the method one utilizes in introducing the finger action. If rote songs using all the fingers are mastered first, then there does not seem to be any reason to delay learning the names of all the notes in the confines of the staff.

\(^{71}\)Ibid., p. 28.


Playing rote tunes using all fingers would be an approach following the axiom of concentrating on one problem at a time. After these movements the problem becomes one of coordinating reading ability with finger placement. The approach of stressing thorough development of coordination of each finger is suggested. For example, some method books seem to aim toward a gradual mastery of all of the fingers on each string. On the other hand, changing strings is less of a mental-physical strain than that of adding another finger since moving a large joint and a few large muscles a very little calls for less coordination than moving many small complex joints in many ways. True, there is a possibility of encouraging poor left hand habits by postponing use of the third and fourth finger. On the other hand, the greater ease and less concentration required in using one finger or two exclusively for a short time permits the child to concentrate on maintaining a good hand position whereas introducing the other fingers causes so much confusion that they are put down with such difficulty that the child disregards the position consideration. It is just as possible to put the third and fourth fingers down with poor left hand position. Consequently, the cross string action of each finger should be established well before introducing the additional fingers.

After exploring the keyboard and introducing the note-name similarities of octaves, the sound of octaves and checking of first and third finger pitch placement should be mastered on the instrument. An exercise similar to the one titled Steam Engine in Appendix C, page 67 might serve.
Materials for developing technic from this point, folk tunes, and bowing in various parts of the bow seems copious enough. Some listings of materials used and found effective by the writer are included in Appendix C. An excellent checklist for evaluating position achievement may be found in Wolfgang Kuhn's, *Principles of String Class Teaching*. Paul Rolland has included many comments on bowing, shifting and vibrato in his book.

A phase not sufficiently explored is that of improvisation. Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman have discovered the value of the pentatonic intervals for this purpose as Dr. Wassum has pointed out.

II. INTERMEDIATE PROCEDURES

Starting the second year students with a general but interesting review seems another problem in procedure. Scale studies are the quickest way of doing this, although reviewing first year materials from sources not previously used seems more interesting. These suggested scales and fingerings are included in the Appendix C, pages 70, 71. Also included are capsule technic drills called Vitamins and Minerals. Except for the last line devised by the writer, the Vitamin drills are taken from a series recommended by Eugene Andrie of Montana


State University and the Minerals drills are taken from Max Fischel's double stop studies. 78

One of the most satisfactory method books for the intermediate stage in the opinion of the writer is Bow and Strings. 79 The second book effectively covers the subject of key changes and the third book introduces third position and attempts to convey the joys of good music literature.

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79 Helen Herman, Bow and Strings, (New York: Belwin Inc., Rockville Centre, L. I.).
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Procedure and manner of presentation are important. A variety of approaches to the same end is a necessary procedure with a group containing varied levels of abilities and comprehension. Using various approaches also helps maintain interest. It is better to learn a little well rather than much in a haphazard manner.

The success factors of string instrument teaching may be summarized in three general points: (1) The teacher must work diligently for purposeful organization of materials, challenging lesson plans, and pertinent and effective procedures. (2) The teacher and pupils must have a clear mutual understanding of the goals to be reached. (3) Finally, all resources including those of a technical or scientific nature should be pooled for the accomplishment of these goals.

Recommendations are made in this work for specific materials and approaches. The writer hopes that this collection of information gained empirically and through reference from many sources can be of help to some string teacher. The writer acknowledges that the procedures and problems involved have scarcely been covered but a beginning must be made and it is hoped that his paper has accomplished this.

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**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**A. BOOKS**

**Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of the English Language**  


New York: Distributed by arrangement with D. Appleton-Century, Company by P. F. Collier and Son Corporation, Copyright 1936.


**Cook, Clifford. String Teaching and Some Related Topics,** Urbana, Ill.: American String Teachers Association, 1957.


B. PERIODICALS

C. PUBLICATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT, LEARNED SOCIETIES, AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Dyer, Dwight E. *Success With School Orchestras*, Urbana, Ill.: American String Teachers Association Commission on Publication, Kenneth Byler, Chairman, Paul Rolland, Editor, School of Music, University of Illinois, 1958.


D. METHOD BOOKS

MUSIC


E. AUDIO-VISUAL REFERENCES

Roth, Heinrich. "Violin Making in Europe and Violin Adjusting in the U. S. A.," Film, Cleveland, Ohio: Educational Department, Scherl and Roth, Inc.


Wassum, Dr. Sylvesta M. *Introduction to recording Music for Children (Schulwerk)* by Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman, English version by Margaret Murray, Libretto with detailed Commentary by Walter Jellinek, Angel Records, New York City, Album 3582-B, (35650-651) (Printed version published by Associated Music Publishers)
APPENDIX A

AN APTITUDE TEST

Used by
Lansing Public Schools
Lansing, Michigan
Elementary Music Department
Lansing, Michigan
Group Violin Test

Student's Name______________

I. Rhythm

Directions: Instructor will tap two rhythms. If the second rhythm is the same as the first, circle S. If the second rhythm is different from the first, circle D.

Sample: S D

1. S D  6. S D
2. S D  7. S D
3. S D  8. S D
5. S D  10. S D

II. Pitch

Directions: Instructor will play two phrases. If the second phrase is the same as the first circle S. If the second phrase is different from the first, circle D.

Sample: S D

1. S D  6. S D
2. S D  7. S D
3. S D  8. S D
5. S D  10. S D

III. Tonal Memory

Directions: Instructor will play two phrases. If the second phrase is the same as the first, circle S. If the second phrase is different from the first, circle D.

Sample: S D

1. S D
2. S D
3. S D
4. S D
5. S D

Perfect Score 25

Errors
Score
Percent
DOES ENROLLMENT IN STRING CLASS CONTRIBUTE TO MUSICAL APTITUDE?

I. By testing 45 students before enrolling in string class and retesting the same students at the end of a school year enrollment, it was found that 15 had an improvement of 10 points or more, 8 had an improvement of 5 points or more, 4 had an improvement of less than 5 points, 7 remained constant, 3 decreased less than 5, 2 decreased more than 5, and 6 decreased 10 or more. There is an improvement in total general scores.

(One student was absent for the first test and three were absent for the second)

II. Is this improvement due to the study of instrumental music, or is it due to general maturity, and classroom music?

Thirty-eight non-string class students were selected and tested at the end of two consecutive years. There were no significant improvements in test scores from one year to the next by those not enrolled in class.
APPENDIX B

AN ATTITUDE TEST

AND

ITS

RESULTS
AN ATTITUDE TEST

1. Why do you wish to take instrumental music?

2. When you are able to play would you like to:
   (Check the ones you would like to do.)
   ___a. play solos for your class and friends.
   ___b. play in a grade school orchestra.
   ___c. play in a junior high school orchestra.
   ___d. play in a senior high school orchestra.
   ___e. play in a real symphony orchestra.
   ___f. play only for your own amusement—not with others.
   ___g. learn enough about music to write your own music.
   ___h. change to another instrument.
### TABLE II

**ATTITUDE TEST RESULTS**

1959-1960

Advanced students total response, 102

Returns in the following frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Response</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>play in a grade school orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>play in a junior high school orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>learn enough about music to write your own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>change to another instrument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>play solos for your class and friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>play in a senior high school orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>play only for your own amusement--not with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>play in a real symphony orchestra</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Beginning students total response, 242

Returns in the following frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>156</td>
<td>play in a grade school orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>134</td>
<td>play in a junior high school orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>131</td>
<td>play solos for class and friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126</td>
<td>learn enough about music to write your own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>change to another instrument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>play in a senior high school orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>play only for your own amusement--not with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>play in a real symphony orchestra</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Accompaniment for open G string

Gaily the troubadour
When he was hastening home from the war,
Singing: 'From Palestine hither I come,
Lady love, lady love, welcome me home!"

Accompaniment for open E string

Cuckoo

Cuckoo, cuckoo welcome thy song!
Winter is going, soft breezes blowing,
Spring time, spring time,
Soon will be here.
Accompaniment for open D string

LIGHTLY ROW

Accompaniment for open A string

TWINKLE, TWINKLE LITTLE STAR
For other songs with rote open strings
see *Easy Steps to the Orchestra*, Book I
and also C. P. Herfurth's *Tune A Day*.
BASIC BOW PATTERNS (Carake-Cone, Royt op. cit.)

- G to D - G to A, G to E
- D to G - D to A, D to E
- A to G - A to D, A to E
- E to G - E to D, E to A

Students should write out their own rhythm patterns and later the proper string notation.
The following pages through exercises 1-22 are adapted from Unione Violinisti Italiani La Tecnica Del Violino, Parte Prima, Fascicolo Primo, Edizione Ricordi, Milano, #141, pages 1-7
1) MIDDLE TO POINT WITHOUT LIFTING DURING REST

2) REPEAT NUMBER 1 USING BOW FROM NUT TO MIDDLE

3) REPEAT NUMBER 1 WITH FULL BOW

4) REPEAT NUT TO MIDDLE

5) REPEAT FULL BOW

6) DO NOT LIFT BOW FROM STRING DURING PAUSE
THE SLUR
PLAYING INDIAN

N. Guicelli
Other satisfactory open string tunes are:

From *Bow and Strings* by Helen Herman

Freight Elevator and Passenger Elevator p. 2
Open Strings on Parade, p. 6

From *Easy Steps to the Orchestra* by Keller-Taylor

March Along p. 9
Toy Soldier's March, p. 9

Chicago, Ill. 1940

A Song for Dad p. 12

*Tune A Day*, C. P. Herfeurth pp. x, xi, xii, xiii, xiv

The Little Bugler and
Morning Greeting by Leo Oehmler, Op. 117, No. 1

*The Violinists First Solo Album*, Selected by
George Perlman, Carl Fischer Pub., 1905

Over the Bridge by Corwin H. Taylor Belwin, Inc., 1957

Open String Concerto by Ving Merlin by B. F. Wood Music
Co., Inc. 24, Brookline Ave., Boston 15, Mass., 1953
ONE STRING SONGS

HOT CROSS BUNS
2 1 0 2 1 0
Hot Cross buns, Hot Cross buns
0 0 0 0 1 1 1 1
One a pen-ny, two a pen-ny,
2 1 0
Hot Cross buns.

I CAN PLAY MY VIOLIN
0 1 2 0 1 2 0
I can play my vi-o-lin
0 1 2 3 2 1 0
Just as well as ____ ____ can.

WINDS OF EVENING
2 1 0 0 1 0 1 2 0
Winds of evening, whis-per-ing soft-ly
2 1 0 0 1 0 1 0
Steal like shad-dows ov-er the earth.

HEY, BETTY MARTIN
3 4 3 1 0 1 0
Hey, Bet-ty Martin, tip, toe,
1 0
tip, toe
3 4 3 1 0 1 2
Hey, Bet-ty Martin, tip, toe
3 fine.

MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB
2 1 0 1 2 2 2 1 1 1 2 4 4
Ma-ry had a lit-tle lamb, lit-tle lamb, lit-tle lamb
2 1 0 1 2 2 2 1 1 1 2 1 0
Ma-ry had a lit-tle lamb, its fleece as white as snow.

GO TELL AUNT RHODA
2 2 1 0 0 1 1 3 2 0
Go tell Aunt Rho-dy, Go tell Aunt Rho-dy
Go tell Aunt Rhody, the old gray goose is dead.

OATS AND BEANS
2221000, 33321111
2341234, 322110

LIGHTLY ROW
4 2 2 3 1 1
Light-ly row, light-ly row,
0 1 2 3 4 4 4
O'er the shining waves we go.
4 2 3 1 1
Smooth-ly glide, smooth-ly glide
0 2 4 4 2
On the si- lent tide.
1 1 1 1 1 2 3
Let the wind and wa-ters be
2 2 2 2 3 4
Still and calm and clear to see
4 2 2 3 1 1

JINGLE BELLS
222 222 24012
233 3322 2211214
222 222 24012
333 33222244310
ONE STRING SONGS FOR CELLO

HOT CROSS BUNS

Hot Cross buns, Hot Cross buns
One a pen-ny, two a pen-ny,

WINDS OF EVENING

Winds of evening, whispering softly
Steal like shadows over the earth.

MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB

Mary had a little lamb, little lamb
Mary had a little lamb, its fleece as white as snow.

GO TELL AUNT RHODA

Go tell Aunt Rhody, the old grey goose is dead.

LIGHTLY ROW

Lightly row, lightly row,
Over the shining waves we go
Smoothly glide, smoothly glide
On the silent tide.

HEY, BETTY MARTIN

Hey, Betty Martin, tip, toe,
Hey, Betty Martin, tip, toe, fine.

numbers in box are in second position
LANSING PUBLIC SCHOOLS
INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC REPORT CARD

Student's Name ___________________________ School ___________________________

Home Room and Grade _____________________ Date _____________________________

Dear Parent:

The purpose of this report is to inform you of your child's progress in instrumental music. Your child's musicianship is judged by the following points. An "S" indicates satisfactory progress. An "E" indicates excellent growth. An "NI" indicates needed improvement.

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st Report</th>
<th>2nd Report</th>
<th>3rd Report</th>
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<td>Tone Quality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demerits</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Daily practice is necessary for continuous progress. It is expected that each child spend a half hour each day in private practice. One point credit is given for each half hour spent practicing. One point is subtracted if the student forgets his instrument or music on class days.

Parent's Signature at time of 1st Report ______________________________________

(Miss) N. Critelli
Instrumental Music Teacher

Parent's Signature at time of 2nd Report ______________________________________

Parent's Signature at time of 3rd Report ______________________________________
THE STEAM ENGINE

NOW THE DAY IS OVER

THE BOAT SONG
NOW THE DAY IS OVER

Arr. C.P. Harborth
Piano by N. Costelli

[Music notation image]
THE BOAT SONG

Accompaniment arr. by H. Coitelli
Other satisfactory pieces using 1 finger only are:

From *Easy Steps to Orchestra*

- Ding, Dong Bell, p. 11

From *Bow and Strings*

- Raking Leaves, p. 5
- My Dog Jumps High, p. 10
- Little and Big Steps, p. 13
- Swinging on the Porch, p. 15
- The two F's, p. 12

*Cornstalk Tunes* by Stanley Fletcher, G. Schirmer, N. Y. 1956

*Melody* by Arthur Le Jeune from the Violinist's First Solo Album selected by George Perlman, Carl Fischer Pub. 1958.

In Old Ceylon and Falling Leaves from *Tone Poems for Strings* by Anthony P. Bacich, Willis Music Co., Cincinnati, Ohio, 1952.

(Also in this collection is a piece with a flat first finger—Summer Frolic, p. ?)

*Southwestern Suite* by Clifton Williams

Southwestern Music Publishers, University Station P. O. Box 7760, Austin, Texas

Cowboy Song
Other satisfying music written for 0, 1 and 2 fingers


**Easy Steps to the Orchestra:** Waltz, p. 13, Gypsy Tune, 15, Sunlight 15, Moonlight, p. 15, Swinging in a Tall Tree, Vacation Time Waltz, p. 15.

**Merle Isaac Method:** Folk Song, page 13, Laughing Water, Trumpet, March Along-Sing a Song, Merrily We Roll Along

**A Tune A Day:** Au Clair de la lune, Harvest time, Melody

**Tone Poems for Strings:** At the Brook, p. 3, Two Songs Without Words, p. 4, Pirate Ships p. 5, Valsette, p. 5, Log Cabin Blues, p. 6, Gondolas Gliding 6.

**Southwestern Suite:** Spanish Dance and Indian Dance

Other Easy materials using three fingers:


**First String Ensemble Album** compiled and edited by Harold M. Johnson, Carl Fischer 1958.

**25-16th and 17th Century Dance Tunes and Airs** by Wolfgang Kuhn, Belwin, 1959

**For Four Violins** by Wolfgang Kuhn, Belwin, 1957

**First Trio Album for Three violins** by Harvey S. Whistler and Herman A. Hummel, Rubank Educational Library No. 164, 1954.

**Small Fry Melodies** by Maurice Stine, Carl Fischer, Pub., 1951.
Bowings Patterns

Seven Suites and Partitas. One octave—Viola.
Seven Scales and Arpeggios - One Octave - Cello

Bowing Patterns

1. \( \text{\textit{pizzicato}} \)
2. \( \text{\textit{pizzicato}} \)
3. \( \text{\textit{pizzicato}} \)
4. \( \text{\textit{pizzicato}} \)
5. \( \text{\textit{pizzicato}} \)
6. \( \text{\textit{pizzicato}} \)
7. \( \text{\textit{pizzicato}} \)
8. \( \text{\textit{pizzicato}} \)
9. \( \text{\textit{pizzicato}} \)
10. \( \text{\textit{pizzicato}} \)
Vitamins