

Strings Method Class Refresher

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A. Teaching a string class

1. Instrument sizes and how to size the students at any age
2. Method books and supplementary/technique books at all levels
3. Playing set-up and building from the ground up on chairs, stools, or standing
 - a. Violin/viola – two hand lifts
 - b. Cello/bass – endpins and contact points
4. Instrument differences
 - a. String length
 - b. Bow differences – length and width
 - c. Unison playing
5. Modeling: voice, winds, students, teacher, media
6. Selecting repertoire
 - a. Grade level
 - b. Quality/curriculum
 - c. Diversity
7. Tuning
 - a. Singing
 - b. Audiating
 - c. Peg manipulation
 - d. Large groups
 - e. Harmonics for basses
8. Repairs and accessories
 - a. strings/type and how to change
 - b. bows/type and re-hairing
 - c. rosin
 - d. end pin holders

B. Left hand set-up

1. Violin/viola-guitar position, shoulder position, fingers/wrists
2. Cello/bass
3. Extensions
4. Shifting, positions, and thumb position

C. Right hand

1. Bow hands – finger function
 - a. The finger down under - the thumb
 - b. Sticking together - the thumb/second finger
 - c. Going along for the ride - the third finger
 - d. Lean on me - the first finger
 - e. Point/counterpoint - the fourth finger
 - f. Bass bows – German and French
2. Picking up the bow – the forgotten step
 - a. Two hands, one bow
 - b. One hand, point up
 - c. Picking up the bow – stands and laps
 - d. Balancing the hand – hold with 2nd and 3rd finger, roll with thumb/2nd finger, vertical bow crawl, horizontal bow crawl, balance point see-saw
3. Bow angles and bow placement
 - a. Placement - frog, middle, tip
 - b. Row your bow – middle then row, row, row your bow
 - c. Arm and elbows - bring air bow in for a landing from above and scratch string with 1st finger then repeat with bow.
 - d. Moving the bow In air –vertically, horizontally, on shoulder
4. Levels and parts of the bow
 - a. Upper vs. lower
 - b. Changing higher - lead with the hand, changing lower - lead with the arm
 - c. Upper, lower, middle, whole
5. Bow placement and weight
 - a. Placement – sounding points
 - b. Weight – dynamics
6. Bow speed
 - a. Parts of the bow
 - b. Bow speeds
7. Resonance
 - a. Pluck and listen
 - b. Bow and listen as if matching pizz.
8. Separated bow strokes
 - a. Detaché, staccato, martelé, marcato, spiccato, tremolo, collé, sautillé
9. Bowings
 - a. Down or up
 - b. Slurs

Resources

Benham et al, [ASTA Curriculum](#)
Gillespie and Hamman, [Strategies for Teaching Strings](#)
Gillespie and Phillips, [String Clinics to Go DVD series](#)
Phillips, Boonshaft and Sheldon, [Sound Innovations for String Orchestra Series including DVDs](#)
Phillips and Moss, [SI: Sound Development for Intermediate String Orchestra](#) (Advanced will be in print spring of 2013)
Phillips, Dabczynski, Sabien, Nieto, [Philharmonic](#) book series: Fiddlers, Jazz and Mariachi