

OUTLINE & NOTES

- String Teaching Technique
 - **(Allen 2003)** – teaching model
 - “process-driven format”
 - model/diagram
 - “proper playing position is among the most important goals of a first year string class”
 - **(Allen 2001)** – preparing your orchestra for festival
 - Teaching considerations from MENC
 - Tone, intonation, technique, balance, interpretation, musical affect, and other factors
 - **(Kjelland 2001)** – But what about the sound?
 - Don’t program harder music to teach technique. Teach technique separate from music.
 - Give advanced students who aren’t challenged by music level latitude & input for alternative fingerings, bowing & interpretation.
 - **(Gillespie 2008)** – checkpoints for self-evaluation
 - Most effective teaching sequence:
 - Teacher presents task
 - Students attempt the task
 - Teacher gives specific positive feedback pertaining to the task
 - **(Dillon 2003)** – playing in tune (big ideas)
 - Poor pitch should never be allowed to start
 - Beginner groups can play in tune
 - Unison playing is crucial to maintaining good pitch
 - Singing pitches & intervals helps students to hear & play in tune
 - Expect students to hear correct pitch as a group
 - “Groups will play as in tune as they are made to play”
 - Additional thoughts & hints for playing for adjudication included
 - “Most discriminating adjudicators will probably not award superior ratings to groups with more than a few intonation flaws.”
- Know the Instruments
 - **(Bugaj 2014)** – preparing to purchase
 - Rihani’s math – consideration of components before the actual violin
 - “without the violin itself, or the bow, or the craftsmanship that goes into making the violin we are already at \$145. So... should a new violin cost \$99?”
 - have a trusted local source for instruments & a relationship of trust
 - same model can be finished with different qualities of components depending on the dealer
 - provide as much detail in the bid as possible.
 - Stephen Schock: “a beginner or a child needs a better instrument because you want them to be encouraged, and a bad instrument gives you no encouragement. You are told to achieve certain things but the instrument won’t let you do it.”

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- **(Brownell 2011)** – new bassist
 - Three variations of construction: carved, laminated, and hybrid
 - Sensitive to humidity
- **(Straub 2008)** – mysteries of the string bass
 - “The bass line is the foundation for any musical ensemble” yet is often neglected
 - Check list for bass setup (p. 54-56)
 - Posture, holding the bass
 - Right-hand and bow-arm positions
 - Left-hand positions and techniques
 - Tuning the bass
 - Standard size considered $\frac{3}{4}$
 - Provides information on purchasing basses
 - Purchase specifications – p. 61
- Repertoire
 - **(Hamann & Gillespie 2004)** - Method books and music
 - Music selection
 - Recommend *Teaching Music Through Performance in Orchestra*
 - Beware **over-programming**
 - Technical guidelines for choosing music
 - Shifting, range
 - Articulations
 - Dynamic range
 - Rhythms
 - Line independence
 - Length of work
 - Required sensitivity & maturity
 - Method book considerations
 - Appearance
 - Cost
 - Content
 - Structure
 - Approach
 - Assessments
 - Supplements
 - Availability
 - Durability
 - ELL/ESOL accessibility
 - Suggested list of literature by classification (p. 247)
 - **(Gillespie 2003)** – Repertoire-based warm ups
 - Step 1: Analyze the playing skills required to perform the piece
 - Checklist/template
 - Broken into left hand skills, rhythms, musical/expressive, and “special effects & considerations”
 - **(Allen 2001)** – Preparing your Orchestra for Festival
 - Praises the value in music festival participation
 - Choose repertoire carefully
 - **Importance of intonation**
 - “adjudicators do not forgive playing out of tune”
 - concept of vertical alignment
 - perform before the performance
 - ask for help

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- **(Kjelland 2001)** – But what about the sound?
 - **Over-programming**
 - Programming music beyond the technical capabilities of the players
 - Also programming *too much* music
 - Emperor's New Clothes analogy
 - “No suit of clothes is better than it looks, no performance is better than it sounds, no wine is better than it tastes.”
 - “Striving for musical excellence at a level appropriate to an individual's and ensemble's means is the more effective path toward music appreciation.” (p. 9)
 - Program at or one level below group abilities.
 - Using music to teach technique & programming up is an *ultimately self-defeating practice*. It is the opposite of what is need for smooth development in both technique and musicianship.
 - Grade levels are frequently underestimated
 - Publisher ratings “only a rough approximation at best,” with a “wide range of variability”
 - The bottom line should be *quality of sound & resulting musical and educational integrity*
- **(Gillespie 2001)** – selecting music for your orchestra
 - Start with the big picture
 - How many concerts? Any themes?
 - What's your audience like?
 - Are you going to festival?
 - Determine playing skills of students
 - Especially check out *bowing skills*!
 - Evaluate the piece of music
 - Take note of finger patterns and other techniques
 - Match music to the purpose of the performance
- Expectations
 - **(Gillsepie 2015)** – ASTA National Standards: 2015 Here We Come!
 - Three big idea categories: 1) musician 2) educator 3) professional
 - Same as 1997
 - Updates from 2015
 - 1) musician
 - high level/advanced abilities specified
 - 2) educator
 - keep up with current trends
 - use technology in teaching
 - follow/utilize ASTA curriculum
 - follow/utilize NAFME national core standards
 - 3) professional – reorganized
 - musician
 - professional affiliations & related activities
 - advocacy, school & community relations

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- personal attributes
 - ongoing professional development
 - advocacy for strings education/school orchestra
 - maintain work-life balance
 - **(Gillespie 2008)** – checkpoints for self-evaluation
 - The Checklist
 - Relating to students effectively
 - Keeping the big, technical vision (technique pacing)
 - Years 1 & 2: Basics & foundation
 - Years 3 & 4: Refine foundation & extend skills
 - Years 5 & 6: Refine advance skills & encourage more musically expressive playing
 - Modeling
 - Rote to Note – utilize rote teaching!!!
 - Proximity
 - Touch (pedagogical, with student's permission)
 - Dissect & stack playing skills
 - Break complex skills into prerequisite skills, then stack back up
 - Use multiple teaching strategies
 - Review
 - Leadership
 - Humor
 - Routine
 - Pacing
 - Classroom Management
 - Repertoire selection
 - Careful development of playing skills
 - Student peer teaching
 - Recognizing the positive
 - Accommodating students' natural learning styles
 - Tools for evaluating your teaching
 - Audiotape
 - Videotape
 - Teaching timeline
 - Reflect & Make a plan for improvement
- Conclusion
 - *The conclusion restates the problem the paper addresses and can offer areas for further research. See the OWL resource on conclusions:*
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/724/04/>
 - Even for native string teachers, the plethora of available information on each of these topics and more can be overwhelming.
 - New-to-strings teachers should be aware of these things, but it would be unrealistic to expect every suggestion to be implemented immediately.
 - Bare bone take-away
 - How to relate complex pedagogy to new teachers for effective practice
 - Abstract
 - When teaching strings, there are many aspects to be considered. Music Educators' National Conference (MENC) suggests tone, intonation, technique, balance, interpretation, musical affect, and still other elements are all to be considered in any music teaching situation (Allen 2001). Successfully achieving these elements in the string realm involves calling

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on some different or additional knowledge for the new-to-strings teacher than that with which they may already be familiar. **This paper is meant to serve as a starting point for such teachers.**