

Development of competence and performance evaluation in the string class

Tell me and I'll forget;
show me and I'll remember;
let me do it, and I'll keep it forever.
Confucius

Developing competence in the string class

At the beginning of third grade, students can choose whether they want to participate in regular music lessons or the string class. They can choose which string instrument they want to learn themselves.

The aim of the string class is to give students the opportunity to learn a string instrument and make music in a group.

The group course, which follows the concept of Paul Rolland, is a particularly joyful and pleasurable form of teaching because students play music in a group in the very first lesson. By participating in the group musical activities, the child becomes actively involved in the community. This fosters the development of social behaviors as well as skills for tolerance and integration. While making music, the child's personality unfolds.

Individual and collective musical activities promote self-confidence, create situations of integration and subordination and thus contribute to individual personal development. Through the development and expression of sensation, perception, and expression in the playing of music, creative abilities are awakened in the child and further developed.

A learning-by-doing approach can be seen in the fact that playing music involves practicing on one's own. Learning an instrument increases independence and thus helps to strengthen self-esteem as desired by the curriculum (cf. Music Curriculum for 2010, p. 6) (Striving for a "high degree

of independence” (Curriculum for 1999, p. 169)).

Objectives and contents

Learning areas

- Learning songs
- By making music with instruments, the development of the child’s creativity is promoted.
- The children engage with music by listening to pieces from different eras and cultures. They thereby strengthen and deepen their ability to listen to music and experience it. They expand their knowledge of instruments, genres and composers.
- Become familiar with important structural principles: repetition, variation, contrast, building intensity
- Detect, enact and describe musical sound characteristics and use differentiated terms (volume: piano – forte; styles of play: legato – staccato; tempos: very slow – slow – moderate – fast, major – minor
- Reading and writing signs: The children make music using musical signs and thus extend their knowledge of music theory and music-making; expanding and using traditional notation:
 - o Gain fundamental insights into principles of traditional notation
 - o Rhythm: different time signatures, note values, key signatures and rests (3/4 time, 4/4 time, 2/4 time; whole note, dotted half note, dotted quarter followed by eighth note; eighth rest, whole rest; upbeat/pickup, full measure)
 - o Melody: five-line system, major scale (identify and play the respective key, the sharp/flat sign, the upper and lower fundamental note, the note names; scale in C major, and other commonly used scales)
 - o Getting to know and implementing expressive qualities and compositional elements: knowing the term, placing the sign, developing sound ideas; dynamics: piano (p), forte (f); crescendo (<9), decrescendo (>); fermata; phrasing: legato, staccato

Songs and pieces of music

- International children's and folk songs, especially American and German
- Pieces of music by well-known classical music composers, such as Bach, Mozart, Beethoven

Performance assessment

The following subject-specific criteria are considered in a performance assessment.

Learning area: Making and experiencing music

- Rhythmic and melodic confidence while playing (in a group and alone)
- Proper playing technique
- Expression given to the performance
- Progress in learning the instrument chosen
- Regular practice at home
- Proper handling of the instruments
- Adherence to agreed signs
- Confident, creative use of rhythm and melody elements
- The level of application of knowledge from general music theory
- Appropriate behavior during musical performances

Study area: Listening to and understanding music

- Task-based listening
- Recognition of musical progressions and pieces of music
- The degree of application of technical terms
- The ability to reflect and judge

- Tolerance of music from different eras and cultures as well as different forms, genres and styles

Study area: Visualizing music

- Connection of music with graphic sequences
- Creative application of movement elements
- Use of various forms of notation in the context of practical musical activity
- Consistency of movement and music

In addition to the subject-specific criteria, product, process and presentation-related criteria are to be given adequate consideration during the performance assessment, such as:

- Attention and concentration
- Effort and commitment
- Independence
- Persistence in problem solving
- Ability to cooperate
- Dealing with success and failure
- Creativity
- Personal responsibility
- Tolerance towards the ideas and achievements of others