Sam Lawson Middle School
Cupertino Union School District

Beginning Strings
Mr. Asa Stern

Build Skills Before Instruments

Bow Hold Progression

01	Wrist Rotations	Day 1
02	Bunny on Finger	Day 1/2
03	Writing Tool	Day 2/3
04	Straw	Day 3
05	Wooden Dowel	Day 4/5
06	Bow Frog	Day 6

Meet Music Theory

1 - Steady Beat
2 - Quarter vs Eighth Notes
3 - Clefs and Note Names
    a. Musical Alphabet
    b. Clef worksheets with same names
    c. Lines and Spaces only

Recruiting Instrument Selection

Different formats

- Recordings (Male and Female players)
- Pictures (Size difference)
- Live Demonstration (same song!)
- Physical Interactions:
    - Students Hold a Cello - Put on Backpack
    - Bass - feel the vibrations along back

Instrument Anatomy

- Instrument & Bow Parts and Vocabulary
- Check for Understanding
  - Kahoot
  - Gimkit
- Instrument Care

Instruments! Yay!



Student Choice

Instrument selection
1st and 2nd choices

Balance

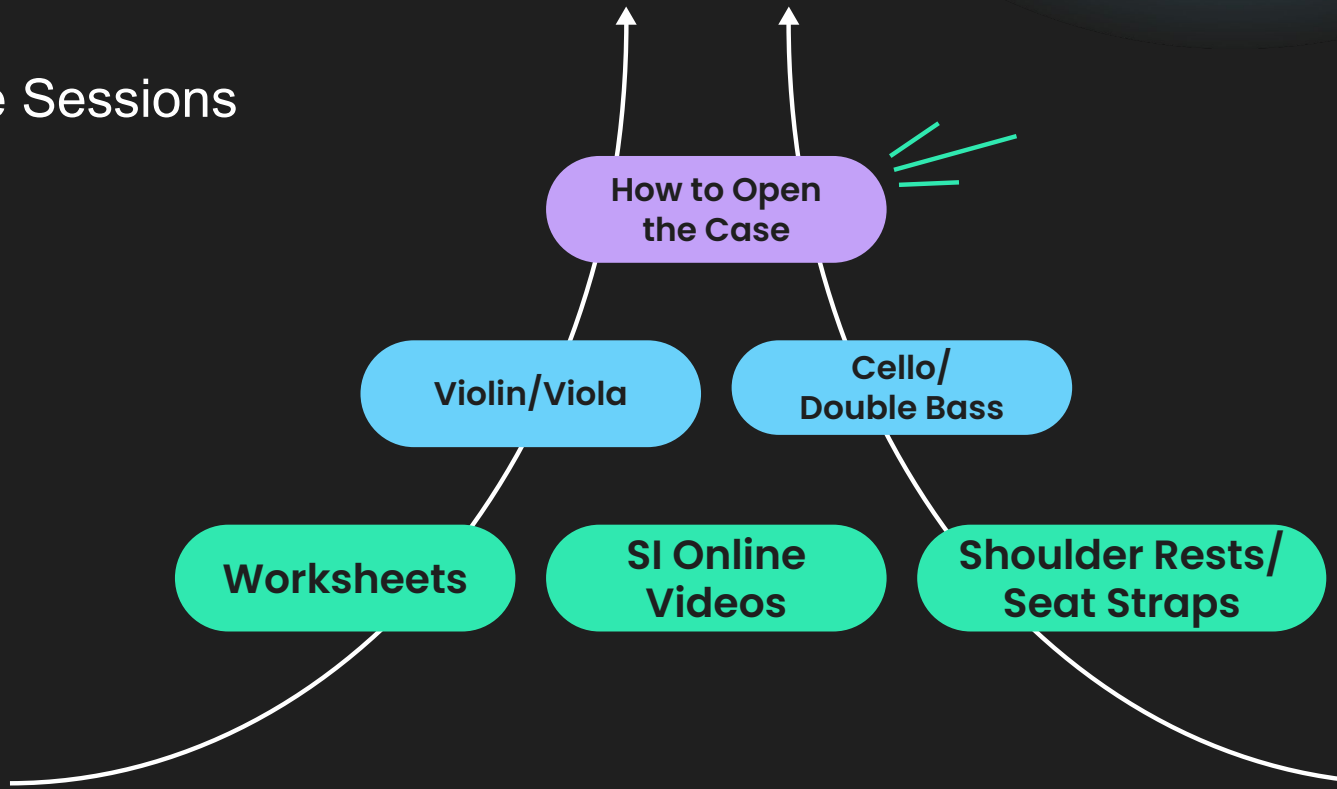
How many of each instrument?

Petting Zoo Benefits

Interact with instruments.
Fewer switch requests.
Recruit more Viola/Bass

Instruments Day One

Instrument alike Sessions
Small groups



Chairs and Music Stands

Chairs - V Shape

Chairs/Stand

- angled toward conductor

Teacher them how to adjust music stand.

- Desk
- Table
- Stem / Legs

Day 1: From ‘What Do I Do?’ to Playing!

How do I safely take my instrument out of its case

- No bow on Day 1 (make sure they know to loosen - they WILL tighten)
- They want to make sound - let them gently pizz. and explore the instrument.
- Start with positions
  - Rest Position
  - Travel Position
  - Guitar Position (Vln/Vla)
  - Play Position (pizz still)

Play Position

Hold instrument at the shoulder (Vln/Vla)
Left Hand Position
Seating straps & End Pins (Cll/Bs)
Pizzicato finger position & small circles
Echo Patterns - 3 quarters D/A Strings
Do several patterns
Start method book after a day or two of echo patterns.
Students should be able to echo A/D patterns

Daily Routines
Tuning

- Starts with Teacher Tuning (A & D only to save time)
- Fine Tuners (1-3 months) - Students can begin to tune themselves w/help available
- Intro to Pegs comes much later (4-6+ months)

Echo Patterns Part 2 - Pizzicato

- Review Instrument positions often (rest, play, travel, guitar, etc)
- Review Open Strings - pizzicato until later in the year
- Review all notes they have learned up to D Major scale
- Intro new notes via rote echo patterns
- Review and Introduce new Rhythms (count outloud)
- Emile Rhythm - https://emilerhythm.com/
- End warmup with D Major Scale (mix up with G and C).

Echo Patterns Part 3 - Bowing

- Once the bow is used in the book - EP with the bow
  - Same process as pizzicato:
    - Open Strings
    - Review Notes
    - Intro New Notes
    - End EP session with D Major Scale



- Use even numbers of quarters notes for U/D bowing
  Whole notes are hard for young strings players due to keeping the bow parallel to the bridge

Content

- Method Book Lessons - Sept - March
- Arranged Music - around Jan - Feb
    - Check Notes/Rhythms - Identify Teaching Needs
- Layered with Book Lessons
- Start with music that has mostly unison rhythms/bowing

-Miniature Symphony - Richard Meyer

1. Modest March (Four Movements)

-Medieval Kings - Soon Hee Newbold

Other Concepts

- Shifting Introduction (Probably around March/April)
  - Readiness: At least a D Major Scale, but probably more
  - Introduction Process - Make part of your daily routine!!!
- Spiccato (April/May)
- Extensions (Cello)
- Vibrato Introduction (Late April/May)

Mr. Metronome is your best friend.

Metronome Usage

- The more you model use of the Metronome, the more the students will use it.
  - Band folks - start with Metronome around 74-80
    - If it's too fast:
      - Bow Holds Get Losts
      - They can't change direction fast enough
      - They can't bow together
      - Yes, Direction matters - hold them accountable from Day 2.
- No you don't have to use 100% of the time.
  - Use Youtube Drum Beats for variety - if classroom situation allows
  - Use Method Book Accompaniments - if classroom situation allows
  - Play the piano with them - as your piano skills allow (even a simple bass line)
  - Yes, conduct them and teach them to conduct patterns
  - Yes, conduct while the metronome is going

Flexibility is Key!

Support struggling students before they fall behind.
Use stand partners as teachers.

Students know how to derail the lesson you spent hours planning last night.
Especially, when you have a fire drill and need to stack chairs for the custodial staff.

Thank you!

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