



FAQs for Elementary Music

1) How do most Elem. music teachers collect data/perform assessments? How do you do that in your classroom?

Lots of the data I collect is based on observation and then noted in my grade book (observation of steady beat while playing an instrument, purposeful movement, vocal development, ability to navigate a score when following a song in the textbook, for example). From there, I can plan lessons (or skip lessons if the students show mastery) that meet the needs of the class. I can also see where exactly students are having trouble and plan instruction to meet their needs. This is especially true with notation - assessments are eye opening and I can quickly see what is tricky for students. From time to time, I use paper/pencil assessments and often, I use projects with a rubric (part of our magnet theme is project based learning). I also use manipulatives, etc. and observe and note student performance based on a rubric/set of standards for performance.

2) Where can I find information on formative/summative assessments?

Common formative assessments for 5th grade classes are posted in the Survival KIT that can be found at http://www.wcpss.net/isd/resources/arts/survival_kit/index.html. Each assessment area has multiple options so you could use one assessment as your formative assessment and one as your summative assessment.

3) What are some typical ways to differentiate instruction in our classroom setting?

When instrument playing is involved, I can provide a student needing more challenge a more difficult part to play and one who is struggling something easier that will help build skills needed for more advanced playing. When working on notation, I sometimes have to color code the start/stop place for students who have trouble remembering that we read/write from left to write. I put a green mark on the left side of the paper and a red mark on the right side to show the starting/stopping places. Not all students need this but some do. Then, I can modify the assignment to fit the needs of the student while giving me a clear picture of the student's current level of understanding. For students with physical handicaps, I use adaptive mallet holders, for example, and provide playing opportunities that match their motor skill level. Sometimes, I'll provide options in how students show mastery (through movement, through instrument playing, something paper/pencil, extension options etc. and the students can decide which modality will allow them to be most successful). These are just a few examples. For me, sometimes I see things "in the moment" and differentiate on the spot in response to student performance. Other times, I plan modifications in advance based on knowledge of my students.

Source: Jennifer Causey, Laurel Park Elem.
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