



Subject: Music

Grade Level: Middle/High School

DI Strategy: Tiered Assignment, Scaffolding, Split Screen

Orchestra Strings Tiered Assignment Lesson

For most of the month, my orchestra students were learning how to shift into third position. This means that they were moving their hands up and playing higher on the instrument. The first challenge was teaching the students how to shift with proper technique, and the other was getting them to play in third position. They had been playing in first position since the 4th grade, so this was a very foreign concept to them.

To assess the students, I had them play a 2 octave D scale for me which involved shifting into third position. This allowed me to assess how comfortable they were with shifting and if they could do it with proper technique. I also had students play a section of the song “Don’t Stop Believin’” by Journey that included third position. This was to see if students could do the skill isolated in a scale and to see if they could incorporate the skill into the context of a piece of music.

Based on how the students played, they were put into three different groups.

Group 1 was the group that I had to reteach. We went over proper shifting technique (light movement up the fingerboard and the thumb comes with the rest of the hand/arm), and we practiced shifting back and forth between first and third position. Once they accomplished this task, we put the shift into the D Scale.

Group 2 was the group that did well in the scale but had difficulty in the concert music. This group had to work together to figure out the third position fingerings in “Don’t Stop Believin.’” Then they performed it for me at the end of class.

Group 3 was the group that was successful on both playing tasks. Therefore, their challenge was to take a simple song (Twinkle Twinkle Little Star) and play the entire song in third position. This was a challenge for them because they learned it a particular way in 4th grade, and now all of a sudden the same notes are played with different fingers.

This lesson worked really well and gave me the flexibility to reach students at each of their levels.