

Developing Effective Lesson Plans

Undergraduate students often find it challenging to plan classes and lessons. Clear communication about guidelines and your expectations will help student teachers prepare more effectively.

- Use email as an extremely effective tool to communicate with students. Ask each String Project teacher to establish a web-based email account (with AOL, Yahoo, Hotmail, or other vendors). This provides teachers with easy access to messages and updates about the String Project from any computer on campus at anytime. You may consider another messaging technology, such as Blackboard, to keep communication channels open.
- Create and maintain a listserv for the String Project staff for sharing ideas.
- It is very important to have a centralized mailbox in the String Project teaching space. Teachers can leave lesson plans for the director or master teacher to examine and use while observing classes.

Beginner Classes

- Typically, teachers follow the model set by the Master Teacher.
- Some Master Teachers find they need to alter the pacing from traditional beginning classes in public schools. There are two reasons for this:
 - 1) Most String Project students will be somewhat younger than public school beginners.
 - 2) The young teacher needs time to assimilate the routine and gain practice in monitoring the learning of children in a large class.

Private Lessons

- Young teachers may need guidance in selecting materials for their private students. The ASTA syllabus is an excellent resource, as are other string curricula.
- The Master Teacher and Project Director can each help the teacher establish goals for the children (i.e., it may be useful for the teacher to envision what he or she would like the child to be able to do by the end of the semester).
- Milestone events such as juries and recitals will provide a goal or deadline for both teacher and student.
- The Teachers should maintain log sheets for each student, noting which scale, exercises and pieces were heard at the lesson. The teacher can also note absences and forgotten materials. This can be useful if the parent every questions the child's progress. For a sample format, click [here](#).

Small Group Classes

- Check lesson plans weekly and ask for reflection. Student teachers should develop the habit of examining which components of the class went well and for those that didn't, being able to decide how he/she will handle differently the next time.

- By their third year in the program, most undergraduates should have completed one or more methods courses and will be more knowledgeable about forming objectives. At this point, they can be asked to fit the plan to a more traditional format.

Orchestra Rehearsals

- After participating in the String Project for three or more years, some undergraduate students may have the confidence and skills needed to handle the second-year orchestra.
- The director of the second-year orchestra may find it useful to work in tandem with the second-year class teachers. Those class teachers may be able to help develop the skills needed for the music in their classes since instruction on specific skills can be a challenge in a large ensemble.
- Second-year teachers can incorporate review of the orchestra pieces into their classes.