

# Using Assessment and Individual Response to Teach to Individual Differences

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- I. Rationale for individual musical responses
  - A. Helps us know how and what to teach because we learn about the achievement levels of individuals in our classes.
  - B. Helps children learn more efficiently, because we are able to individualize instruction to the children in our classes.
  - C. Gives us information about children's learning that can be communicated to parents so that we can participate in information sharing with parents like teachers of other subjects. We can communicate what individuals in our classes have achieved and how they have communicated that achievement.
  - D. Makes music more mainstream because we are measuring the individual achievement of students in our classes rather than listening to them as a group and guessing about levels of achievement. If we have a curriculum, we should be measuring how individuals in our classroom are achieving our curricular goals.
  
- II. Myths that get in the way
  - A. It takes too much time to listen to individuals.
    1. Practical tools for keeping track of individual responses.
    2. Systems of record-keeping.
  - B. Students will be scared and won't respond.
  
- III. Activities for solo response: Include at least one in every class period.
  - A. Make it short.
    1. Tonic (Old John the Rabbit)
    2. Tonal patterns: (Tarry Trousers or any song)  
Can adjust to different skill levels and goals.
    3. Rhythm patterns (Little Rondo)
    4. Phrases (Michael Row the Boat Ashore)
  - B. Make it playful. Children like games.
    1. High High Hill
    2. You Must Pass This Shoe
    3. Dollar Dollar
  - C. Use props as a distraction: Letter, bean bag, ball, Hoberman sphere
    1. I got a Letter This Morning (envelope)
    2. Hickety Pickety (bean bag)
    3. Banks of Newfoundland (Hoberman sphere)
  
- IV. Using that for assessment: Steps in the process
  - A. Determine what curricular goals you want to assess at each grade level?  
What is most central to the music learning at that grade level?  
What gives you the most information to use in improving instruction?
  - B. Develop measurement tools.  
What kind of behavior is it? Continuum or yes no.

## Rating Scales: Continuous or additive

Example of continuous rating scale:

Over several class periods, ask all students to sing a phrase of a song in solo.  
(Michael Row the Boat Ashore)

1. The student is learning to use singing voice.
2. The student sings the contour of the song with inaccurate pitches.
3. The student sings part of the song on the correct pitch level but is unable to maintain throughout.
4. The student sings on the correct pitch levels with minor flaws in intonation.
5. The student sings with accurate intonation throughout.

Based on what we know about singing voice development. Must understand developmental process in order for rating scale to work.

Develop one with your partner for beat competency.

C. Develop a record-keeping system. (Most common downfall.) Must require as little work as possible and must be able to be completed as you teach.

Paper version: Binder for each class or grade level with dividers for each curricular goal.

Electronically: Less space and mess. Requires more savvy.  
Keeps you honest.

D. Determine activity that you will use for your assessment.

1. Make it playful “London Bridges” with rhythm patterns. “High, High Hill” with tonal patterns.
2. Use manipulatives (“Aiken Drum,” “Ocean Waves”: with 5 to 1) (Hoberman Sphere, Ball, Bean Bags)
3. Make it short. You need to find ways to observe individuals. “Old John the Rabbit” and “All the Pretty Little Horses” for resting tone. “My Pony Bill” for tonal patterns.

E. Share measurement tool with your students so that they can learn to assess their own musical accomplishments. (Particularly for older students)

F. Learning Sequence Activities: A regular, efficient way to gather information about students.

F. Use what you have learned to adapt instruction.

V. So what about report cards?

- A. Different schools have different cultures.
- B. Options: Report card or special reports home
- C. Should be based upon achievement (not necessarily letter grades)
- D. Should be based on primary curricular goals.
- E. Perhaps stay parallel to other subjects.

Example: Possible use in K-2:

### Tonal Developmental Level:

- I. The student is learning to use his or her singing voice.
- II. The student is using her or her singing voice but is not consistently accurate.
- III. The student sings accurately most of the time and is in the beginning stages of being able to generalize skills from one setting to another.
- IV. The student is consistently singing in tune and is often able to generalize skill from one setting to another.
- V. The student is consistently singing in tune and understands the context of what he or she is singing.

### Rhythm Developmental Level:

- I. The student is exploring beat and meter.
- II. The student performs to the beat some of the time but is not consistently accurate.
- III. The student accurately performs to the beat most of the time and is sometimes able to accurately echo 4-beat rhythm patterns in duple and triple meter.
- IV. The student consistently performs to the beat with accuracy and is able to accurately echo most 4-beat rhythm patterns in duple and triple meter.
- V. The student consistently performs to the beat with accuracy and is able to accurately echo most 4-beat rhythm patterns in duple and triple meter. The student demonstrates an understanding of meter through movement.

### VI. Conclusions

- A. Keep it simple.
- B. Pick your focus.
- C. Use what you learn.