

First Note™ Curriculum: Assessment

The First Note™ curriculum (K form) is intended for use in Pre-K, Kindergarten and first grade by classroom teachers who can facilitate children's musical development and learning without specialized training in music. The 30-lesson First Note curriculum is a ready-made package of DVD, CD, instructional materials, and small percussion instruments. Concepts and skills are introduced directly through the DVD, which allows 'pause for classroom practice' of repertoire and skills directly according to the model. The regular use of the First Note curriculum, with repeated viewings of each week's 30-minute lesson, is geared to the development of children's competence in rhythm and pitch, their singing skills, their development of a vocabulary of musical terms, and their identification of the musical instruments they play and that they observe performers play. Just as there are no expectations for non-specialist teachers to 'teach' the First Note curriculum (rather, the program does the teaching), the assessment of knowledge and skills is so fundamental as to offer a straightforward and direct means of listening and looking to the results which children manifest in a few basic areas.

The skills areas (beat, rhythm, pitch, in-tune singing) and knowledge domains (instrument, music culture, vocabulary) are presented below as a rubric for assessment to be administrated after the completion of every five lessons. One sheet is to be provided for each participating student, and teachers may then mark them on the extent of their skill and knowledge acquisition. Definitions of terms are noted, and stipulations for the extent of student skill areas are articulated. The knowledge domains are of a nominal order of assessment, such that students are expected to respond yes or no, or to offer discrete answers to questions of musical instruments and music culture, while the skills are in motion and progressive, such that 'emerging', 'satisfactory', and 'proficient' are judgments corresponding to a more subjective observation of where children are in their development.

The aim of the First Note curriculum is to enrich the lives of children through music, and to assist them in realizing their capacities to listen, sing, and play music. Children who develop these foundational skills and understandings in their early years will be all the more readied for study of a musical instrument, participation in a musical ensemble, and creative composition activities in music. These musical engagements are powerful sources of joy and fulfillment that last a lifetime.

Directions for Use

For each child, observe the following skills (beat, rhythm, pitch, in-tune singing) as emerging, satisfactory, proficient, or 'not observed'.

For each child, offer questions that will allow identification (instrument, music culture) or recall (vocabulary).

Not observed Emerging Satisfactory Proficient

<i>Skills&Concepts</i>				
Beat				
Rhythm				
Pitch				
In tune singing				
Instrument				
Music Culture				
vocabulary				

Definitions

Beat:

Task: Student is asked to pat the beat on their knees, while speaking or hearing a known song or rhyme.

Not observed: Student does not pat his knees.
Emerging: Student pats 0 – 50% of the beats accurately
Satisfactory: Student pats 50 – 90% of the beats accurately
Proficient: Student pats 90 – 100% of the beats accurately

Rhythm:

Task: Same as above, substitute rhythm for beat

Pitch:

Task: Student is asked to show a specific melodic contour, by moving his/her hand higher and lower to represent the sound made by the teacher or an instrument

Not Observed: Student does not move hand.
Emerging: Student moves hand to show contour, with 0-50% accuracy.
Satisfactory: Student moves hand to show contour, with 50-90% accuracy.
Proficient: Student moves hand to show contour, with 90-100% accuracy.

In-tune singing:

Task: Student is asked to sing a known song alone.

Not observed: Student does not sing or speak the song.

Emerging: Student performs all the words of the song, but with no identifiable tonal center.

Satisfactory: Student performs all the words of the song, but the tonal center shifts within the song, and/or some notes are not in tune.

Proficient: Student performs all the words of the song, maintaining the tonal center, with all notes in tune.

Instrument:

Can the child identify by sight and by sound the drum, sticks, shakers?

(Yes/No)

Music Culture:

Can the child identify by sight and by sound a song, poem, instrument, or other artifact of a music culture?

(Yes/No)

Vocabulary:

Can the child recall the keyword of a lesson (also known as 'word of the week') and note its meaning?

(Yes/No)