

CAN YOU CUE?

LESSON/ACTIVITY PLAN

OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will understand the function of cueing in a small-ensemble setting.
2. Students will demonstrate cueing technique in classroom performance.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Explain that when musicians perform together, they must give signals, or cues, to one another so that they start together and stay together throughout a performance. It's a way of communication and working together. The process of cueing might include an exaggerated nod of the head; a sharp, audible inhalation; and/or deliberate eye contact.
2. Watch one or more videos of string quartets with students. Observe the performers' body language and eye contact. Sometimes you will see very obvious examples of cueing, though often this cueing is subtle, requiring close attention to discern and highlight.

Here's Brooklyn Rider playing the [String Quartet in G minor](#) by Claude Debussy.

And here is the Parker Quartet playing Béla Bartók's first [string quartet](#).

It's easier to notice obvious cues in the Brooklyn Rider performance. The Parker Quartet's cues are more subtle. Every string quartet has its own cueing style and habits.

3. Integrate cueing into classroom performance. Group students into quartets and ask them to choose a favorite classroom piece to perform. They may choose to sing, play on classroom instruments, or combine the two. Remind them that they must be able to start together on their own. Circulate among the groups during rehearsal time and help each quartet refine their cueing technique. Complete the activity by asking each group to perform for the class. Give feedback regarding cueing.

STANDARDS:

These activities incorporate aspects of the following Minnesota Standards for the Arts:

1. K–3. Artistic Foundations 2. Demonstrate knowledge and use of the technical skills of the art form, integrating technology when applicable. Music. 0.1.2.3.2. Sing and play with accurate pitch, rhythm, and expressive intent.
2. K–3. Artistic Process: Perform or Present 1. Perform or present in a variety of contexts in the arts area using the artistic foundations. Music. 0.3.1.3.1 & 0.3.1.3.2. Reflect on a performance based on the feedback of others.
3. Grades 4–5. Artistic Foundations. 2. Demonstrate knowledge and use of the technical skills of the art form, integrating technology when applicable. Music. 4.1.2.3.2. Sing and play alone and in a group demonstrating proper posture, breathing, technique, age-appropriate tone quality and expressive intent.
4. Grades 4–5. Artistic Process: Perform or Present. 1. Perform or present in a variety of contexts in the arts area using the artistic foundations. Music. 4.3.1.3.2. Revise performance based on the feedback of others and self-reflection.
5. Grades 6–8. 3. Artistic process: Perform or Present. 1. Perform or present in a variety of context in the arts area using the artistic foundations. Music. 6.3.1.3.1. Rehears and perform music from a variety of contexts and styles alone or within small or large groups.



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