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memorized. Students should then recognize that middle C is in the middle of the staff and that the top space F in alto clef is the bottom space F in treble clef. These two notes are easy to perceive visually, and they may be easily correlated to their new fingerboard positions by relating the G and D strings to the G and D strings of the violin. This sort of string relation will also facilitate learning the new placements of treble clef notes. To develop fully the staff-pitch-fingerboard correlation, students can play any piece at a deliberate tempo while saying the note names prior to playing them.

Of course, reading must transcend fastidious attention to every note if complete ease and speed are to develop. For this reason, the student should immediately undertake a daily sight-reading program. Teachers should encourage their students to actively pursue opportunities to read chamber, orchestral, and solo music.

Orchestral playing provides ample opportunity to practice reading. Students will also learn from playing with other violists in the section. Orchestral playing proves particularly beneficial for students who read more confidently when

playing with other people.

Chamber music is the ultimate reading situation because students bear sole responsibility for their parts. They must continue to play and keep their place because the ensemble will not pause for an error. For the less-advanced student or the uncertain reader, early Haydn quartets or the William Primrose transcription of Bartok's 44 Violin Duets, Book I, are excellent material for reading.

In the absence of other musicians, students should practice sight reading by themselves. Etudes provide the ideal solo reading medium because they are rhythmically, harmonically, and melodically independent works that frequently address a single technical problem. Through reading etudes, students can learn to recognize harmonic progressions, scales, arpeggios, and technical difficulties at sight.

When sight-reading music, students must pay strict attention to the pulse and continue to play without stopping or locking back. Most reading breakdowns are actually caused by inattention to pulse, not technical or reading difficulties. If the student stumbles frequently despite a good sense of pulse, the teacher

should suggest a slower tempo or easier repertoire.

Reading deficiencies can also result from a limited field of vision. When students read only one note at a time from left to right, their focus is constricted and they cannot read more than a few notes ahead. Students who read in this manner should be encouraged to maintain a relaxed focus that allows awareness of the entire page in the peripheral vision. A student using this type of focus will enjoy clear perception of the entire phrase while playing, awareness of clef, key, and meter changes well before they occur, increased awareness of dynamics and motivic patterns, and decreased physical tension and eye strain.

The foregoing methods of learning the alto clef should be employed according to students' individual needs. Students who quickly establish the eye-hand coordination need not devote as much energy to reading transcriptions. On the other hand, students who have approached the clef carefully and thoroughly would do well to develop speed through transcriptions and sight-reading practice. For all students, fluent reading will result from a strong correlation between the eyes, staff, and fingers, a thorough knowledge of the alto clef, and substantial reading experience.

I have written this article based on my own transition and my teaching experiences. I have found that these issues and solutions are relevant not only for recent converts, but they are also pertinent for students who never played violin or who switched years ago. In closing, I would like to thank Ken Goldsmith, Larry Wheeler, Toby Appel, and Karen Ritscher, all of whom contributed to my own transition and to the ideas and exercises contained in this article. I trust that this information will give other teachers success in guiding students from violin to viola. ♪

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