

# Arts Assessment For Learning

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MUSIC — 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

## HOW TO & TIPS: COMPOSITION IN PERCUSSION

### Week 1

Learning Objective: I can play the conga drum with good posture and hand technique by sitting straight at the edge of my seat and alternating right and left hands.

Key Word: Respect: How do we treat each other / instruments with respect?

Making Connections: (Optional) General information about African- map, natural resources, language, religion and other interesting facts

1st Instruments: Congas, djembe, bongos and tubanos

High tone: played at edge of drumhead with four finger together like a paddle, thumbs out. Strike the edge as if dribbling a basketball or as if touching a hot stove. Make sure to alternate hands: right, left.

Establish a quiet signal!

Echo 1: Have students repeat two-beat rhythmic patterns. Include quarter, eighth and sixteenth note fragments. This is done aurally, not with written notation. Focus on producing a secure high tone.

Numbers: Choose a number from 1 to 20. Have students count aloud as they strike their drum once for each number with the chosen number being the final beat. Be sure to alternate hands, left then right.

This activity serves several purposes:

1. Builds good hand technique by allowing students to practice alternating hands and "dribbling the basketball"
2. Builds strong unison drumming
3. Gives you a chance to assess the group's ability to maintain a steady tempo.

Question & Answer: What's your name?

Ask each student, "What's your name?" Give each student 2 beats to answer.

Encourage them to say their name with energy and be aware of the syllables.

Repeat this process again with drum and ask the question. Have students drum as they answer aloud. Finally, drum the question and have students drum their answers.

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Conclusion: What are you wondering? What was challenging? Why? What was easy?

## **Week 2**

Learning Objective: I can play my part securely and consistently while other parts are played by keeping a steady tempo and focusing on my rhythmic pattern.

Key Words: Review respect for all and respect for the instruments.

Focus: How is focus important to you in your everyday life? Why is focus important to musicians?

Making Connections: Music and culture of West Africa

Echo 1: Students repeat 2 beat phrases including quarter, eighth and sixteenth note fragments using the high tone, (edge of the drum head) only. Be sure to use good hand technique; alternating hands and "dribbling the basketball." Choose 2 student leaders.

Low tone: Cup the hand slightly, not completely flat, and bounce off the center of the drum head creating a bass note we call "low."

Echo 2: Have students echo 2 beat rhythmic phrases using quarter, eighth and sixteenth note fragment. Use high tone, (edge of drum head) and low tone, (center of drum head). At this point say and have students say, "low" and "high" as they play.

Question & Answer: What's for dinner?

Ensemble 1, (see the score by Will Schmid): low drum and high drum parts

- Teach the low drum part saying "low-high-low, hands off."
- Teach the high drum part saying "hands off, keep the rhythm going."
- Divide the group in half- low part players and high drum players
- Start the low drum part. When it is well established, secure and steady, bring in the high drum part.

Conclusion: What have you learned? What surprised you? What was challenging? Why?

## **Week 3**

Learning Objective: I can improvise complementary rhythms to the lead drummer's part.

Complement: What does it mean to give someone a compliment? What is an example of a compliment? Complement with an "e" means a thing that completes or brings to perfection. For example, "the libretto proved a perfect complement to the music" What is another example of complement with an "e"?

Making Connections: Instruments of West Africa

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Warm-up: Echo 2 - Have students echo 2 beat rhythmic phrases using low and high tone. Continue to have students say "high" and "low" aloud. Choose 2 student leaders.

Question and Answer with Echo: What's your candy? (It's Halloween!)

Round 1: answer with voices only. Round 2: voice and drum answer. Round 3: answer with drums only. Finally, have the group repeat or "echo" the answer of each individual.

Ensemble 1 (see the score by Will Schmid): Add cowbell and shekere, (or other type of rattle), parts to low and high drum parts. The cowbell plays a steady quarter note rhythm. The shekere plays a quarter note triplet followed by a quarter note. The shekere part gives the ensemble a polyrhythmic element that is characteristic West African drumming.

Rhythm Complements 1: Play a slow quarter note rhythm on a bell or rattle. Have students improvise rhythmically on their drum. Give feedback and remind students to play a part that complements the leader's part without matching it exactly. Choose 2 students to improvise with the leader's part for the class. Ask a few students from the class to offer feedback to the soloists. Allow for revision by giving the soloists another chance to play their rhythm complement.

Conclusion:

What did you learn about the word, "complement"? What do you think complementary rhythms means? What is challenging about rhythm complements? What made for a successful or interesting rhythm complement?

## **Week 4**

Learning Objective: I can improvise complementary rhythms with my small ensemble.

Teamwork: In West Africa, rhythmic singing and clapping children's games are culturally important. How is teamwork important to you? Where else is teamwork important? (Sport, family, etc.)

Warm-up: Echo 2 - Have students echo 2 beat rhythmic phrases using low and high tone. Start play phrases without saying "high" and "low" aloud. Choose 2 student leaders.

Ensemble 1, (see the score by Will Schmid): Introduce gankogui or double bell of West Africa. Add double bell part to cowbell, shekeres, low and high drum parts

Rhythm Complements - Week 2:

- Form groups of 4. Allow them to use 2 drums, a bell and a rattle.
- Ask them to create a simple rhythm and 2 or 3 other rhythms to complement the

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original part. Tell students to play simply and listen for "holes" or "windows" in the music.

- After working for 5 minutes, allow each group to share 30-60 seconds of their piece.

Have the rest of the class share comments and observations.

- Allow for 5 additional minutes of small group work. Check on each groups' progress.

Conclusion: Develop the rubric- Establish clear criteria by making a list of what each ensemble member should do and what they should do as a group. What compositional elements, such as beginnings, entrances and endings could be used to enhance the ensemble piece?

## **Week 5**

Learning Objective: I can create a piece of music with my ensemble by layering our complementary rhythms.

Listen: Listening to others will make it possible to fit into complementary patterns.

Develop the Rubric: What makes a drum ensemble successful? What does each group member need to do? What makes a piece of music sound complete and ready to perform? Share a first draft of the drum ensemble rubric. Allow students to read and ask any clarifying questions. This is not the final version of the rubric as I will revise it based on student feedback and performance.

### Rhythm Complements - Week 3:

- Return to groups of 4 from previous session. Allow them to use 2 drums, a bell and a rattle.
- Tell each group to review and play each members' rhythmic part from last week. Remind students to play simply and listen for "windows" in the music. Then try layering their parts to create an original piece.
- After working for a few minutes, distribute the rubric to each ensemble. Ask each ensemble to look at the rubric carefully and use it as a tool to help them create their piece.
- Have each ensemble play their piece for approximately 1 minute. Video their performances.
- The rest of the class may share comments and observations, using the rubric as a guide when giving feedback.

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- Allow for 5 additional minutes of revision in small groups. Continually check on each groups' progress.

## **Week 6**

Learning Objective: I can improve the piece of music that my ensemble created by using the rubric we developed.

Listen: Listening to others will make it possible to fit into complementary patterns.

Discuss: The Revised Rubric

- Distribute the new version of the rubric and tell students to read it with their ensemble.
- Have each ensemble decide what score they would give themselves in each of the three categories based on their performance last week.
- The three categories are: 1. The piece we created, 2. My part, 3. Rhythm complements

Rhythm Complements - Week 4:

- Have students further develop the piece they began 2 weeks ago. Allow them to gather the drums, rattles, bells and other percussion instruments.
- Allow the ensembles 7-10 minutes to work on their piece. Remind them to use the rubric as a guide when making revisions.
- Have each ensemble play their piece for the class. Video their performance.
- The rest of the class may share comments and observations, using the rubric as a guide when giving feedback.
- Allow for 5 additional minutes of revision in small groups.

## **Week 7**

Learning Objective: I can explain how African drum ensembles work by reflecting on my experiences playing and composing.

- Share the video clips from Rhythm Complements week 2 and 3 with the class
- Have students write about their learning and creative process

Ask: "What instruments did you and your group choose and why? What was your role in the group? What steps did you and your group take in the creation of your piece of music?"

- What made your group successful? What was challenging?