

Arts Assessment For Learning

MUSIC — 4TH GRADE

HOW TO & TIPS: NOTE READING - IMPROVING MUSIC LITERACY

After a few weeks of studying jazz and the 12 bar blues, students started learning how to notate the root notes of each bar. This process ended up being 7 lessons over a 3 month period.

Step 1: Introduce the lines (EGBDF) and spaces (FACE) of the music staff.

Students practiced notating accurately. They repeated this process 4 times, while labeling each note with the correct letters. Teacher feedback was provided, as well as opportunities for revision.

Step 2: Practice drawing treble clefs. (at least 15 times) Teacher and peer feedback.

Step 3: Introduce alphabetical order of alternating lines and spaces.

Students practiced notating from low F to high F (F4-F5), alternating between space and line notes. This was practiced several times. At this point, students understood that notes went in alphabetical order on the way up the treble clef.

Step 4: Notation writing games:

Game 1: On the staff board, I drew several bar lines. Underneath each measure I wrote various notes, such as Low F, G, high E, etc. Students were to notate accurately. Answers were discussed.

Game 2: I drew notes in the staff and students were to write the letter names underneath each note.

Game 3: I wrote words under measures, such as BAG, FED, ADD, BAGGAGE. Students notated on the staff, and were allowed to choose low or high notes, as long as they were accurate.

Game 4: I notated various "words" on the staff, such as DEAF, AGE, CAB, CABBAGE. Students wrote the actual words under the notes.

Step 5: Generate a note writing checklist.

Review- what makes music easy to read. Through our discussion, we came up with the following checklist criteria:

- Music notes on a staff are clear and easy to read,
- Note head is fully colored in (when needed)
- Notes are evenly spaced
- Notes are sized uniformly and the notes are not too big and not too small (they are not taking up the placement of two notes.)

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Step 6: Notate songs from the textbook.

Students practice copying musical passages from previous lessons.

Peer feedback using the checklist helps the students revise their work.

Step 7: Using the Music Note Reading and Playing Rubric.

Students look at a musical phrase and name the notes. Next they look at phrase 2 without writing any notes in and have the opportunity to play it on the xylophone.

Students read through the note reading and writing rubric and rate themselves. They discuss their rating and articulate their next steps.

Students write a self- reflection of their experience.

Step 8: Notate the 12 bar blues progression in E

After singing roman numerals (I, IV, V) then names of root notes, (E, A, B) students drew 12 measures, label each measure with the correct Roman numeral and then notated E, A, B in the correct order.

Play the progression on xylophones, reading the music with opportunity for soloists and small groups to improvise over the blues.

I implement this strategy in the middle of our jazz unit, after learning about and practicing the blues; Over 6-8 class sessions.

Provide a clear and detailed plan that addresses these points and shows how these strategies are integrated in a unit plan: