

Arts Assessment For Learning

MUSIC — 5TH GRADE

REFLECTION: ORFF - IMPROVISATION & COMPOSITION

Without judgement, describe what you did. just the facts:

After the core lesson on “Erie Canal,” teacher and students came up with a checklist for high quality improvisation techniques on xylophones. Checklist included: Using the entire instrument/all notes, keeping the beat, using imagination/creativity, using rhythms that we have worked on, matching the style of the music. Students again attempted to improvise using these ideas. Partners listened and gave feedback on peer response forms. Discussion followed.

The following week, we went over the checklist and narrowed it down to 2 criteria: Using the entire instrument and matching the style of the music. After learning the piece “Pat works on the Railway.” Students improvised with the 2 criteria in mind. Partners gave verbal feedback and switched roles. After peer discussion as well as class discussion, students revised improvisations with new ideas. We ran out of time and did not get to write these responses.

The following week the class had an assembly. We had spring break the next week. The following week the class had testing and did not come to the music room. The next week I was absent. The 6 consecutive session plan did not happen. By the month of May we were behind in our curriculum mapping and needed to move on to the next unit.

What went well?

The students had a chance to revise their improvisations, and did indeed sound better!

Students had new ideas to work with, and took rhythmic and harmonic chances. Their improvisations sounded more musical and more creative.

What was so-so?

At first, the quality of feedback was lacking in depth, and some students had some less than helpful language.

What was the most challenging part of trying this?

The most challenging part of this was implementing the plan for 6 consecutive weeks. On paper it was packed with high quality thinking skills, deep meaning, opportunity for feedback, revision and improvement, and creative music making. However, the reality of a school schedule (and having music only once a week) got in the way of implementation.

What questions were raised for you as you implemented the assessment practice?

Which of these can you share with your group? How can I get quality feedback from my students? How can this help their peers make informed decisions and improve their performance?

Arts Assessment For Learning

**What new insights or understandings are forming as a result of this experience?
(share with group)**

I should have started the improvisation revision process with 2 criteria. After students were comfortable using those 2 ideas, we could keep adding just 1 new criteria to the process. For the peer feedback, I will provide prompts to get them started, such as "I like the way you played....." and "you might think about starting your solo by.....". After some practice with these prompts, students may gain a better understanding of what it means to communicate with meaning and depth.

How do the results of your action plan inform your inquiry question?

How does the strategy inform my inquiry question? After the first lesson, I saw improvement. If the schedule would allow, I believe this strategy works, given consistent implementation. Students not only learn from their peers, but they themselves can be responsible for their own learning.

Documentation to bring (student work, photos, writing, teacher journal, etc):

Video of first lesson, peer feedback forms.