

# Arts Assessment For Learning

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MUSIC — 3-5<sup>TH</sup> GRADES

## **ACTION PLAN: RHYTHMIC COMPOSITION**

### **Who (the class or group I will focus on):**

Upper elementary school music students

### **Inquiry question:**

Do peer and self-assessment using rubrics improve students' improve student performance on original compositions using percussion instruments?

### **Student learning goals:**

Students are able to echo rhythms in unison (one singular rhythmic part played by several percussionists), but are lacking tone quality, having trouble creating and playing complementary parts (different rhythmic parts that work together in one rhythm), and keeping track of form (beginning, middle, end) when performing a percussion piece.

### **Identify indicators from the *Blueprint* aligned with the student learning goals:**

Students will be able to:

- Build technical skills for percussion playing and exploring and express them through percussion composition
- Work on problem solving and articulating themselves as literate musicians both on and off their instruments
- Play and distinguish between high and low tones on a hand drum
- Create different drum parts that work around one rhythm (Complementary parts)
- Follow the form of a percussion piece and make changes together by communicating musically
- Communicate about each other's pieces using musical language/vocabulary and evidence from the piece of music they are observing

### **What formative assessment strategy I will put into practice:**

Self and peer assessment through the use of rubrics.

### **Why this strategy will help my students achieve or improve the above goals:**

My goal is to use the rubrics to focus the students' attention on best practices of the music in order to accurately perform the piece.

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### How I plan to implement this assessment strategy in my practice and/or lessons:

#### Lesson 1

- I will introduce the Percussion family, demonstrate different percussion instruments we will be using and do class exercises on Unison percussion (playing the same rhythm at the same time with others).
- We will also exercise the use of high and low tones on a hand drum and proper wrist technique for other percussion instruments
- We will also learn how to distinguish between distinct parts of a rhythm (different instruments and different rhythmic parts) and the rhythm as a whole.

#### Lesson 2 & 3

- Students will form groups of 4-6 and use one hand drum to mimic a rhythm in unison
- Students will then play the same rhythm with several instruments.
- Students will then perform this rhythm for the class, with the class discussing rhythm (is it in Unison), Form (do they start and stop together), and Style (are they using high and low tones, proper technique).
- Unison Performances will be video taped for review, revision and comparison to final performance for student self-reflections.

#### Lesson 4

- Students will do a teacher-led exercise on Complementary rhythms (when we build a rhythm by adding different parts that work together as one whole rhythm).
- After exercises, students return to groups to work on complementary parts
- Students will be given a worksheet that helps them to write down their complementary parts.
- They turn the rhythm into a group of words, in order to help them remember it from week to week.

#### Lesson 5

- Students perform complementary pieces to class and get peer feedback
- Complementary Performances will be video taped for review, revision and comparison to final performance for student self-reflections.

#### Lesson 6

- Students meet to do class exercises with Dissonant rhythms – rhythm parts that do not fit together, as in complementary parts, and that are not in unison.

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- I will then explain the final part of the project: Students will be composing a percussion piece based around a single theme.
- As they come up with story idea for their theme, they will compose rhythms that go along with the story.
- The final piece will be in 3-5 parts, containing a mixture of unison, complementary and dissonant rhythms.

Before they begin composing model:

- Choose a theme and title for their percussion piece (i.e. “my morning”).
- Write 3-5 parts to the story (i.e. coffee dripping, getting dressed, driving to work, sitting in traffic, arriving and running to school).
- Create a rhythm for each part (i.e. light unison tapping to mimic sound of coffee, complementary rhythm to mimic the different parts of a car moving while driving, etc).
- Write down parts on worksheets as you come up with them as a group – students will be given a worksheet to fill in so they can keep their notes from week to week. The worksheet will include columns for part of story, type of rhythms used, and length of rhythm per part of story.
- Practice the piece from beginning to end, focusing on transitioning by counting as you are playing and changing from part to part as they come up.  
\*Model a full story and brainstorm theme ideas with class.
- Review the rubric that encompasses the three skills we’ve learned thus far :
  1. Sound (use of high and low tones and/or right and left hand movement),
  2. Form (starting, changing and ending together during a piece of music),
  3. Rhythm (unison, complementary and dissonance).
- Send student to groups with their worksheets, rubrics and instruments in order to begin composing.

## Lesson 7

- Students work in their groups to create a theme for their piece, create parts and decide on what rhythms they will use for their piece and when to change them.
- They decide on where the high and low tones will fit into the rhythms and practice using them.
- Students turn and talk about the sounds they are creating and how to improve them before the final performance.
- They will also watch their own video and reflect on their complementary rhythm, using the new rubric.

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- They will be doing both peer assessments, as some groups will demonstrate what they are working on, and self-assessments when discussing their video with their own group.

## **Lessons 8-10**

- Students given time to create piece and rehearse, with teacher rotating through each group to assist
- During these weeks, the groups will perform what they are currently working on to get peer feedback and to return to groups to work on revisions, post feedback.
- The feedback will be directly related to the rubrics we are using in the study.

## **Lessons 11 & 12**

- Final performance, peer reflections and class discussion for each group. Final performances will be recorded on video.
- Peer reflections will be a general class share, with students being held accountable for what category they are addressing on the rubric (indicate whether they are talking about sound, rhythm or form).
- In the final class, students will watch all of their videos, from the beginning of the project until the final performance. They will then reflect on their own performances using the rubric and a self-assessment questionnaire.

## **When I plan to implement this strategy (at which point in the teaching/learning cycle or unit plan):**

The timeline was as the above lessons indicated, making adjustments in the beginning of the year based on review of prior knowledge.

## **Evidence of effectiveness of this assessment strategy:**

Video of performances, peer feedback, rehearsals, and composition process.

Student work- index cards that students used to write out rhythmic parts, self-assessment/reflections