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Examining the Fears, Benefits, and Applications of Teaching Improvisation in General Music

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EXAMINING THE FEARS, BENEFITS, AND APPLICATIONS OF TEACHING
IMPROVISATION IN GENERAL MUSIC

by

Krystle Boyd

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Music
Education at Lindenwood University

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EXAMINING THE FEARS, BENEFITS, AND APPLICATIONS OF TEACHING
IMPROVISATION IN GENERAL MUSIC

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the School of Arts, Media, and Communications
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Music Education
at
Lindenwood University

by

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Saint Charles, Missouri
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Abstract

Title of Thesis: EXAMINING THE FEARS, BENEFITS, AND APPLICATIONS OF
TEACHING IMPROVISATION IN GENERAL MUSIC

Krystle Boyd, Master of Music Education, 2019

Thesis Directed by: Dr. Katherine Herrell, Associate Professor, Music

This project focused on identifying and resolving fears associated with teaching improvisation in the general music classroom. The primary focus was on music educators and providing them with reassurance, reasoning, and plans on how to begin the process of teaching improvisation and follow through so that it is a well-developed initiative that will be built upon and utilized for years to come. This project demonstrated plans for an entire year of 5th grade general music instruction and provided a curriculum map, lesson plans, rubrics, and a manual of explanation for the lessons and activities.

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Introduction

Improvisation is something that many music teachers feel unprepared to teach, yet it is a skill that can help students in many ways. Improvisation is most commonly associated with jazz, but it can be taught and developed in all music classes. If it is taught from an early age, students will be more comfortable taking risks and creating their own music, and on a larger scale, sharing their own ideas and being innovators in other areas of their lives. The sources reviewed in this paper help reveal and resolve fears of improvisation, share the benefits of improvisation in the music classroom, and give insight as to how improvisation can be incorporated into general music classes at the middle school level.

The lesson plans followed an entire year in the 5th grade music classroom, focusing on building a nurturing environment and developing basic musical skills in the first half of the year, and then applying those skills and refining their creative works in the second half of the year. The rubrics provided structure to assist in measuring and analyzing the effectiveness of the creative activities, musical skills being taught, and overall guidance within the classroom. The manual explained the details of implementing the activities and how to properly provide feedback to establish and foster the nurturing environment that is essential to the success of this project. There is also a curriculum map to help show what is guiding the lesson plans, along with an explanation for how this approach would be further developed in the following year of music instruction.

Methodology

The goal of this project was to create a plan with appropriate resources for music educators that would provide them with answers to questions and calm insecurities that often come with teaching improvisation. In this project, I sought to demonstrate how to incorporate

creating music throughout the year. The areas of focus were developing a nurturing environment, selecting and incorporating activities, guiding and assessing, and final project. The goal was to include improvisation alongside the current music curriculum. In the end, it was necessary to modify the current curriculum plans more than originally intended, but the overall result became one that students would be much more connected with for years to come. The final project for the 5th grade curriculum plan was an album of songs that would be created by the different sections of the class. Its purpose was to provide students with a connection to music, creating music, rehearsing music, and performing music that will stimulate lasting memories and appreciation of music, respect for their peers and working together, and their own self-esteem.

Literature Review

When most think of improvisation, they immediately think of jazz (Beckstead, 2013). Despite the common association with jazz, many other areas of music and music education are a wonderful setting for improvisation, too. Many music educators, especially choral music educators, were never taught to improvise (Farrell, 2016). If they were not a member of a jazz ensemble, they most likely had very little experience with improvisation as an individual (Whitcomb, 2010). Even those who were members of jazz ensembles during their undergraduate course work still do not have much experience with improvisation. Additionally, most educators, even those who know better, still associate improvisation with jazz. Even if they recognize that improvisation is something not completely exclusive to jazz, they still see it as a separate skill, rather than one that should be incorporated in everyday lessons. Many music educators do recognize some of the benefits of improvisation, but they are unsure and not confident about how to teach their students. They do not know where to begin, how to develop a structured lesson, or how to gauge growth in their students' improvisation skills (Robinson, 2011).

The solutions to overcoming these fears are much more simplistic than many might expect. It is more about the educator accepting the fact that even though they are not a highly skilled jazz performer, they do understand enough to start the basics of improvisation. They must trust their own musicality, realizing that they can recognize good phrasing, structure, and other musical elements (Giordano, 2011). Educators must be willing to try new things and grasp the basics so they can demonstrate for their students, yet also be willing to make mistakes and continue learning a new skill. This is not unfamiliar territory for music educators as they must learn and demonstrate many different skills that they learn through technique classes in college. “Just as with any other knowledge domain in music, college music ed majors need to have a reasonable grasp of it before they enter the secondary music classroom” (Wagener, 2009). If educators work to become more comfortable and confident in improvisation activities, then their students will follow that example. “And, the more comfortable teachers feel with it, the more that ease will transfer to their students” (Wagener, 2009).

Music educators must be creative, ask open-ended questions, be willing to be guides for their students rather than the center of attention, and must care about creating and fostering a nurturing environment (Robinson, 2011). As for overcoming fears of teaching improvisation, the last important point for educators is that educators must be willing to practice improvisation (Wagener, 2009). This can be done by starting with composing first and then improvising small excerpts, creating rhythmic drumming beats, echoing ear training exercises and then altering them to make it more call and response, practicing with three basic notes first, using one chord and the arpeggio as a guideline. It does not have to be advanced improvisation; they must simply find a starting point to build from so that they know how to demonstrate and lead students through the process.

High school students are much more reluctant and intimidated to try improvisation than elementary or middle school (Beckstead, 2013). If educators can begin teaching improvisation in general music classes, it may help show students how to enjoy music-making on a more personal level. "Improvisation is a gateway to show general music students how rewarding music-making can be" (Berman, 2017, p. 28).

One key point made for both teachers and students is that improvisation is not meant to be intimidating (Beckstead, 2013). It is not something that should be viewed as an elite activity that only the chosen few can participate in. For students to understand this, educators must work to include it and continue throughout the course of a student's music education. "Introducing improvisation early and keeping it an integral part of music instruction from elementary up through college level can lead to a generation of well-rounded, creative, fearless musicians" (Berman, 2017, p. 25).

The benefits of improvisation for students, teachers, and music programs overall are quite substantial. In today's world, educators are looking for ways to teach students to be innovators, to be confident with who they are, and to try new things and not be afraid of failure. Improvisation helps students become more alert and prepared to learn and illustrates the importance of uniqueness (Beckstead 2013). The importance of uniqueness is something that is truly beneficial for students of all ages, as they learn to be comfortable and confident with who they are and accepting of others. Improvisation "is a transferable skill that helps them get past their self-doubt and fear of making mistakes" (Wagener, 2009).

Another benefit of improvisation is that it activates the brain in ways that recreative music-making does not (Wagener, 2009). It helps students become more alert and prepared to learn and utilizes the area of the brain that is associated with meditation, daydreaming, and

complex, long-term multitasking (Beckstead, 2013). Improvisation is on a much higher DOK level than recreative music (Robinson, 2011). An important reminder to educators about improvisation and engaging the brain is that it does not have to be complex improvisation to activate the brain benefits (Beckstead, 2013).

If improvisation is used as a way for young students to apply and explore the music skills they learn, it will also help them take ownership of their own musicianship (Giordano, 2011). It will help students develop deeper understandings, connections, and independence in music (Robinson, 2011). It can also provide wonderful emotional support for students as they go through different experiences. Improvisation provides them with an outlet and allows them to react to tough situations without having to use words while still feeling that emotional release (Carroll & Lefebvre, 2013).

Improvisation is also a way to ensure the future of music education and music-making. It can lead students to appreciating and possibly following the composition track as a music career (Giordano, 2011). It also gives people the power to create music for recreation. If more people enjoy creating music and see the value in creating their own music, they will value music education and support it. People enjoy recreational painting and poetry. They can enjoy recreational music-making as well. People who enjoy painting as a hobby do not usually worry about if their painting is worthy of a museum display; they just enjoy it as a creative outlet. If students enjoy and connect with music-making from an early age, educators are giving them the power to create their own music for a lifetime (Giordani, 2011).

Addressing the applications is the biggest factor in this project. Overcoming the fears and understanding the benefits are important to generate motivation, but without proper applications, educators will not be able to follow-through on the intentions of bringing the benefits of

improvisation to their students. Most of the applications are student-centered activities.

Educators must be willing to let go of the control and allow the students to create without any opinionated judgement or criticism. This can be very challenging, but if educators strive to do this, even in small segments at first, it can make a huge difference for all involved. Upon review of the included sources, the application process of improvisation in the general music classroom is going to be discussed in the following categories: (a) teacher preparation; (b) creating the proper environment; (c) skills and structure; (d) guiding while encouraging creativity; and (e) assessing and developing.

Teacher preparation. In order to be prepared to teach improvisation, music educators must first and foremost be willing. This sounds like a simple and perhaps insignificant point; however, with all the common fears and misconceptions mentioned earlier, it is merely a waste of time for an educator to put effort into teaching improvisation if they are not willing to let go of those fears and try something new. Educators must take some time to practice improvisation and reflect upon the activity. If an educator is scared or insecure to try improvisation, the students will be scared, too. Music educators must know and remember that they have the skills to improvise. They do not need to be expert jazz musicians in order to participate in improvisation, just as they want to teach their students the same. If an educator is willing to participate and share in the music-making process with students, the students will be able to see the enjoyment the educator has for music-making, and the results of this are extremely beneficial for students (Musco, 2011).

Some examples of ways that educators may practice and prepare include practicing call and response vocally or on an instrument, taking simple folk songs and changing the rhythms or notes within them to make them their own, and using a few notes of a scale to create new

melodies while using a background track. Any of the activities that the students will be doing in class are a good place for the educator to start, too.

Creating the proper environment. Once an educator has prepared him or herself to understand, keep an open mind, and practice improvisation, they must work to create an environment that is safe, playful, and reassuring (Farrell, 2016). Students must feel safe and free to experiment and take risks (Robinson, 2011). This is something that can be done as the basic principles of improvisation are being introduced. One of the first steps is just allowing students to share ideas about any easy topic in class without them facing judgment in any way. It should be fun and about responding to what has been given (Berman, 2017). All too often, students are worried about what others will think of their ideas, so when educators allow them to share and do not criticize those ideas and then show appreciation for them sharing their ideas, they are setting the stage for an open and encouraging environment. The next step is to include some games that require them to think outside the box, more group games to get a sense of support not just from the educator, but also from their peers. Comedy improv games are a good place to start, as they give structure and time, along with the ease of comedy not feeling too intimidating (Berman, 2017). Any time instructions are given for an activity, be sure to give clear, concise parameters and model the activity for students so that you may let go after instructions and each student understands the expectations (Farrell, 2016). If students feel that they understand the exercise and believe that they can succeed, they are more willing to participate.

After some time is spent creating the sense of encouragement, educators should move on to doing some sound-related activities. These should not include specific musical skills. Have students create sounds that go to a story using simple classroom instruments (Clauhs, 2018). Listening activities are helpful as well, where they share what they see and feel through music

(Berman, 2017). This shows students that music represents different feelings and allows them to interpret it on their own, and it also promotes sharing ideas and feelings with the class.

While creating this environment, it is extremely important that music educators are mindful to not limit students or give a notion of any expectations. It is important to share that no one is an expert in this area; everyone is learning together (Clauhs, 2018). No student will do better or worse at an activity, and it is important that the educator does not give any indication that they feel one does better or worse. Educators should be careful to even discuss improvisation, possibly avoiding the term completely throughout the entire process. Keep it playful and fun, and the students will never associate it with a skill that has set expectations. Lastly, educators must not expect their students to become music specialists. This process is not meant to generate musicians who will perform and entertain. It is meant to bring people together and learn to share as a group and with the group (Musco, 2018).

Skills and structure. Providing skills and setting structure for improvisation while maintaining the nurturing environment can seem tricky to many; however, if the time is taken to really establish the nurturing environment and the guidelines listed in this section are followed, this task will flow rather easily, and allow educators to teach those building block skills of technique and musicianship as well.

The most important factor to this step is to avoid complexity (Berman, 2017). It must be kept simple to allow students to, “take ownership and understand the meaning of their choices” (Giordano, 2011, p. 34). Educators do not need to see improvisation as an objective, but an activity to combine with other skills (Whitcomb, 2013). As students learn new skills in music, educators can use an improvisation activity to help reinforce the new skill (Giordano, 2011).

There are several activities music educators can and should use when leading into improvisation. These not only teach students how to share ideas through music, but they also begin to build the skills and vocabulary necessary to create music based on their ideas. One basic activity that is recommended for music educators to use to casually introduce improvisation is call and response or echo games and activities (Berman, 2017). Educators can echo-chant rhythmic patterns on a single syllable (Poliniak, 2011). Call and response engages students in music-making immediately, trains their ears, and teaches shorter patterns that they can later use to build their own musical ideas. One key factor when using call and response is to eventually allow other students “call” and the class and the educator to respond (Berman, 2017). This is a great way to show students that their musical ideas are valued just as much as anyone else's, including the music educator's ideas. It also helps them build their confidence that they can create music on their own. It is important to keep it simple, one to two notes to begin with, and no more than 4 beats. Many educators shy away from improvisation and singing; however, the use of chanting neutral syllables and solfege syllables is a great way to start improvisation (Clauhs, 2018). You do not have to teach any instrumental techniques, and may start creating immediately.

Compose music first (Clauhs, 2018). Allowing students to compose on paper reaches out to the students who are more introverted and do not want to share immediately, but instead want to take the time to review and edit their creation beforehand. Initially, the music educator wants all students to share and participate in improvising in class, but by allowing students to put their ideas on paper first, it helps them sort through them and create something they are more confident about. The music educator must remember that students learn and apply skills in different ways, and that improvising and composing on paper are closely related. This can be a

beneficial step for many students. Music educators may want to select an emotion for the students to focus on. Allow the students to edit, ask questions, and practice their musical idea in class (Robinson, 2011). Once a student has a musical idea on paper, it can also be helpful for the educator to offer to play it for the student. This puts the focus on the creation of a musical idea, rather than the student's ability, to perform in front of others. Once they hear the short composition played by the confident educator, it can build more confidence in their own ability and lead them down the path of eventually performing and sharing ideas on their own.

As improvisation develops, it is important to give students some time to practice on their own during class. This may sound messy at the time, but it will allow for students to experiment without being put on the spot. It will also encourage them to create as they hear their classmates creating and trying new things, too. The educator may ask students to simply stop playing to show when they are done creating (Robinson, 2011). It can also be helpful to have a calm, visual signal to ask the class to pause to see where they are at in the process or let them know how much time they have remaining. It is best to give them as much time as needed, but class periods have limits, so helping the students pace themselves is important. This is also another reason to keep the exercise simple and short. The application is the key, not the length.

Guiding while encouraging creativity. The music educator needs to remember that their role is to guide the students through improvisational activities. It is important that the educator does not share any opinions on the musical creations of the student, but instead provides guiding questions to the student. It is also important that the educator does not become too overbearing or corrective about the technical aspects of music, such as rhythm and notation, especially in the beginning (Giordano, 2011).

It is important for students to feel encouraged to continue, but it can be tricky to do this without praising their musical creation. Music educators must praise the students for their efforts, not their product (Farrell, 2011). This puts the focus on the activity of creating and not the creation. This means there is no right or wrong answer in the end; the students' opinions of their own work is more important than the educators. This is a great viewpoint for students to have as they continue through their school career and on into life. When they stop looking to the educator for approval, they will start developing more intrinsic motivation and work toward their own goals. The music educator must be willing to focus on the students creating and thinking musically, rather than the music itself being the most important objective (Robinson, 2011).

Assessing and developing. Advice for assessing and developing improvisation can be found in many composition objectives. If improvisation is being used to apply a new musical skill, the educator may assess that skill and whether a student has achieved the objective (Giordano, 2011). As students learn more skills, they can be incorporated into the improvisation or composing assignments. It is important to allow students to rethink and improve upon their work (Giordano, 2011). Improvising is a form of composition, and even if the improvisation is planned out, it is a good place to start (Berman, 2017).

It is important that the music educator allows the time to complete the music making process and provides ways for students to record, reflect, and analyze their own work. Recording students' musical creations is one way to preserve them and it shows that the music educator has respect for them (Robinson, 2011). This also allows for reflection and critique from the student and can provide them with something tangible that they can keep and remember that they are capable of creating. Over time, if multiple recordings have been made, they can be used to

showcase the growth of the musician, not just for the student's sake, but for parents and administrators, too (Robinson, 2011).

Having the class collaborate and combine their musical ideas into one composition is a great way to combine assessment and group work together. This can even be featured at a concert. The music educator may provide an idea/feeling/event to share as a centralized theme and then have students, either individual or as small groups, create musical ideas for each section (Beckstead, 2013). This could be the end-of-term assessment after skills have been developed.

Reflective analysis is an ideal way for students to assess themselves and generate interest in areas that they might want to take on as their next challenge. The music educator must continue to ask guiding questions to have students think about what they did well and what they might change, and it is important that they always provide rationale for their answers (Robinson, 2011). Students will learn that there are many solutions to problems, it isn't just "right" or "wrong."

Educators can help their students further develop their improvisation skills by allowing students' ideas lead to the next project. As students come up with ideas on what they would like to do next, the educator can find ways to bridge the other areas of the music curriculum, such as music theory, history, and performance with the students' ideas. Students will see the benefit of learning new skills in music because they will want to learn how to do more in their own work. Motivation will rise, the ownership in music will strengthen, and the musicians will grow in so many more ways than if they had just been told what to do and not given the opportunity to create and reflect on their own ideas.

Additional challenges. There are a few additional challenges found when incorporating improvisation into the music classroom that should be shared before moving on with the project.

Some of the challenges include classroom time, vocal range for students, technical ability on instruments, introduction to notation (how and when), and practice efforts on their own (Clauhs, 2018). These challenges are all relevant but may be addressed by keeping things simple. The activities do not need to be lengthy; the range for voices and instruments should not be extensive (starting with 1 note and adding in more only when ready). The most important part in all of this is for the music educator to trust him or herself and be willing to try something new.

Project Application

The goal from this project was to create thorough plan to incorporate improvisation into the year-long curriculum for fifth grade general music. The areas that were addressed included teacher preparation, developing a nurturing environment, defining skills and establishing a structure, guiding while encouraging creativity, designing a culminating experience for the students, and planning for sixth grade. What I learned was in order to be successful, I needed to plan creative activities and also carefully plan my approach, assessment, and feedback.

The curriculum map was modified from the existing fifth grade curriculum (See Appendix A). It was necessary to reduce the quantity of concepts that were to be taught. While this approach would narrow the breadth of the scope of the concepts, students would benefit from exploring each concept with increased depth and multiple opportunities to apply what they were learning.

The lesson plans included on this project are for one class period per week for an entire year (See Appendix B). I see my 5th grade classes once a week for 40 minutes, so the lessons were planned carefully in order to make sure students would be successful within one class period and could retain the information from one week to the next. This is often the reason why activities and objectives are kept simple, yet effective.

There were four rubrics included in this project that focused on each quarter. These rubrics were designed to measure the focus area for the quarter, or Big Idea (See Appendix C). The goal was to keep them brief but effective so that the educator could easily get a read on where the student, section, and class were in terms of the project's objectives. Although, these rubrics were not meant to measure day-to-day objectives, some assessment plans related to day-to-day objectives were included within the lesson plans themselves as part of the daily activities. These rubrics were designed to help the educator keep the big picture in mind and help see progress, even if some of the activities in the daily lessons would not turn out as planned.

The manual written was meant to be a guide to explain the reasoning for the different parts of the project (See Appendix D). The nurturing environment was a big focus, along with explanation of the activities. I found that with the activities, it was one thing to read about them and another to demonstrate them. The short descriptions included in the manual explained why I chose these certain activities and what should be the focus when using them.

Teacher preparation. One of the first steps is to let go of previous expectations for both educator and students. The educator must keep an open mind and realize that he or she possesses the skills to teach improvisation, while also understanding that he or she might need to look at things from a different perspective when guiding students to create. In my own work, this meant letting go of my expectation of what the correct response or answer is in many situations and activities. The students must feel as though they can create freely, and no matter what their answer is, there is no wrong answer (Berman, 2017). For the educator, this can be a big shift, especially for someone who is also a band director and is always analyzing and trying to “fix” things in rehearsal. It also means adjusting feedback to be more unbiased and allow the students to take ownership in their own skills and opinions. This does not mean that concepts taught will

not be assessed, but how they are applied will change. One challenge is learning to give unbiased feedback and continuing to guide the students to develop their own ears, ideas, and opinions about music. In the later parts of the project, starting in mid-second quarter, I worked to incorporate guiding questions for students about their creative work that would lead them to evaluate their work and find their own answers (Robinson, 2011).

Educators must practice the activities that they wish to use in improvisation or any creative objective. This is not uncommon for educators, as many were taught to practice their classroom activities during their initial training; it is just a new area of practice. A suggestion to keep this attainable for educators who are inexperienced in improvisation is to keep the activities simple and consistent. Educators do not need to be experts in improvisation or composition in order to teach the basics to students (Giordano, 2011). A place to start is for the educator to find one or two activities that are appealing and focus on practicing those activities. Once the educator is comfortable with those activities, they may be used every day. This allows the educator to assess the new concept as it is applied to the existing activity, and allows students to focus on using the new concept in a creative way that speaks to them. They are not learning new procedures or requirements. For this reason, I selected the main activities at the beginning of the year to include echoing, call and response, and one-word share. Something as simple as an echo game allows the students to be casually introduced into improvisation without ever being told they are doing so. The educator begins by having the class echo his or her patterns, and then eventually asks for a student volunteer (Berman, 2017). Since these activities are simple, they are less intimidating for both student and educator. This also helps the educator set-up a nurturing environment within the classroom, as the pressure is lowered with fewer expectations and more acceptance early on.

Lastly, the ongoing preparation is for the educator to allow him or herself to learn alongside of the students. The educator must stop giving the answers and allow students to seek the answers. Educators should lead by example and seek answers alongside his or her students. An “effective teacher of creative strategies perceives him/herself as an equal member of the learning community, not the sole giver of information” (Robinson, 2011). Educators must remember that they always have room to learn and grow, just as they want their students to always continue to do the same. Leading by example means also demonstrating what it means to be a lifelong learner. If the educator shows how he/she is an equal member in the learning process and works more to guide the students instead of dictating what they must do in their education, it will help them take more ownership in their musicianship and education. Having clear plans and objectives are great, but it is also important to keep one’s own judgement and insecurities from blocking their own learning, too. Educators emphasize to students that it is okay to try things and to make mistakes, and we must take our own advice and lead by example in this area. In this project, recording the album is still an area that will take some learning and planning. It is important to be flexible and adjust plans as needed. Educators must remember during this process that it is still about their students and making music. Another positive impact on students will be their opportunity to see their educator enjoy learning and enjoy music making (Musco, 2018).

Developing a nurturing environment. “When students believe their thinking is valued and respected, their confidence to share (musical) thoughts increases and happens more freely, fluidly, and frequently” (Robinson, 2011). It will take time. General music classes are limited in class time and educators, including myself, tend to put the relationship building on the backburner in order to get down to what *really* needs to be taught. The truth is that it doesn’t

matter what music educators teach if their students are not fully involved. The limited time is even more reason to create the nurturing environment so that when students enter the music classroom, they feel free to be themselves and want to engage in whatever learning is about to take place. If they are guarded, it doesn't matter what we teach because they are not going to connect with it or want to engage with it. Much care must be put into creating an environment where students feel free to experiment and take risks (Robinson, 2011). Nevertheless, it is still intimidating to think of sacrificing class time for team building, instead of teaching students to read rhythms and play recorders. The answer is adjusting the activities just right so that you can create that environment while still teaching the concepts. I have found that you still must scale back a little on the concept taught, but you can have an application activity sooner that will help develop that environment. The key to this is in the feedback and teaching the students how to respond to each other's work. Remind all students that their opinions and ideas matter in your class and that no one is right or wrong.

Regarding limited educational time and spending it wisely, it is important to start off the right way from the beginning. Slow down at the beginning of the year and connect with the students. Do funny improv games as first that do not have musical expectations (Berman, 2017). The warm-up for the first lesson plan is an echo activity where the entire class makes silly sounds starting with the teacher and then moving to the topic of zoo animals. After the teacher demonstrates a few, she asks for student volunteers to share, too. This shows that the teacher values their input but will not put pressure on anyone to perform if they do not want to.

It is also important to find something that is relevant to them (Robinson, 2011). Each year, I start my general music lessons with some popular music that most of the students will know. In this project, I used the song *September* by Earth, Wind and Fire, but will be using the

version from the motion picture *Trolls*, as most of the students are still quite familiar with the movie.

Allowing the students to share feedback is an important part of creating the nurturing environment in the classroom. They must know their thoughts and opinions are valued (Robinson, 2011). The one-word share activity is used in many lessons in this project, and it is a time-efficient way of allowing all students to share their thoughts without taking up too much class time or putting too much pressure on more reserved students who do not like to talk much. The key is to reinforce with students that their opinion is important in the music classroom. I have written this in my lesson plans to be sure that I share this with my students several times over, so there is no doubt in their minds that I want to know their thoughts and opinions. It is important to treat each student's responses to these equally.

Feedback is probably the most powerful tool in either creating or destroying the nurturing environment in a classroom. Educators must praise students for the effort they put into creating and sharing (Farrell, 2011). From the beginning, the class should be prompted to follow the educator's example and taught that everyone's opinions matter and everyone's musical creations are their own and they can be whatever that student wants them to be. There will most likely be moments at the beginning where students might snicker if someone "messes-up," or share when they are impressed at another student's skills. It will be important for the teacher to neutralize these situations in order to retain the theme that everyone's contributions are equal. This can be done by keeping a calm and neutral presence and responding to the class when needed. For example, if a student has a hard time translating their creation when it is their turn, the educator should reassure the student that there are no right or wrong answers, and it is whatever you want to share. If a student performs something that is impressive to the class, the educator should not

discourage that behavior, as that would take away for the student-creator, but rather just continue without giving that student additional praise. Eventually, the students will see that all creative ideas hold equal value to the educator and will learn to follow this example. If a student is doing something well and the educator wants to point that out, the educator should point out the specific skill and not the student. For example, if a student has ideal hand position while playing recorder, the educator could state, “Student A has a great example of proper hand position. Her left hand is on top and she is hovering her fingers in a C-shape.” It is important that Student A does not get additional praise for her hand position or extra attention or rewards because of it. This focuses on recognizing that student’s effort without implying that the rest of the class is lesser than because their hand position is not as good as Student A, and it also praises the effort that Student A is putting forth instead of praising Student A. Even if Student A is someone who thrives on attention from the educator, eventually, if this feedback is continued throughout the year in this class, all students will start to value the effort more, instead of feeling like some students are better at music than others, or that the educator likes certain students more than others.

“Students should be allowed to pass if they are not ready to share in an improvisation activity if they do not feel ready” (Berman, 2017). When a student passes on a share activity, it is important to not draw attention to accept that graciously and continue. As the shy students start to see the welcoming and nurturing environment and realize that they can be themselves, they will begin to feel more comfortable in the classroom. It is important that when they do share to remember to not praise the student for being right or wrong but thank them for sharing with the class. It is also important to not give this student extra praise and make a big deal out of the fact that they finally shared. This could cause the student to feel embarrassed and not continue to

share and it can also tell the rest of the students that this student is more important than the others. If the class decides to applaud the fact that this student finally shared, do not diminish it, but do not add to it either. Allow the students to respond, then move on with the activity.

Creating a sense of community with each class will develop the more ideas are shared and effort is praised instead of results. There are a few more activities that will help develop the sense of community, too. Having activities where students can relax and have fun are important. That does not mean music class should be unstructured game day every day, but simple things like doing silly vocalises and allowing the students to laugh a little at them, especially when they are first learning them, help a lot. Having students share their own silly sounds with takes away the intimidation factor of creating and sharing because it is supposed to be silly. Comedy improv games are also helpful, along with drum circles and body percussion. All students have listened to and tapped or drummed on things in their everyday lives (Berman, 2017). The expectation of doing something impressive is removed and allows students to not worry about judgement.

Utilizing activities that can build a bridge between current things that are important to students will also help build a sense of community. Current popular music is a great way to start this, along with allowing students to have share time about their favorite things in their everyday lives, or what they are did over the weekend. Students will learn that this group cares about them because they listen to each other when they share. In many cases, these classes are with each other all day, but the music room might be the place where they feel they are all equal. This will also help when students start to analyze and critique their own work later in the year. If they are taught to respect and care about each other, they will also learn that they must respect and care about themselves, so when they critique their own work, they can be guided away from thinking their ideas are inadequate and less worthy.

Skills and structure. When it comes to including improvisation activities into the curriculum, it is important to make creative activities a part of every lesson. This allows the creative process to become part of the norm, and eventually washes away the fear of the unknown. The more something is practiced, the more comfortable the students and the educator will be with the process. It does not have to be an extensive creative project each week. In fact, most weeks, especially early on, the activities should be simple and easy to accomplish, so students feel comfortable and the educator can feel confident in preparation and application. The activities should be related to the objectives being taught. Even when it is something as simple as a one-word share, it is related to the music they listened to or the skill they just learned. When it is an echo or call and response pattern, it includes a new note learned on recorder, or a new rhythm concept taught that day.

Give clear guidelines to structure the task and be sure the students understand what is expected in the activity (Beckstead, 2013). Early on, when the educator simply wants each student to share something with the class, the educator needs to emphasize that and state, “The number one goal for this activity is to just share something with the class, that is all.” When the activities are focusing on a specific concept, the educator needs to emphasize that concept by stating, “The main goal of this share is to include quarter notes and eighth notes.” As students share, the educator evaluates whether or not they achieved the goal, but never corrects the student in public and is thankful that the student shared. The assessment is only to inform the educator whether the student understands the concept and can demonstrate it. If the student is not successful in this skill, the educator knows that the student will need some additional help and can plan accordingly.

Developing and practicing activities ahead of time is a key step to success in this project. While the echo, one word share, and call and response activities are not the most complex and won't require too much practice, it is still important to go through the activity to be sure you can model what you want to model and ask for the correct responses. On one-word shares, it will be important in some cases to provide a word bank for students to refer to help generate ideas and make them feel secure. For more complex activities, it will be important to test out the steps to ensure the students will understand the instructions and that the activities will be able to be completed in the allotted amount of time. This was something that I had to work on in the lesson plans. I wanted to still include the songs and material from current lessons, but initially that led me to not giving adequate time for the activities. Not allowing enough time would be counterproductive and lead to feelings of insecurity and stress and hinder the nurturing environment for both the students and the educator. While I did not want to eliminate things that I currently have in my lessons, I realized that I did not have to eliminate the concepts and if the students are utilizing concepts in a creative way, they are much more likely to retain the information. A more important factor that I started to realize as I worked on this project and understanding this point was that not only will they retain the information, but they will develop a deeper sense of appreciation for the concepts and the creative process. Students will begin to see what kind of skills and effort are used in creating music and will have an idea of what went into the process of creating the music that they experience outside of the music classroom, too.

Guiding while encouraging creativity. Neutral feedback is a key factor in guiding while encouraging creativity and fostering the nurturing environment. Another area that is important to help guide and encourage creativity is using consistent activities. Initially, I found an extensive list of creative activities to use in the lessons for this project. I chose to use only a select amount

of those activities in order to allow the students to master the process of each activity and allow them to feel more free to create once the students understand the parameters of each activity. Avoiding complexity allows for confidence building and then the educator may add more when they are comfortable and confident with the current parameters.

The old saying “less is more” is incredibly relevant when it comes to adding in creative activities. By using fewer activities, it allows the students to learn the procedures for each activity and feel more comfortable with them. If students are more comfortable with the activities, they will feel more comfortable and confident when it comes to creating. If they are constantly putting their efforts into learning the steps of a new activity, then there is no time left to create. Also, if a new concept is being taught and applied to a new activity, it will lead to confusion and take too much time in the class. Students will not be able to focus on the main objective.

By teaching something simple like echo and call and response and using it from day one, the students become familiar with the process and then when the new concept is being taught and added into the creative activity, the students actually have the ability to focus on the objective of using the new concept. The creative activity is the part that they are most familiar and comfortable with, and they will see the new concept to be even more creative because the educator has just taught them how to expand their vocabulary. It’s similar to teaching a student to write poetry and having them become comfortable with their own poetry and then sharing more and more words to help them express what they want to share, or teaching a student to love painting with just 2-3 colors and later, adding in more colors, after they have learned to appreciate the activity of painting.

Another concept to be aware of when guiding while encouraging creativity is recognizing that not all students will enjoy these activities as much as others. It is important to recognize that and remind the students that it is okay to not like something, but we are learning to do these things to better understand and appreciate them. The one-word share exercise is an excellent way to allow students to share their dislike or frustration with a skill while also being creative. Educators will be able to motivate students in a different way when allowing them to share their feelings about the music, activity, and lesson. Students must learn that it is okay to dislike something and remain respectful about it. This process also allows the educator to learn more about what the students are taking from an activity in a fast and informal manner. If several of the students are sharing that it is frustrating or difficult, it lets the educator know that perhaps the pace is too fast or more explanation may be needed. Allowing the students to share their opinions and reminding them that their opinions matter continues to foster the nurturing environment throughout the year as well. When students know that their opinion is valued, they open-up and allow themselves to connect with the music and music-making process more. The issue of feeling judged or worrying if the educator approves of his or her contribution no longer stands in the way.

The most important part of guiding is knowing how to respond to students. We teach students that they must be respectful towards one another and that everyone can like and dislike different things. It is important that the educator follows the same guidelines of respect, too, and does not favor those who are most enthusiastic about it or push those who are not. Favoring those who are enthusiastic about the project will only shift the students' focus away from doing it for the love of music and create a sense that they should be doing it for the educator's approval. If the educator pushes the less-enthusiastic students, it can imply that they are inadequate or not

skilled enough to be involved in music. It is not about the educator; it is about the relationship the student is building with music and creating. All students must do their part and the educator does have to make sure all students stay engaged, but it is important to let them have their own feelings about the project and be able to participate in a respectful manner without being pressured to like something inorganically. This will only push those away from truly enjoying music for music's sake in the future.

Recording students' work. The culminating project for this unit was the recording of an album for the full fifth grade class. Each class section would compose and rehearse their own song and then record and present it. Completing this project would enable the students to learn about many kinds of careers in music, to create a permanent record of their work, to revisit the feelings of creating and accomplishment associated with the project, and to stimulate their desire to continue creating music.

Moving on into sixth grade. Moving on into sixth grade, the same kind of format would be followed for the year, where the culture is established and developed during the first quarter, skills are taught and refined in the second, the writing process takes place in the third, and then rehearsing and recording would take place during fourth quarter. The parts of the curriculum and plans that would change in sixth grade are the concepts taught. More advanced rhythms, forms, melodic, and harmonic forms would be taught and used. Students would get to have more of a say in their planning procedures; since they would have been through the process before, they would be able to share more about what else they would like to do. The groups would either be smaller, or students might work individually. One melodic and harmonic objective would be to move beyond the pentatonic scale and use a 12-bar blues form with the corresponding major scales and arpeggios. This would allow students to understand the folk, blues, and pop music

they use in their everyday lives. Being able to teach students how to utilize this form and feel confident in playing the chord progression on guitar would also build confidence in their music-making skills. These benefits would ideally boost enrollment in ensemble music classes or promote music-making for those students not enrolled in an ensemble course.

Conclusion. The initial plan for this project was to create an example for educators to demonstrate how improvisation can be incorporated into the everyday general music curriculum and lesson plans. Throughout the process of developing the curriculum map, lesson plans, rubrics, and manual, I learned that it is much more about the approach and feedback rather than the knowledge and experience in improvisation that makes the biggest difference in students' music education. It also became apparent that scaling down and modifying the objectives is essential to allowing the appropriate amount of time to develop and foster a nurturing environment and allow students to create their own music. However, the benefits of guiding students to use the musical concepts taught to help them learn to create music, work together, and learn to express themselves is well worth the time to make the adjustments. It helps students establish their own connection to music and develop an appreciation of music. It also teaches students to respect their peers, appreciate the effort of working together, and that their own ideas and opinions are valuable and matter. These are traits that every educator wants for his or her students to see them lead happy and successful lives.

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Appendix A: 5th Grade Curriculum Map

1st Quarter	August		September				October	
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 1	Week 2
Big Idea	Imagine: Generate musical ideas for various purposes and contexts							
Create	Unit 1: Connect with students through music		Unit 2: Interact with music				Unit 3: Begin to explore altering given music and creating music	
Essential Questions	How do individuals choose music to experience? How do musicians make meaningful connections to creating, performing, and responding?						How do musicians make creative decisions?	
Objectives	Steady Beat/Tempo Quarter/Eighth	Quarter/Eighth	Quarter/Eighth Half	Quarter/Eighth Half	Q/E/H	Q/E/H/W	Q/E/H/W	Review
	SM	SMD	DRMFS	DRMFS, Ostinato	DRMFSLTD	DRMFSLTD		Review
				Arpeggio	Chord	Chord progression		
	Verse/Chorus	Verse/Chorus		AAB		AAB		
Featured Music/Music History	Pop Music, ask students what they like	1980s/1970s	1960s	1950s/Elvis	Big Band Swing	Louis Armstrong	New Orleans Style Jazz	African Drumming: Funga Alafia (Liza Jane)
Activities	Sing/Dance	Sing/Dance	Sing/Orff	Sing/Orff	Sing/Orff	Sing/Orff	Body Percussion, Composition	Drums

2nd Quarter	October		November			December		
	Week 3	Week 4	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3/4	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3
Big Idea	Plan and Make: Select and develop musical ideas for defined purposes and contexts							
Create	Unit 3: Begin to explore altering given music and creating music		Unit 4: Reflecting on musical ideas and defining purpose. Decide upon next theme for the next project.			Unit 5: Create 2-4 measure rhythmic and melodic compositions with specific guidelines.		
Essential Questions	How do musicians make creative decisions?		How do musicians generate creative ideas? How do musicians improve the quality of their performance?			How do musicians improve the quality of their work?		
Objectives	Review	Performance	Review performances	Sixteenth notes	Sixteenth notes	Sixteenth notes	Sixteenth notes	Holiday
	Arpeggio		Reflect on the creative process	Note names on staff	G Scale/Arpeggio	G Scale, sharp	G Scale	Holiday
			Discuss possible future themes			I-V Chord Progression	I-V Chord Progression	Holiday
Featured Music/Music History	Talk about giving back and being good examples for the younger students. Have them share what creating music as a group has taught them.		Music about weather	Rain songs	Rain songs	Vivaldi: Four Seasons	Winter songs	
Activities	Orff, drums, voices	Orff, voices, drums	Review and analyze	Recorders	Recorders	Recorders	Recorders	

3rd Quarter	January				February				March	
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 1	Week 2
Big Idea	Evaluate and Refine: Evaluate and refine selected musical ideas to create musical work that meets appropriate criteria									
Create	Unit 6: Final choices made on album theme and composition themes for each section. Begin the composition process.				Unit 7: Review, edit, and develop ideas for composition.				Unit 7 Continued	
Essential Questions	When is the creative work ready to share?									
Objectives	Review concepts from Semester 1	Select a theme and outline goals for this album	Compose melodies for chorus and verses	Review and Revise melodies and lyrics	Learn the song, verse 1 and chorus	Learn remaining verses	Add in new instrumental parts	Review the song with the recently added parts, record and listen to see if we like what we have so far.	Decide who is going to play/sing which parts on the recording.	Practice the song with the assigned parts.
		Review rhythms, scales and chords		Careers in music composition		Decide what else we want to add: drum ostinato, xylophone, recorder melody, non-pitched percussion	Practice the song with the new instrumental parts, edit as needed	Take a break from the creative process to do a little teambuilding and have some fun.	Do a sample recording to see what it will be like.	Discuss goals for recording.
	Explore themes for the album/songs	Compose a melody								Make first recording
Featured Music/Music History										
Activities	Recorders	Recorders	Recorders	Recorders	Guitars	Guitars	Guitars			

4th Quarter	March		April				May	
	Week 3	Week 4	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 1	Week 2
Big Idea	Present: Share creative musical work that conveys intent, demonstrates craftsmanship, and exhibits originality							
Create	Unit 8: Assign recording, marketing, presentation, performance jobs for album.		Unit 9: Recording final product and making final decisions on presentation.				Unit 10: Presentation to school/family, reflect on work overall.	
Essential Questions	When is the creative work ready to share?		How do musicians improve the quality of their performance? (Performing) When is the creative work ready to share?					
Recording	Start recording	Continue recording/editing	Record/Review/Edit				SPRING BREAK	Celebrating/Reflecting
Analyzing/Reflecting	Troubleshooting		Continue process	Reflecting, "Behind the music" interviews	Advice for future groups		Plan for next album	
Careers in Music	Sound engineer						Sharing with family and friends	

Appendix B: Lesson Plans

August, Week 1

Lesson 1

- **Objectives:**
 - Seating chart, learn names
 - Set the stage for a nurturing environment: Your opinions and thoughts are important in this classroom! I want to hear from you. This class is not about me, the teacher, it is about music and learning about each other.
 - Sing and recognize SMD, Steady Beat, Verse/Chorus
 - Make connections with their favorite music
- **Songs used:** “Concentration,” “September” (version from the movie *Trolls*)
- **Instruments:** Teacher on guitar
- **Movement:** Funny actions on call and response, Dance to “September”
- **Create:** Funny actions and sounds, one word share

Procedures: (40 minute class period)

1. Call and response: Have students come in and stand on the mat, each student on one colored square. Ask students to stand and be your echo. Do some funny sounds and actions then go around the room and ask the students to share a funny sound or action pertaining to a theme (zoo animals are always good) and have the class echo that person. If they do not want to create one, allow them to pass. (5 minutes)
2. Teacher resumes the call/students echo and moves to counting/clapping rhythms and singing short solfege phrases, teaching the song “Concentration” by rote. Move on to using students names and a beginning version of the game Concentration. When the student’s name is called, they may go take a seat in a spot of their choice. (15 minutes)
3. Teacher then puts names into seating chart, explains the rule of choosing seats, that if anyone needs to move to better help them focus in class that they may do so. Teacher introduces self, welcomes students, thanks them for coming in and singing immediately! (5 minutes)
4. Ask the question, “What is your favorite Disney/movie song?” and go around the class and let each student answer. Remind them how important their opinions are in this classroom! Talk about the movie *Trolls* and that one of your favorite songs from the movie is the song “September.” Explain to the students the difference between a verse and chorus. Show them the special dance move that will be used on the chorus. **Every time you reach the chorus, use the same movement.** After doing the dance moves with the students, stop moving and ask them to keep going. Watch to see if the students can identify the chorus. Thank the students for having a dance party with you! (10 minutes)
5. Closure: One word share. Explain to students that you would really love to hear their opinion on their first music class with you. There are no right or wrong answers for this.

Remind them, “Your opinion is important in this classroom!” Whatever the students share, the teacher must respond with a neutral yet encouraging response that shows their opinion is important and you are so thankful that they are sharing with the class.

Examples: “Thank you for sharing.” “Awesome work!” “Thumbs up!” Have stickers at the ready, too. They LOVE getting stickers so go for it on day one.

- a. Once they share, have them line up. If a student is having a hard time thinking of a word, help them out with a word. Don’t make them feel too pressured and “on the spot.” Make sure they **know** you enjoyed the class time with them and you are excited to see them again next week because they are so great! (5 minutes)

August, Week 2

Lesson 2 **Recorder orders

- **Objectives:**
 - Set the stage for a nurturing environment: Your opinions and thoughts are important!
 - Sing and create together as a class
 - Make connections between current pop and classic pop through covers
- **Songs used:** Concentration, Liza Jane, September (Earth, Wind and Fire original)
- **Instruments:**
- **Movement:** Dance moves for verse/chorus
- **Create:** Verse of Liza Jane, One word share

Procedures: (40 minute class period)

1. Call and response vocal and rhythmic. Sing and play Concentration. This time, pass it around and each time someone’s name is called they can sit down. (5 minutes)
2. Teach Liza Jane by rote, sing it with your guitar (in key of C). Talk about changing the tempo when you slow it down to learn it. (10 minutes)
3. Sing it several times and show them what word you change chords on (play the “easy” version of the chords if on guitar). Do a basic review of guitar basics, parts of guitar, finger placement, etc. (5 minutes)

This is our Theme Song for the semester! We will learn something new about Liza Jane throughout the year and sing it at least once every class. It can be substituted for other I-V folk songs (here is a great list <https://www.bethsnotesplus.com/2017/04/songs-chords-v.html>)

4. Create a new verse to Liza Jane as a class. Start by just changing some words to the first verse (Instead of “I’ve got a house in Baltimore” change it to your local town. Change the rest of the song to fit things about the town and the community with suggestions from the students. Have some ideas ready to go to help them out. If they have a hard time thinking of stuff on their own, offer suggestions and let them vote. That way they are still giving their input, but the stress of creating something is not too much. Remind them that their

input is important to you! Say that to them several times. Write the lyrics down and create a printout for the students to have next class. (10 minutes)

5. Pop song from the 1970s: “September” original by Earth, Wind, and Fire. Watch the music video and *see if they remember the movement for the verse/chorus from the week before*. Recognize the “funny” outfits up front and mention how it was a part of the culture then. (5 minutes)
6. Closure: One word share using a descriptive word about the music video, but they cannot reuse the same word (this is the beginning of giving them guidelines within their creative exercises). Remind them that their opinion is important in this class! If they cannot think of a term right when you get to them, let them pass and come back to them later. Help them if they cannot think of anything at all. Give them a sticker and have the students line up once they share. (5 minutes)

September, Week 1

Lesson 3

- **Objectives:**
 - Develop nurturing environment
 - Introduce the concept of the root of a chord
 - Orff instrument procedures
 - SMD
 - Listening and analyzing music
 - Reading rhythms (quarters and eighths, echo only)
- **Songs used:** Liza Jane
- **Instruments:** Orff, voices
- **Movement:** Solfa hand-signs
- **Create:** One word share

Procedures: (40 minute class period)

1. Call and response: Use MusicPlay’s Echo Solfege for SMD. Be sure to use hand signs while singing and have students do the same. Have students sing Do on 4 quarter notes and then sing So. Play the chords C and G and have students switch from Do and So when you change chords. *Stop singing with them and see if they can recognize when you are changing chords by using their solfege hand signs as you strum chords*. Do this in quarter notes, 4 quarter notes per chord. (10 minutes)
2. Introduction to Orff instruments, procedures for getting the instruments and mallets out, rules while not playing, mallet grip, etc. (5 minutes)
3. Have students play Do (C) and So (G) on the Orff instruments. Use MusicPlay’s Echo Rhythms (approx. 1 min each sequence) and have the students echo the rhythms on those two notes. Take other bars off instruments if needed. (5 minutes)
4. Review Liza Jane while teacher plays guitar. Point out the two different chords, C and G. Go through slowly and have students follow on Orff, playing the root of the chord while

teacher plays and sings. They do not need to master this activity, just have them follow slowly so they can see where the chords change. Focus on one line at a time. First line changes to V chord on the word “Jane” and the second line changes to the V chord on the word “Little” and back to one on “Jane.” (5 minutes)

5. Put Orff away, take time to do it properly. (5 minutes)
6. Share the David Bowie cover of Liza Jane. See if any of them know who David Bowie is. Explain that this recording was done way before he was the pop superstar. (5 minutes)
7. Do a one word share on a word to describe the Bowie cover. There are no right or wrong answers for this. Whatever the students share, the teacher must respond with a neutral yet encouraging response that shows their opinion is important and you are so thankful that they are sharing with the class. Examples: “Thank you for sharing.” “Awesome work!” “Your opinion is important in this classroom!” “Thumbs up!” (5 minutes)

September, Week 2

Lesson 4

- **Objectives:**
 - Define scale
 - Ostinato
 - DRMFS
 - Recognize chords and begin arpeggios
 - AAB Form/Blues verse
- **Songs used:** Liza Jane, Hound Dog <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4HWhrPaDTj4>
- **Instruments:** Orff, voices
- **Movement:** Hand signs
- **Create:** One word share

Procedures: (40 minute class period)

1. C&R: Solfege--DRMFS is the call, students answer with SFMRD. Pass around the room and let each section of students (group of 5 chairs) be the call, not changing anything yet. The students simply sing DRMFS and everyone else answers with SFMRD. **Use as a diagnostic to see who can demonstrate proper singing habits and do hand signs.** Offer for students to do the call solo, reward volunteers with stickers (regardless of accuracy). Tell the students that this is the beginning of our major scale, and that a scale is a group of notes arranged in a specific pattern. (5 min)
2. Echo: Rhythms, quarter and eighths on body percussion. Use MP Rhythms first. **Pass around the room for the students to create a measure of rhythm using quarter/eighths.** Keep track of who can demonstrate the correct kinds of rhythms and play one full measure without going over or under. If a student does not want to share, allow them to pass. Once finished, share a round of applause for all soloists. (5 minutes)
3. Review the Orff parts with guitar chords from previous lesson, students play C on Orff when teacher plays C chord on guitar, and G when teacher plays G chord. Add in Liza

- Jane and have students recognize the chord change. Only have them play quarter notes and be sure to remind them to keep a steady tempo. (10 minutes)
4. Next, add in the third of the chord to the arpeggio. So on C, have students play C-E, and G-B. Start with quarter notes and practice having them change between the two when the chords change in the song. After you have practiced that, ask for suggestions to change one quarter note in the ostinato pattern to two eighth notes. Let them know that these notes you are adding in are parts of the full chord that is being played on the guitar. When we break up the notes of the chord and play them one at a time, we call this an arpeggio. (10 minutes)
 5. Mention last week's listening example (David Bowie's Liza Jane), and share that this week we are going to listen to some rock and roll that is from about ten years before that. Ask who has ever heard of Elvis Presley? Play the song "Hound Dog" for the students. Use a lyrics video off Youtube so that the students can read the lyrics as an introduction to the AAB form. (5 minutes)
 6. Put Orff away and also do a one word share about what they think of the song "Hound Dog." Provide a word bank so they can have an idea of some descriptive words. Have them line up once they share. (5 minutes)

September, Week 3

Lesson 5

- **Objectives:**
 - C Major scale (DRMFSLTD)
 - Arpeggio/chord
 - Jazz listening
- **Songs used:** Sing the Scale, [Liza Jane \(Preservation Hall JB\)](#)
- **Instruments:** Orff, voices
- **Movement:** Hand signs
- **Create:** A visual representation of the listening selection

Procedures: (40 minute class period)

1. C&R: Solfege--DRMFS is the call, students answer with SFMRD. Pass around the room and let each section of students (group of 5 chairs) be the call, not changing anything yet. The students simply sing DRMFS and everyone else answers with SFMRD. **Use as a diagnostic to see who can demonstrate proper singing habits and do hand signs.** Offer for students to do the call solo, reward volunteers with stickers (regardless of accuracy). Tell the students that this is the beginning of our major scale, and that a scale is a group of notes arranged in a specific pattern. (5 min)
2. Sing the Scale: Now look at the full scale using the song "Sing the Scale." Let the students listen to it first, then pass out the worksheet for the song and the scale. It explains half-steps and whole-steps with a picture of the piano. Remind them that a scale is a collection of notes arranged in a specific pattern and that all major scales will follow this pattern of half-steps and whole-steps. Walk the students through it. Use the

interactive solfa tool on MP to display the answers for the class to see. Point out how the second half of the song is simply the scale ascending. Also take the time to count the rhythms and review the half note at the end of the song. (10 min)

3. Sing the song together. Start by using the hand signs and speaking through the solfege, then singing it measure by measure. Add in words, then sing together. Accompany with guitar or piano. Eventually, this exercise may be sing in a round. (5 min)
4. Show the music to the song using note names, move to Orff instruments and have students practice the scale from the song on Orff. If there are students who understand this faster than others, allow them to work on the first half of the song. Students do not need to master this on Orff. This is simply to give them the chance to see how the scale works on an instrument. Remind them of the arpeggio they worked on last week. Have them find C-E-G. Have one group play each note and explain how these notes make a chord when played together. (10 minutes)
5. Have students turn over their worksheet from the scale lesson. Explain to them that you want them to draw the first shape they think of while listening to a jazz version of Liza Jane (Preservation Hall JB). After they draw their shape, fill it with words they would use to describe this version of the song and elaborate into whatever visual representation of the song they like. (7 minutes)
6. One word share about what shape they thought of for the activity. Have students hand in their papers as they line up. (3 min)

September, Week 4

Lesson 6

- **Objectives:**
 - C Major scale, arpeggio
 - I Chord
 - Review rhythms and create
 - New Orleans Jazz Origins, Louis Armstrong
- **Songs used:** Sing the Scale, When the Saints (MP and [Louis Armstrong](#))
- **Instruments:** Orff, voices
- **Movement:**
- **Create:** Rhythm response

Procedures: (40 minute class period)

1. Echo rhythms with MP (2 min). Call and Response with rhythms. Teacher claps a specific rhythms and goes around the room as each student responds with their own rhythm. It may be the same as the teachers or something of their own. Use only quarter and eighth notes for this activity. (5 min total)
2. Practice scale on Orff. Two quarters per pitch, then single quarter per pitch. Ascending and descending. (5 min)

3. Practice the arpeggio for the I chord. Have students play different parts to create a chord all together. Play the chord on guitar or piano while they do this. Explain to them why this is called a I chord. (5 min)
4. Now, when you are playing a C chord on the guitar, the students may play whatever patterns they want to play on C-E-G. Allow them to experiment all at once while you play an accompaniment. After a time of experimentation is up, ask if anyone would like to play a solo for the class. Reward those soloists with stickers and have the entire class applaud (remind them of respectful audience etiquette). (10 min)
5. Put Orff away as you segway into next section. Explain that knowing the arpeggio of a chord helps musicians create solos of their own. Refer to the Preservation Hall JB recording of Liza Jane from the week before and how there were soloists playing on different instruments (play a short clip of a solo section). While it might not have sounded just like the arpeggios we just played, most of those musicians have those in their head while they are playing to give them guidelines of what notes they would like to use. A famous jazz musician who was one of the first to start doing this was Louis Armstrong. Listen to the recording of Saints by Armstrong and help the students break down what the band is doing. The clarinet is playing more scale-like passages, the drums and bass some background winds are playing ostinatos, the piano is playing chords (like our guitar accompaniment) and Louis is playing some made-up patterns that are often based on arpeggios, just like we did! (10 min)
6. One dance share on this version of Saints. Turn the recording back on and have each person share a 4-count dance move with you before they line up. It can be anything from footwork to pointing a finger in the air. Have them line-up when they share and reward their dance moves with stickers. (5 min)

October, Week 1

Lesson 7

- **Objectives:**
 - Rhythms
 - Create a rhythm composition
- **Songs used:** Create original composition, Liza Jane (Cha Wa's version)
- **Instruments:** voices, body percussion
- **Create:** Halloween Rhythm Rap

Procedures: (40 minute class period)

1. Listening: Cha Wa's Liza Jane. Take note of the traditional costume that the lead singer is wearing and also the different kind of instrumentation this group has vs. a normal rock band or traditional jazz band. (5 min)
2. Echo: Rhythms. Review the rhythms associated with the Halloween terms you have listed on the board (pumpkin is two quarters, skeleton is two eighths and a quarter, etc) (5 minutes)

3. Present October's project to them (create a Halloween composition/rhythm rap, and then orchestrate the composition). Show them how to combine words and rhythms to make a 2-measure phrase. Then give students a moment to compose 2 measures on their own. Have students write it down. Go around and help students as needed. Remind them that they need to fill 8 counts and they may use rests. (10 minutes)
4. Then have the students meet with their groups and combine their measures to create a full piece. Have them practice saying it all together several times. (10 minutes)
5. Have the groups all turn in and form a circle, staying with their group. Go around the circle and help them read their composition to the class. Remind them that even if they make a simple mistake that it is okay. We are just practicing and sharing. As each group performs, collect their materials. If there is time, read a second time and play a drum while they do so. (5 minutes)
6. Class share on their favorite part of this activity. (5 minutes)

**Set-up with younger (K-4) classrooms to see if they would be interested in having an in-class performance where they come visit the music room and for a special concert. This is better than going to visit because of the transition time and set-up time for instruments. If this does not work, you can always record and share it or perform for another section of 5th grade, special guest teachers/administration, etc.

October, Week 2

Lesson 8

- **Objectives:**
 - C Major Scale
 - Dynamics--piano and forte
 - African Drumming
 - Audience/performer etiquette
- **Songs used:** Funga Alafia
- **Instruments:** Drums
- **Create:** Halloween Rhythm Rap, add drum beat and dynamics

Procedures: (40 minute class period)

1. Listening activity on Liza Jane, Sing Liza Jane with the students, then present Funga Alafia. Explain that this is a song from Liberia and it is a song of welcome. Show the Kennedy Center performance. Review audience etiquette with the students and ask them to demonstrate it even though the performance is a video. Note that the drums being used are called djembes. Ask the students if they can hear the similarities between the two songs. (5 minutes)
2. Rhythms: Share a short Halloween rhythm rap of your own with the class. Then have them play a body percussion ostinato while you share the rap with them again. Have them repeat the rap and you play the ostinato on a drum (use the djembe if possible). Add in piano and forte sections. Keep it simple. First measure can be forte, second measure

- piano. Then switch them. Explain to the students that they are going to create a drum ostinato for their rhythm rap. They are also going to add the dynamics forte and piano.
3. Pass out rhythm raps from the week before and have groups practice them again. Have them assign dynamics to each section and write them in. Remind them that they can always go back and change them later if they do not like it. Just start with something. (5 minutes)
 4. Next, they are going to add a drum ostinato and dynamics to their rhythm rap. Then the group needs to practice their rhythm rap with the drum ostinato and dynamics. (10 minutes)
 5. **Share the compositions with the class. Remind the class of audience etiquette (don't talk, applaud) and the performers of performer etiquette (don't grimace at mistakes, and bow to thank the audience). Collect materials after group performs.** (10 minutes)
 6. Class share on favorites. (5 minutes)

October, Week 3

Lesson 9

- **Objectives:**
 - Arpeggio
 - Ostinato
- **Songs used:** Original compositions
- **Instruments:** Orff, drums, voices
- **Create:** Add xylophone ostinato and two auxiliary percussion instruments to rhythm rap

Procedures: (40 minute class period)

1. Echo solfege: **Sing different patterns on the arpeggio and send it around the room.** Have the students sing an arpeggio ostinato while you share your rhythm rap and play your drum ostinato. Start with the drum (4 measures), add the arpeggio (4 measures), then say the rap. Then 4 measures later, have the arpeggio stop, 4 measures later, have the drum stop. (5 minutes)
2. Discuss that this is the next step for their Halloween Rhythm Rap. They are going to use the C arpeggio to create an ostinato on a xylophone to accompany their rhythm rap. (5 minutes)
3. Pass out students' compositions and instruments. Remind them that they do need to discuss it as a group. They need to explore different notes and rhythms (rhythms will be limited to quarter notes and eighth notes). Be sure to move around and check on students and help the groups make decisions when needed. Call time and ask each group to demonstrate their ostinato. If there is a group still undecided, give them 1-2 more minutes to finish up. (10 minutes)
4. Have the students practice their rhythm rap with the words, drum beat, and ostinato. Start with the drum beat, then add the arpeggio, then have the students come in and say the rap. The students playing the instruments do not need to say the words. (15 minutes)

5. Perform the rhythm rap for the class. Remind of audience/performer etiquette. (10 minutes)

Grade the rhythm rap to be sure it has all the requirements.

	Advanced	Proficient	Developing
Xylo Ostinato	Uses the notes from a C chord arpeggio (C-E-G), has a definite and solid rhythm pattern, 2 measures long, and is well prepared	Uses the notes C-E-G, has a defined rhythm, but could use a little more work to make it more solid as an ostinato	Uses some of the notes, needs assistance on defining the rhythm
Lyrics with rhythms	Lyrics match the rhythms well and are clearly spoken and understood	Lyrics mostly match the rhythms and are clearly spoken	Lyrics sometimes match the rhythms and need some work on performance
Drum Beat	Uses clear, defined rhythms (quarters, eighths and rests), 2 measures long, and is well defined and prepared	Uses clear rhythms, is 2 measures long, but could use a little more preparation	Has some clear rhythms, but needs assistance on finalizing the pattern and preparing it

**Remind the students that they will have their special performance the next week. Be sure to contact the special guests/class to remind them of the dates and times.

October, Week 4

Lesson 10

- **Objectives:**
 - Performance/Recordings
 - Performance/audience ettiquette
- **Songs used:** Halloween Rhythm Rap Compositions
- **Instruments:** Xylophones, drums
- **Create:** Performance and recording of Halloween Rhythm Rap

Procedures: (40 minute class period)

1. Have each group assemble and get their instruments/items ready as soon as they enter the room. Give them some time to practice. Remind them that no matter what little mistakes

happen during the performance, to just keep going. Make sure the chairs are set up properly for an audience to enjoy the performances before they arrive. Also have a recording device ready so students can watch their own performances the next week. (15 minutes)

2. Welcome the special guest audience and introduce the class and their projects. Take the time to explain what the different instruments are and that the students wrote these compositions all on their own. (5 minutes)
3. Have each group perform. Don't forget to remind them to bow. (10 minutes)
4. Thank the guest audience for coming and congratulate the students on a job well done! (5 minutes)
5. Put all things away in the class and celebrate the performance! Let the class know they will have a special day next week where they will get to watch their own performances. Possibly plan to bring a treat of some sort. (5 minutes)

Composition/Rehearsal/Performance Rubric

	Advanced (4-5)	Proficient (2-3)	Developing (0-1)
Contribution and involvement	Student has consistently worked to share ideas and collaborate with group all while keeping a positive attitude and the overall goal in mind.	Student usually worked with group to share ideas and collaborate with group. Attitude was mostly positive throughout.	Student sometimes worked to share ideas and collaborate with group. Attitude was not often positive and had to be addressed by the educator.
Ability to adapt and edit	Once ideas were created for the project, student was able to accept critique from others and educator and make decisions to edit help composition.	Once ideas were created, student accepted critique from others and made edits on composition, but sometimes wanted to ignore a request.	Once ideas were created, student seldom listened to critique and did not want to change things unless directed by the educator.
Rehearsal and performance efforts	Student was a diligent member of the group who worked to make sure the music was prepared and represented the group well during the performance.	Student was a fairly diligent member of the group who worked to make sure the music was prepared and represented the group fairly well during the performance.	Student worked some during rehearsal time, but had to be reminded by the educator. Student performed with the group, but was not utilizing the best

			performance behavior.
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November, Week 1**Lesson 11**

- **Objectives:**
 - Reflecting
 - Analyzing
 - Composer's Intent
 - Planning
- **Songs used:** Halloween compositions
- **Create:** Plans for future project (check with classroom teachers for a cross-curricular subject)

Procedures: (40 minute class period)

1. Review the performances from the week before. Enjoy a treat if it suits the class and is appropriate. (15 minutes)
2. Have students fill out reflection form. See what they liked/disliked about the project. What was their favorite step? If they could change one thing, what would it be? If they could keep one thing the same? If they could add something else in? Be sure to encourage the use of musical and specific terms. Share some thoughts in a class discussion. (15 minutes)

	Advanced	Proficient	Developing
Perceive and analyze artistic work.	Student shares insight and ideas that clearly use music terminology and own thoughts about the music and assignment.	Student shares musical description and some own thoughts on the music and assignment.	Student shares some description, but lacks musical terms and does not provide much of own thought on music and assignment.

3. Ask if they could write an entire song, what would they want to write about? What instruments would they want to include? Guide them towards writing a song and creating an entire album for the 5th Grade class. (10 minutes)

November, Week 2**Lesson 12**

- **Objectives:**

- Sixteenth notes
- Time signature
- Staff
- Key signature
- Recorder basics
- Count, say, sizzle, play
- **Songs used:** Raindrops Round
- **Instruments:** Recorder, voices
- **Create:** Rhythms on recorder

Procedures: (40 minute class period)

1. Review of recorder procedures: Posture, hand position, etc. (5 minutes)
2. Review notes on recorder. Practice a C Scale. (5 minutes)
3. Call and Response rhythms on one note of recorder, introducing 16th notes. Show the subdivision on the board and have students practice saying the syllables. **Pass around the room and let students create a 1 measure call using 16th notes.** (5 minutes)

	Proficient	Accomplished	Advanced
Student demonstrates the new rhythm being taught (16th notes)	Student needs some assistance creating a measure using the assigned rhythm.	Student is able to create and demonstrate a measure using the assigned rhythm	Student creates and demonstrates a measure using the assigned rhythm with enthusiasm and is willing to create more if time.

4. Look at the music for Raindrops Round (note name worksheet from MP). Have students use pencils to label the key and time signatures. Write in the counting for the rhythms above the staff measure by measure. Count the rhythms together as a class. Then write in the note names below the staff. Say the note names and review the fingerings on recorder. Then sizzle through it while you play it, followed by the class playing it together on recorder. Have half the class sing it while the other half plays recorder, then switch. Briefly explain that they just did CSSP. (15 minutes)
5. Accompany students on guitar playing a C chord. Share with the students what chord you are playing throughout. Ask if any student would like to play a solo/duet while you play guitar. (5 minutes)
6. One-word share on playing recorders and guitar together. (5 minutes)

November, Week 3

Lesson 13

- **Objectives:**
 - Sing in a round
 - Play recorders in a round
 - Sixteenth notes
 - Changing a melody
- **Songs used:** Raindrops Round
- **Instruments:** Recorders, voices
- **Create:** Change the melody of a current song, Doodle Score

Procedures: (40 minute class period)

1. Echo/C&R Vocalise and Solfege. (5 minutes)
2. Sing Raindrops Round unison, then review how to sing in a round. Demonstrate by having the class sing as part one and teacher sing part two, then switch. Then divide the class into two groups. (10 minutes)
3. On recorders, play the song together, reviewing notes as needed. (5 minutes)
4. Ask students to chose two notes in the first measure and change them to a different note from the given notes on the music (C arpeggio). Demonstrate for them, then give them time to experiment. Remind them that they are changing the melody only, not the rhythms. **Call time and go around the room and ask them to share what they changed.** (10 minutes)
5. Discuss the composer's intent for Raindrops Round. Lead into songs about weather. Listening exercise: Vivaldi's Four Seasons "Autumn" and **have students draw a picture of what they hear.** (10 minutes)

	Proficient	Accomplished	Advanced
Develop and demonstrate musical ideas based on an idea or theme	Student changes notes/rhythms in given songs when asked and understands the tasks of generating new musical ideas based on a given theme	Student alters given songs using the given parameters and generates new ideas based on the given idea or theme	Student alters given songs using the given parameters and generates new ideas based on the given theme and comes up with new ideas and themes to use

December, Week 1

Lesson 14

- **Objectives:**
 - G Major Scale
 - Recorder reinforcement
- **Songs used:** Winter is Here, Largo from Four Seasons

- **Instruments:** voices, recorders
- **Create:** Doodle score

Procedures: (40 minute class period)

1. Do vocal warm-ups while strumming G Chord. (5 minutes)
2. Review the music for “Winter Is Here.” Mention how this song uses a G Major scale rather than a C major scale. It is the same pattern, but a different starting note. Speak the solfege and count the rhythms. Sing the song together. (10 min)
3. Learn the song on recorder. Review note names and fingerings, then play it together. Let the students know that they will be using the recorder to help them compose next class. (10 min)
4. Review music about seasons, listen to an excerpt of Vivaldi’s Largo from Winter and have them draw a picture about winter based off of the music. (10 min)

December, Week 2

Lesson 15

- **Objectives:**
 - Create a melody
 - G major scale
- **Songs used:** Winter is Here
- **Instruments:** Recorders
- **Create:** A melody about winter
- **Supplies needed:** Manuscript paper, felt-tip markers, construction paper snowflake cut-outs, ribbon, stickers, paint, etc.

Procedures: (40 minute class period)

1. Solfege/recorder call and response warm-ups. Recorder: G-A-B-C-D (5 min)
2. Review Winter is Here. Tell students we will be creating a melodic ornament for them to take home. Today we are writing the melody and next class we will complete the craft. (5 min)
3. Have students write a phrase about winter. Then go around and help them put rhythms to their text. (15 min)
4. Once they have their text and rhythms, ask students to start placing notes to their text/rhythms to create a melody using their recorders. **Ask them to use G-A-B-C-D. Let them notate however they need to in order to get their ideas down.** (10 min)
5. Collect materials and put things away. One word share on their favorite thing about winter. (5 min)

Review melodies to see if they used the correct criteria.

December, Week 3

Lesson 16

- **Objectives:**
 - Complete melody ornament
- **Songs used:** Original melodies, listen to holiday music while crafting
- **Instruments:** Recorders
- **Create:** Melody Ornament

Procedures: (40 minute class period)

1. Pass out students' work from week before. (5 min)
2. Have them review it and make any last minute changes. Then, transfer their melody to their manuscript circle that will go in the middle of their snowflake in pencil. Once the melody is written out, go over it with a felt-tip marker. Help students as needed. (10 minutes)
3. Take circles and place in the middle of their snowflakes and glue them in place. Allow students to decorate their snowflakes with whatever supplies available. Hole punch the top, reinforce it if possible, and place ribbon through it so it may be hung up as an ornament. (20 min)
4. Clean up and make sure each student has their ornament to take home. (5 min)

January, Week 1

Lesson 17

- **Objectives:**
 - Welcome back
 - Review
 - Composing melodies and notating them
- **Songs used:**
- **Instruments:** Recorders
- **Create:** Short Melody

Procedures: (40 minute class period)

1. Vocal warm-ups, solfege call and response, DRMSL share around the room. (5 min)
2. Recorders call and response using C, D, E, G, A. (5 min)
3. Give students a basic rhythm and some time to compose a 4 measure melody on their own and notate it. Let them notate it however they feel most comfortable. **The overall goal is to create and notate a melody.** (15 min)

	Advanced	Proficient	Developing
Melody is composed and notated so that student can remember it	Melody is four measures long, uses the assigned notes and student can read	Melody is four measures long, uses most of the assigned notes and student has	Melody is just a bit too long or too short, uses some of the assigned notes and the notation needs a

	his or her own notation	an idea of what his or her notation means	little clarification for the student and teacher
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4. Discuss the composition project with the students. Share the overall theme (Be Your Best Self) and have them brainstorm some ideas on what their song could be about based off of that theme. Talk about the target audience being fellow students, especially younger students, as we want to encourage them to feel proud of who they are and happy to be who they want to be. Also talk about how something like this project could help others and ask the students how they want people to feel when they hear their music. Reassure them that they will not have to perform this music if they do not want to. We will record it and review it and edit it as the process goes along so that it becomes what we want it to be. (10 min)
5. Student share on one thing they like about themselves as they line up. Have stickers ready and remind the class to be supportive. If we want to let the younger students to know we support them just as they are, we have to be good examples with our own classmates! (5 min)

January, Week 2

Lesson 18

- **Objectives:**
 - Select a song theme
 - Compose a chorus melody together
 - Start working on verse phrases
- **Songs used:** Begin original composition
- **Instruments:**
- **Create:** Chorus, short melodies

Procedures: (40 minute class period)

1. Singing warm-ups and recorder warm-ups, call and response. (5 min)
2. Talk about verse/chorus again. Explain to students that we are going to write a chorus for our class song together today. (5 min)
3. Provide the students with a set rhythm to start the chorus melody on. Use the recorder to show them which notes are going to be used in the song. Practice playing and singing the notes as you work. Plug in certain notes and have the students help plug in pitches to create their melody. Use two lines that are each four measures long and then repeat them (16 measures total). (15 min)
4. Provide students with their own sheet to compose a 4 measure melody again that include a basic rhythm. Count the rhythm together a few times before they begin. They may use ideas from their previous melody or may start completely new. Provide references for the notes to help them with notation, but remind them that the main goal is to write it down

so that they can read it. If students must simply use letter names rather than standard notation, that is okay. Let them use their recorders to help them determine which pitches they want where. **Have students turn in their melody sheet when they are finished.** (10 min)

	Advanced	Proficient	Developing
Melody is notated and is the appropriate length and used the given rhythms and pitches	Student clearly notated the melody and met all given criteria	Student clearly notated the melody but missed one or two minor details from the criteria	Student notated the melody, but it is not always clear and they missed some details in the given criteria

5. One-word share on what they think about writing a melody on their own? (5 min)

January, Week 3

Lesson 19

- **Objectives:**
 - Add lyrics to melodies
- **Songs used:** Original composition
- **Instruments:** Recorders
- **Create:** Melody

Procedures: (40 minute class period)

1. Review the theme for the song (remind students that we do not have to title it yet) and begin to brainstorm about what words we want to use in our chorus. Write the ideas out on the board. (5 min)
2. Review the melody written for the chorus from the last week. It will be best if you are able to pull the full thing up on the screen. Sing through it together. Take the words shared in the brainstorming session and begin to make decisions together about what each phrase should be in the chorus. Remind students that the lines do not have to rhyme, but they can if they want to. If rhythms in the melody need to be altered to make words fit, that can be done, too. (15 min)
3. Pass out the student's melodies from the previous week. Have them brainstorm what they want their message to be in the song. Tell them to write directly on their sheet (perhaps create a spot for this in a worksheet format). What do they want their part to say about being true to themselves? What does that mean to them? These can be single words or short phrases, just something to get them thinking about their message. (5 min)
4. **Have students then start making some decisions about where they want to place the lyrics to their phrases.** Walk around the room and help them with word selection and rhythms. If they have too many words, help them condense the message into a shorter phrase and vice versa. Let the students know that they will not be sharing these in class

today and that they will be reviewed and shared anonymously in class by the teacher next week. Have the students turn them in. (10 min)

5. One-word share on how songwriting makes them feel. (5 min)

Review students' work and number the phrases. Come up with a recommendation of what order each phrase should go in, trying to gather like ideas together for each verse. Make a note of which students need some additional assistance and plan to help them next week during the edit time.

January, Week 4

Lesson 20

- **Objectives:**
 - Edit and revise phrases
 - Music composing as a career
- **Songs used:**
- **Create:**

Procedures: (40 minute class period)

1. Vocal warm-ups, review chorus several times. Make any edits to the chorus that might be needed/wanted. (5 min)
2. Present the students' phrases to them (be sure to practice them a little bit ahead of time). Do not share names of each one and remind the class to be respectful of all work. Ask the class if they approve of the order you put each phrase in and if there is anything they would like for you to change. (5 min)
3. Once you share all of the phrases (sing them with guitar accompaniment), pass them back to the students and allow to write down what they like/dislike about their own phrase. They do not need to make any changes to their phrase unless they know exactly what it is they want to change. (10 minutes)
4. At this point, the students have been constantly working on their composition for several class periods. Now, take a break and share with the some examples of other school's that have student composition programs, discuss what it would be like to write music for a living, how they would earn a degree to do that, and share some student compositions found online. In upcoming years, you will have examples of your own students' compositions to share with them, too. (15 min)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AG139fbeNyA>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qlDUUnUOQbeU>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V0ZrSEXpZfQ> This is a great overview of what a composer does.

February, Week 1

Lesson 21

- **Objectives:**
 - Guitar basics
 - Chord progression
 - Sing and play guitar
- **Songs used:** Original composition
- **Instruments:** Guitars, voices
- **Create:** One word share

Procedures: (40 minute class period)

1. Guitars, pass them out, check tuning. Review the parts of the guitar and the basic finger technique warm-up (chromatic exercise on first and second strings). (10 min)
2. Show students a C chord and G chord (easy versions). Practice strumming them together as a class and slowly move to switching between the two. (10 min).
3. Show the students the chord pattern for the class chorus. Have students locate what note they change chords on and practice some. (5 min)
4. Review the first verse of the song. Demonstrate it for the students, then proceed on to learning the first verse together. Show them where to change chords. Break it down into sections, have half of the class sing while the other strums, etc. If they can do both, allow them to do so. This helps differentiate instruction without having to do different activities or single anyone out. **The goal for this activity is repetition so the students learn the song, as long as they are engaged with one or both activities, they will be focused on it and starting to memorize it.** (10 min)
5. One word share on how they feel about what they have learned about creating music. (5 min)

February, Week 2

Lesson 22

- **Objectives:**
 - Finish learning song together as a class.
 - Rehearsal/practice habits
- **Create:** Ideas for new instrumental parts in song

Procedures: (40 minute class period)

1. Review and warm-up on guitars, practice chords, use Liza Jane to help. (10 min)
2. Review verse 1 and chorus of class song and proceed to work on the remaining verses. Include a couple “brain breaks.” (20 min)
3. What other instruments might we want to include on our song? Drums, recorders, Orff, piano, auxiliary percussion, etc. Let the class vote on 2-3. (5 min)
4. **One word share on who the students want to share their song with. (5 min)**

February, Week 3

Lesson 23

- **Objectives:**
 - Refine class song
 - Add in new parts
 - Come up with a group name for the class to be used on the album
- **Songs used:** Original composition
- **Instruments:** Guitars, whatever instruments the students have chosen to add
- **Create:** Ostinatos, rhythmic and melodic

Procedures: (40 minute class period)

1. Come in and do warm-ups for guitar and voice. (5 min)
2. Review class song and ideas for additional parts for song. Narrow it down to 4 different kinds of instruments. Assign students into groups to work on each instrument. If the group does well, you could ask who wants to work on which instrument, starting with the first choice. If there is an instrumental group that is unpopular, simply state, "I could really use someone to take on this challenge of this instrument." And see if a couple students volunteer. If not, perhaps the instrument selection needs to be changed. Have each group bring one or two guitars so they may practice with the guitar. Let the group know if they are composing an ostinato for the verse or the chorus. (10 min)
3. Allow groups to work on their ostinato. Have paper and pencil ready so they may notate it. Visit each section and help them combine the ostinato with the song. (15 min)
4. Put all instruments away. (5 min)
5. Class discussion on what else they want to see happen with their song. (5 min)

February, Week 4**Lesson 25**

- **Objectives:**
 - Review all work done up to this point
 - Importance of taking a little time off from the creative process
 - Review rhythms in game
- **Songs used:** Original composition, Raindrops round, Concentration
- **Instruments:** Guitars, percussion, etc.

Procedures: (40 minute class period)

1. Review song and practice it with all parts. (15-20 minutes)
2. Take a break from the writing process and play a musical game. (20 min)

March, Week 1**Lesson 26**

- **Objectives:**

- Understand what an album of work is
- Ideas for album artwork
- Decide who is going to play what on the final recording
- Do a short recording to understand the process
- **Songs used:** Beatles albums, original composition
- **Instruments:** performance instruments, recording device
- **Create:** An idea for album artwork

Procedures: (40 minute class period)

1. Vocal warm-ups, solfege call and response, share around the room. (5 min)
2. Set-up for rehearsal and decide who is going to play and/or sing what on the recording. In a class of approximately 20-25, there should be 2-3 students per part on the percussion instruments/recorder parts. The rest of the students should be playing and/or singing guitar. (10 min)
3. Show students what the expectations will be for recording. If mistakes are made while recording, simply continue on. We will decide if we want to re-record or not afterwards. Remind them that we will probably have to record it several times until we get it the way we want it and that is just part of the process. Recording can be done on anything from a tablet, phone, voice recorder, or more advanced technology. This is an area that can be further explored with the time and resources. The main goal is to teach the students how to prepare for a recording and to give them the experience of hearing their work put together. (5 min)
4. Do a short recording of just the chorus to get started. Let the students listen back to what it sounds like and start making observations about what we like and don't like about the way it sounds. (10 min)
5. Put instruments away. (5 min)
6. Discuss goals for next week with class. (5 min)

March, Week 2

Lesson 27

- **Objectives:**
 - Make first draft of recording
 - Help students analyze the process
 - Troubleshoot any issues

Procedures: (40 minute class period)

1. Set-up, warm-up and practice song together as a class. (5 min)
2. Review the guidelines for recording. (5 min)
3. Record first draft of song. (10 min)
4. Listen to song and make observations. Do we need to change the set-up? Change anything in the music? More/less singers? (10 min)

5. Put instruments away. (5 min)

March, Week 3

Lesson 28

- **Objectives:**
 - Review song and recording process
 - Careers: Sound Engineer <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yRA8K0pY1Y>

Procedures: (40 minute class period)

1. Come in and rehearse song. Use a metronome to help everyone stay together during the process. Stop and ask students if they feel they are ready to record. If not, ask what they want to make better. (15 min)
2. Record second draft of song. Listen to it and take notes as a class. (10 min)
3. Put instruments away. (5 min)
4. Watch the video of the sound engineer. Discuss his credentials and what would be the pros and cons of being a sound engineer. (10 min)

March, Week 4

Lesson 29

- **Objectives:**
 - Continue recording process
 - Create album artwork

Procedures: (40 minute class period)

1. Review notes from last week's recording session. Make a detailed plan for this week's recording session. Discuss how we want to have our final recording done either this week or next. (15 min)
2. Record song. Review and decide if we want to redo it or not.

If the song comes together well, start talking about the process of doing an "interview" session about making our album that we will include with our album.

Also, start talking about everyone's roles in "the band" and possibly come up with fun nicknames to include in the album credits. Make sure everyone is included and has a role! (20 minutes)

3. Put everything away and congratulate them on a job well done! This is a tough process. (5 min)

April, Week 1

Lesson 30

- **Objectives:**

- Finishing touches on album
- Reflection video
- Prepare to present
- **Create:** Reflection video

Procedures: (40 minute class period)

1. Review song recording and finalize any last minute details. Do not plan to re-record unless absolutely necessary. (10 min)
2. Review credits and nicknames for album. (5 min)
3. Record class discussion about the process of making the album to include on the album. Ask students about learning about music, what they thought it would be like vs. what it really was like. The frustrations of working together, making sure the song was just right, etc. (20 min)
4. One word share on what they expect this album to be like put all together. (5 min)

**Check with teachers to make sure that next week will be okay for the album preview in the gym or band room.

April, Week 2

Lesson 31

- **Objectives:**
 - Review all materials
 - Album preview for full class

Procedures: (40 minute class period)

1. Use time for any last minute preparations for the album.
2. Each class will create a band biography to include with their album. This can be in print form or digital form, but it will be in the layout similar to a Wikipedia type page. Have a template ready and just let students fill in the blanks.
3. Friday, all classes will come together in one room, possibly the gym or the band room so they may all view their album put together in entirety. This will be for the students only. Fellow LAMP teachers may attend to help with classroom management.

**After this preview, send the album to all K-4 classroom teachers and have them share a 1-3 minute video reflection on what they think. They can have individual students share or their whole class. It can be from the classroom teachers, too. Have them do this on FlipGrid so it will be easy to share the feedback with the classes next week.

April, Week 3

Lesson 32

- **Objectives:**
 - Responses from the listeners

Procedures: (40 minute class period)

1. Discuss what they think the rest of the school's reaction will be. (10 min)
2. Pull up the videos from the classes and let the students hear back from their listeners. (20 min)

April, Week 4

- Week left empty to adjust for Spring Break

May, Week 1-2**Lesson 33-34**

- **Objectives:**
 - Prepare performance for talent show if class chooses
 - Improvisation Game "Game Over"
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fp01m5UVNuE>

May, Week 3

- Partial week, will be mostly play day, talent show and end of year parties

Appendix C: Rubrics**Qtr 1: Developing a nurturing environment and a personal relationship with music.**

	Advanced	Proficient	Developing
Participation in creative activities (This caption is so that the educator can gauge how nurturing and positive the classroom environment is)	Student engages thoroughly in activity and responds positively to others and encourages classmates	Student participates in the activity willingly and interacts with others	Student participates in activity as instructed
Understanding of music theory concepts through creative activities	Student has a strong understanding of taught skills and shares ideas with confidence and enthusiasm	Student uses taught skills as instructed and is able to share ideas clearly	Student attempts to use taught skills, but still needs assistance in clarifying their ideas
Ability to connect with music and share thoughts about it	Student is able to speculate the creative intent and share specific musical reasons for their decisions	Student is able to share why they like or dislike the music and speculate the creative intent	Student is able to share whether or not they like the music/idea

Qtr 2: Applying musical concepts and skills in creative activities.

	Advanced	Proficient	Developing
Develop and demonstrate musical ideas based on an idea or theme	Student alters given songs using the given parameters and generates new ideas based on the given theme and comes up with new ideas and themes to use	Student alters given songs using the given parameters and generates new ideas based on the given idea or theme	Student changes notes/rhythms in given songs when asked and understands the tasks of generating new musical ideas based on a given theme
Use standard or iconic notation to record ideas	Student creates musical idea, can record it with little to no help and idea can be shared with others	Student creates a musical idea and can record it with little help and can understand his/her own record of idea	Student creates a musical idea and can record it with some help from educator

Qtr 3: Creating

	Advanced	Proficient	Developing
Evaluate their own work, applying teacher-provided criteria such as application of selected elements of music, and use of sound sources.	Student understands teacher criteria and is able to apply it thoroughly to her/her work with no assistance	Student understands teacher criteria and is able to apply it to multiple areas of his/her work with little-to-no assistance	Student is able to examine and give feedback on his/her own work and make alterations using teacher-provided criteria with directed assistance (example adjust dynamics)
Describe the rationale for making revisions to the music based on evaluation criteria and feedback from their teacher.	Student shares why he/she chose to make selected changes using correct terminology and individual reasoning	Student shares why he/she chose to make the selected changes using the criteria terminology and reasoning	Student shares why he/she chose to make the selected changes using correct terminology with assistance

Qtr 4

	Advanced	Proficient	Developing
Prepare and rehearse composition.	Student works diligently to do his/her part with a positive attitude and encourages classmates in the process.	Student works diligently to do his/her part with a good attitude.	Student works but sometimes gets frustrated in the process and needs some assistance from the educator.
Refine and decide when composition is ready for presentation and/or recording.	Student has thoughtful input on what should be done before the composition is presented. Student also acknowledges and respects the thoughts of the class.	Student has some thoughtful input on what should be done for the presentation. Student listens to the thoughts of the class.	Student has input, but the educator has to seek it out when discussing with this student. Student doesn't always listen to the thoughts of the class and must be reminded that we have to work together.
Reflect on the creative process, the growth experienced as individuals and as a group. Share	Student is able to reflect and share their thoughts and opinions with clear reasoning.	Student is able to reflect and share, but needs some assistance clarifying reasoning for	Student is able to reflect and share but needs assistance from the educator.

what changes could be made, and what they valued most		thoughts and opinions.	
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Appendix D: Manual for Project

Introduction and goals

This project was put together to demonstrate how to incorporate and develop improvisation within the general music classroom throughout the entire year and beyond. Improvisation is not the sole creative activity used throughout the project, but rather the jumping point that inspired this project. The goal for the project was to provide music educators with a plan of how to incorporate improvisation and creating music into their curriculum by providing clear and defined examples, activities, and explanations. This manual serves as a resource to clarify any additional details needed to fully understand the project and implementation of lesson plans, assessment, and activities.

Defining a nurturing environment

A nurturing environment for the teacher means one where the objectives are clear and well-explained. Plans are thorough and at the appropriate level for the students. The teacher creates this environment for him/herself by taking the time to clearly define the objectives, plan for the activities and assessment, practices the activities, and remembers to keep things simple and not try to put too much into one lesson. The teacher must also remember that he/she is the expert in the situation and to trust his/her training. If the teacher is in a place where there is unknown territory, it is important to lead by example. The message to students is that it is okay to not have the answer, we sometimes must find the answer. If the teacher remembers this and demonstrates it for the students, it will put the students at ease and help further develop a nurturing environment for them, too.

A nurturing environment for the students is one where they feel safe to be themselves. The activity expectations and guidelines must be clear so that students feel confident about what they are supposed to do and where they have creativity. Feedback and how feedback is delivered is such a crucial part of the nurturing environment. Being able to give feedback that shows the students' efforts and creativity is valued is essential. The difficult area that many teachers run into is giving feedback that encourages the students without judging whether you like their product. Another side of this is giving feedback that praises the effort and creativity while also guiding on the concepts that were to be included in the activity, such as certain rhythms or melodic patterns.

If the teacher continues to guide and give students feedback that encourages them to keep developing their creative ideas and musical skills, the long-term outcome is that students will be motivated musicians who will want to continue to develop and learn more advanced musical skills.

Having a word bank available for the teacher to use during the class will help the teacher to use the appropriate language when giving feedback. It is important to encourage the creative effort, no matter how much or little the student shares. When grading specific musical concepts, such as terms, rhythms, melody, etc. It is important to give clear guidelines and keep things very simple. If a student needs assistance or correction, the teacher must be clear and explain to the student why that correction was needed and be sure to convey that it is completely okay that a correction was needed.

It is essential that the teacher remembers that the nurturing environment is something that will take year-long effort to develop and foster. It is not something that may simply be established and then forgotten.

Activities

The activities should be kept simple and use musical concepts as the guide for the activities. Consistency is incredibly important. Once the students learn the activity and process, they will not have to focus on learning the activity and can focus more on sharing their ideas within the activity. For this purpose, I have used a select list of simple activities and extended upon them.

- a. Echo: The teacher sings or plays a pattern and the students echo it back. This can be passed on to the class so that a student plays a pattern and the class echoes it back.
- b. Call and Response: The teacher sings or plays a pattern and the students can play their own pattern back.
- c. One Word Share: This activity allows students to share their thoughts, opinions, and observations within a timely manner. It also provides students who might otherwise be shy and not want to share, a less intimidating way to share. It is helpful to provide the students with a word bank, especially when exploring new sharing opportunities. It is key that the teacher shows that he or she values the students' feedback.
- d. Change the Lyrics: Start with a song that the entire class already knows or teach them a song. Then ask to change one or two parts of the song. In this project, I

took ideas from the students about their local community and we wrote a verse of “Liza Jane” about their town.

- e. **Change the Rhythm:** This is an activity that works well to assess if students understand and apply a rhythmic concept. Changing a measure that has only quarter notes and eighth notes and requesting that the students change one beat to four sixteenth notes and asking them to demonstrate it allows them to be creative and choose where they want to put that certain rhythm and the teacher can check to make sure the student can demonstrate the rhythm correctly.
- f. **Change the melody:** Take a simple melody and ask the students to change the last measure, or even one note. This should be done together as a class first, having the teacher change a measure of the melody, then ask for volunteers to change something about it. After a few examples have been done, the students may work to change the melody on their own. This also allows the teacher to assess a variety of melodic concepts and leads to composing their own melodies in the future.
- g. **Compose rhythm rap:** A rhythm rap is a good place to start in terms of a full composition because the students do not need to think of lyrics necessarily, but they have words to associate with the rhythms. To start, give the students a word bank with a topic. In this project, I used Halloween as the topic. Students will have a variety of terms and rhythms to choose from to help them create. They may also choose their own if they like. It also helps them notate their composition with some assistance.
- h. **Doodle Score:** This activity allows students to share their interpretation of a listening activity. Students will draw a visual representation of what they feel the

music would look like as they listen to it. It has students creating while also connecting with the feeling of the music.

- i. Compose a verse/chorus song: This could be done with any compositional form, but I chose a verse/chorus for time-sake and for relatability. Students are most familiar with this form through popular music. Since the rhythms and melodic elements in this form are repetitive, it allows the teacher to help guide the entire class on creating a template and then allowing students to add in their own contributions. This is helpful in terms of time management, since I only see each section once a week, I want to provide students with options that are not overwhelming but still allow them to create. Once we are successful with this form, we will look into more advanced forms and more creative liberties in the future.
- j. “Game Over” improvisation game: This game is from *Not Right Music* and allows students to participate in real-time improvisation with certain visual cues and all kinds of different instruments and objects. This game is included to provide an outlet for free improvisation and as a break from the overall project.

Assessing creativity

This can be a daunting task for teachers. It is important to focus on assessing the creative process and effort, not the outcome. Help the students develop their own opinions on their creative works and guide them to improve upon them based on their own criteria. If the students are not evaluating and applying the concepts the teacher wants them to apply, then the teacher must educate the students to develop more detailed expectations. It is important to remember that assessing creativity is not the same as assessing other musical skills such as music theory and

history. The teacher must guide the students and refrain from sharing opinions of the students' work with the students.

Teacher preparation

The curriculum and lessons included are meant to serve as an example of how creative activities can be used throughout an entire year of general music. It is also to show how simple the concepts and activities are kept. This shows that teachers do not have to be improvisation experts in order to include creating in every single class. Choose one activity to start, practice it on your own to build your confidence in the skill, and then use it consistently in your classes. Once you feel comfortable, try adding another activity. Make sure to give it time to develop. Things do not have to go perfectly the first time we try it.

In this project, I chose to work toward one final production by making an album. This led to the second semester being much more focused on creativity rather than the music lesson plans based around certain concepts such as those in the first semester. This does not have to be the case if an educator does not want to work toward this kind of project. The simple activities can be utilized throughout the year in each class. Having an end project to work towards, though, will really give the creating, rehearsing, and presenting portions of the music curriculum more purpose. It will also give the students something memorable for years to come. They will be able to refer to their musical composition, the memories they made while creating it, and the ownership they developed in their own musicianship.

Overall objective

Remember that the overall objective of this project is to have an example of how to implement improvisation and creating activities within the music curriculum. These specific

lesson plans may not fit your music curriculum exactly, but the application of the activities, plans, and assessments are meant to be used as a guide and example for how improvisation may be taught all year and developed over the course of multiple years.