



The Effect of Creativity on Learning in the General Music Classroom

Margaret McKay  
2014 W. Main St.  
Norristown, PA 19403

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Elizabeth Sokolowski, Division Head of Music Education

The University of the Arts  
College of Performing Arts  
School of Music

Master of Music in Music Education

# The Effect of Creativity on Learning in the General Music Classroom

## Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this empirical study is to explore how students' musical learning is impacted when they are given opportunities to create. One first grade class from Wyncote Elementary School and one first grade class from Cheltenham Elementary School will participate in a comparative study in which both classes will receive instruction on the same unit of study. However, one class will follow a traditional approach while the other will be taught using a model that includes more engagements for student creativity. This study will take place over seven weeks during one class period each week. The results will be measured with a pre-test and a post-test created and administered by the music teacher.

## Rationale

When students use musical vocabulary terms and concepts to create, they apply critical thinking skills and have more meaningful learning experiences. They are not only able to recall the subject matter, but also know how to employ what they learn in the proper context. Both critical thinking and creative thinking are named as 21st Century Learning Skills that students need to develop in order to succeed in the information age (Thoughtful Learning). Watson states that projects based on creativity allow "for an understanding of music on a deep level" (18-19).

This study is designed to explore the impact the implementation of creativity-based activities has on students' learning of music. It is driven by the desire to see students more actively engaged in their own music education. The nature of this pedagogical approach could also assist music teachers in the promotion of music as an essential subject employing skills that are applicable to society. Advocacy and the enhancement of student learning are significant issues to the music educator.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### Statement of Purpose

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also assist music teachers in the promotion of music as an essential subject employing skills that are applicable to society. Advocacy and the enhancement of student learning are significant issues to the music educator.

### Expected Findings

I anticipate that the class presented with more opportunities to create will show more growth than the class that will experience a traditional teaching method. Both groups of students will receive instruction on the same unit of study centered on the pitches la, sol, and mi. However, I expect the class that is allowed to create will demonstrate a deeper level of understanding as a result of being more directly involved in their own learning. I will use the same pretest and post-test at the beginning and end of the unit to assess each student's level of growth.

## **Chapter 2: Topical Information and Awareness Building**

It is extremely important for music educators to allow their students to create. Watson insists that doing so is necessary to “provide them with a balanced musical experience representative of the diversity of musical activity” (14). He argues that we have a need to create as humans and without creativity in the music curriculum, music teachers are overlooking “an effective source of motivation and mode of learning” for their students (Watson 17).

Improvisation and composition are two creative outlets within the music curriculum. The difference between these avenues are “difficult to define”, but their “boundaries often include innovation versus conservation” (Beegle). Composing may be viewed as “creative problem solving” since students are tasked with finding a solution within certain parameters (Watson 21). Improvisation may be seen as “innovative musical problem solving” (Beegle). The act of performing and creating music at once sets improvisation apart from composition (Beegle). It “allows students to express music in the moment that is uniquely theirs” unlike any other form of music making (Scott).

The ideas of incorporating improvisation and composition into music education are not new. There are methods and approaches that include opportunities for students to create. One of the three components of Dalcroze eurhythmics is improvisation (Mark and Madura 100). In this method, while the teacher improvises at the piano, the students improvise with movements in response to the music (Mark and Madura 102). In the early stages of these improvisations, students should be allowed to experiment boldly and expressively with musical concepts (Mark and Madura 102).

Imitation to Creation are one of the key components to the process of the Orff approach (Mark and Madura 104). Orff believed that “music education should be patterned on the

evolutionary stages of mankind” (Mark and Madura 104). The essence of his plan is to help children build a vocabulary of musical patterns (Mark and Madura 104).

Gordon’s Music Learning Theory includes creating or improvising music in his eight types of audiation (Mark and Madura 123-124). He believes that “creativity can only be taught indirectly” (Mark and Madura 127). He suggests that the teacher “guide the creative process” by making sure students have attained a certain level of knowledge and skills (Mark and Madura 127). With Music Learning Theory, music educators can have students improvise “at the aural/oral level by performing familiar and unfamiliar tonal or rhythm patterns with a neutral syllable” (Mark and Madura 127).

According to Katz Cohen, the Kodaly Method “helps teach students to make their own music” (Perlmutter). She asserts that it “allows children to practice what they have learned by creating their own rhythm and melodies” (Perlmutter). She and her students often engage in composing and improvising once the students “have learned specific concepts” (Perlmutter).

Though there are supportive methods and approaches in music education, there is a lack of teacher training and experience in improvisation and composition. Typically, educators “have not been taught how to compose music, let alone lead their students in composing experiences” (Birnie). There are music teachers who do not feel qualified to teach improvisation because of their own lack of participation (Whitcomb). It can be challenging “for educators to teach a skill they were never taught without further training” (Scott). Due to the years of learning to focus on music that was written, “some may find reading and performing existing music easier than creating” (Jacobi-Karna). Consequently, planning engagements for creativity take many music teachers out of their “comfort zone” (Jacobi-Karna).



There is a “strong need” for composition to be included in the music education program of study “that has been growing steadily since the early 1990s” (Deemer). This issue often leaves “graduates in the field” and “their faculty instructors at the university level” training “with little to no composition experience” (Deemer). Some challenges within the university curriculum are “the lack of exposure to composition” and “the mental roadblocks educators place in front of themselves due to inexperience” (Deemer). Other obstacles include “the overly limiting performance-based mindset of educators and the programs that prepare them” along with “the lack of collaboration between music education and composition faculty at the university level” (Deemer).

Work must be done “on creativity in various aspects of college music education” (Brinkman). This will ensure “that all music education majors (not just jazz performers) have the tools to be the creative teachers of the future” (Brinkman). Both studies of composition and music education “need to break down any barriers and find ways to incorporate composition faculty into the music teacher preparation curriculum” (Deemer). Threading “composition into the entire course-work structure helps to ensure that all music education students have a baseline of solid experience” (Deemer). The findings of a free-improvisation study at the university level call for “spaces for preservice music teachers to experiment with, and experience, this kind of music making” (Hickey).

However, composition and improvisation do not have to be the main objectives of a lesson. Educators could use techniques that “combine improvisation with other skills while maintaining the integrity of all endeavors” (Whitcomb). For example, proper singing can be reinforced while students use solfege to create spontaneous melodies (Whitcomb). Improvisational skills are expanded while the quality of singing remains unimpaired

(Whitcomb). Music teacher Kimberly states that improvisation “can be incorporated into a lesson that focuses on a particular musical concept” (Whitcomb). Instead of generating a completely new set of lesson plans, educators can “consider the activities already happening in their classrooms and adapt lessons to include an improvisatory component” (Whitcomb). The same approach could also apply for incorporating composition.

Student creativity may not be teacher-centered, but the teacher plays an important role in fostering a successful experience. It is recommended that music educators first “have good class control and rapport with and among students” (Marshall). Perhaps students will feel more at ease taking musical risks if the teacher shares stories of their own personal growth with improvisation (Whitcomb). In the early stages of improvising, more emphasis can be placed on the process than the product in anticipation of the students’ fears and challenges (Whitcomb). Constructing “a safe and supportive environment” is part of encouraging children to develop and participate in creative activities (Miranda).

The elementary general music classroom is an ideal place for students to begin composing, as they return to music class consistently over extended periods of time (Birnie). When combined with recorder instruction, children could also have the opportunity to perform compositions on an instrument they learned to play (Birnie). Students can create steady beat patterns while developing beat proficiency (Merrill). They can also create rhythmic patterns combined with movements that help them “understand the rhythmic flow, beat, and expressiveness of music” (Merrill). In general music, children could participate in exploration activities. Vocal skills may be developed through improvised singing conversations (Merrill).

The music educator must also serve as a model in the creative process. Beginning composers need well-demonstrated experiences as a first step (Birnie). Teachers may feel

uncomfortable improvising, but a vast amount of experience is not required to become a miniature part of a music lesson (Whitcomb). Music educator Kimberly Inks advises teachers to go through the process with their students by learning with them (Whitcomb).

Students will also need suggestions as they explore creatively. Teachers must “decide where the guidelines begin and when they can be loosened” (Whitcomb). Educators should provide a “musical context” including “melodic and rhythmic vocabulary already addressed in previous instruction” (Whitcomb). One of Watson’s principles says to “employ parameters and limitations that remove distractions and help students focus” (37). Another of his principles encourages music teachers to “remove parameters and limitations that stifle creativity and lead to contrived expression” (47). These ideas can be applied to both improvisation and composition.

In 2014, the nine National Music Standards were replaced with “four more general standards”, including Creating (Deemer). Under this standard, for students in kindergarten through eighth grade, there is an “Imagine” strand which calls for students to “generate musical ideas for various purposes and contexts” (National Association for Music Education). Another process component, entitled “Plan and Make” expects students to “select and develop musical ideas for defined purposes and contexts” (National Association for Music Education). The “Evaluate and Refine” branch of the Creating standard looks for students to “evaluate and refine selected musical ideas to create musical work(s) that meet appropriate criteria” (National Association for Music Education). The “Present” off-shoot anticipates for students to “share creative musical work that conveys intent, demonstrates craftsmanship, and exhibits originality” (National Association for Music Education).

It is quite possible that “creativity will be more of an expectation than ever before” (Brinkman). With this expectation, “the new teacher needs to be able to articulate to many

constituencies why creativity matters, and how the arts are uniquely positioned to encourage creative thinking” (Brinkman). As one author states, “if we give preservice teachers the tools for dealing with the future, then we ensure the health of the profession” (Brinkman).

### **Chapter 3: Detailed Study Finding**

The intention of this empirical study was to explore the impact of creative engagements on student learning. One first grade class from Wyncote Elementary School and one first grade class from Cheltenham Elementary School participated in a comparative study in which both classes received instruction on the same unit of study. One class followed a traditional approach while the other was taught using a model that included more opportunities for student creativity. This study took place over seven weeks during one class period each week. The results were measured with a pre-test and a post-test created and administered by the music teacher.

Both Cheltenham Elementary School and Wyncote Elementary School are two of four elementary schools in the School District of Cheltenham Township. Cheltenham is a “suburban community in Montgomery County”, Pennsylvania (Cheltenham School District). It consists of “the communities of Glenside, Laverock, Edge Hill, Wyncote, Cedarbrook, Cheltenham Hills, La Mott, Elkins Park, Melrose Park, and Cheltenham Village” (Cheltenham School District). Cheltenham Township is diverse, “full of people of different racial, religious, social, and economic backgrounds” (Cheltenham School District). The school district “serves a population of nearly 37,000 residents in a 9 square mile area” (Cheltenham School District). It reflects the diversity of the community “with an ethnic student body population consisting of 53% African American, 35% Caucasian, 7% Asian, 4% Hispanic, and 1% other races” (Cheltenham School District). Cheltenham School District has “a record of high academic accomplishments” (Cheltenham School District).

Cheltenham Elementary School has 464 students enrolled in kindergarten through fourth grade (Pennsylvania School Performance Profile). It is considered a Title 1 school with 23% economically disadvantaged students, 8% English language learners, and 9% of students in

special education (Pennsylvania School Performance Profile). The enrollment by ethnicity includes 48% African American, 28% Caucasian, 11% Asian, 9% Hispanic, 4% Multi-Racial, and 0.2% Pacific Islander (Pennsylvania School Performance Profile). The enrollment by gender consists of 52% male students and 48% female students.

Wyncote Elementary School has 441 students enrolled in kindergarten through fourth grade (Pennsylvania School Performance Profile). It is also considered a Title 1 school with 14% economically disadvantaged students, 5% English language learners, and 10% of students in special education (Pennsylvania School Performance Profile). The enrollment by ethnicity consists of 46% African American, 37% Caucasian, 8% Asian, 5% Hispanic, 4% Multi-Racial, 0.5% Native American/Alaskan Native, and 0.5% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (Pennsylvania School Performance Profile). The enrollment by gender includes 53% male students and 47% female students.

Both first grade homerooms in this comparative study receive music instruction for 40-minute periods twice a week. For seven weeks, one period each week was dedicated to this study. At the beginning of a unit on the notes la, sol and mi, I gave each class a pre-assessment. Room 14 at Cheltenham Elementary was my control group and received my original methods of instruction. Room 205 at Wyncote Elementary was my variable group and received instruction that included more opportunities to create. At the end of the unit, I assessed each group of students and compared the levels of growth between the two groups.

In the first week of my study, both homerooms took the pre-assessment at the start of their lesson. The assessment was created to determine how well students could identify la, sol, and mi through listening. After I pointed to the name of each pitch and played it on the piano, they were instructed to circle the pitch that they heard. For six listening examples, the students

had to listen for one note and for four listening examples, they had to listen for two notes. The test was graded on a scale of 0 to 10. In Room 14 at Cheltenham Elementary, the pretest scores ranged from 0 to 7.5 and the average score was 4.7. In Room 205 at Wyncote Elementary, the pretest scores ranged from 0 to 6.5 and the average score was 3.4.

In the first week at Cheltenham Elementary, students in Room 14 learned how to sing la, sol, and mi with hand signs and “body notes”, which they used to place the notes on their bodies with relation to the level of each pitch. The lesson concluded with students playing a game while using the previously mentioned notes to sing “Cinderella”. Most students sang the pitches successfully while echoing the teacher and playing the game.

In the first week at Wyncote Elementary, students in Room 205 also used hand signs and “body notes” to learn how to sing the notes la, sol, and mi. Their lesson concluded with opportunities to improvise with the pitches using hand signs and “body notes”. Many students sang the notes with accurate pitch while echoing the teacher. However, most students sang the note names while improvising, but did not sing the correct pitches.

During the second week of the study at Cheltenham Elementary, Room 14 reviewed how to sing and sign la, sol, and mi using hand signs and “body notes”. The students demonstrated some success with doing this accurately. I then created a melody with the three pitches and used it to guide students in singing through the book “Polar, Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?” by Eric Carle. As the students sang, they used the corresponding hand signs for each pitch. At the end of the lesson, Room 14 used la, sol and mi to sing “Doggie, Doggie” while playing a game. Most students sang the correct pitches during this engagement.

In the second week at Wyncote Elementary, Room 205 also reviewed singing la, sol, and mi with hand signs and “body notes”. The students in this homeroom were also guided through

using the pitches with hand signs to sing through “Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?” by Eric Carle. Some students struggled with singing the correct pitches. After singing through the book, the group sang the melody that was used in the story to ask individual students, “What do you hear?”. Taking turns, the individual students improvised singing responses to the question using la, sol, and mi. Some students successfully created an answer while singing accurate pitches.

At Cheltenham Elementary during the third week of the study, Room 14 began their lesson with a review of singing la, sol, and mi. Then the students decoded melodies with the pitches using a three-line staff as a group. I created a three-line staff with moveable polar bears to distinguish the pitches. This was projected on the smartboard in the classroom. I sang each melody on a neutral syllable and played it on the piano. After going through this process collectively, students individually decoded melodies with la, sol, and mi. Each student was given a paper with two three-lined staves and small polar bear-shaped erasers as manipulatives to indicate the pitches they heard. I noticed that some students were proficient while others struggled with the decoding. Upon reflection after the lesson, I thought the students needed more individual practice with decoding.

In the third week of the study at Wyncote Elementary, Room 205 also began their lesson with a singing review of la, sol, and mi. Like Room 14, these students went through the same process of decoding as a group and as individuals with the same materials. The students at Wyncote experienced success with deciphering melodies collectively. At the end of the lesson, the students in Room 205 were given the opportunity to individually create and perform melodies on their papers using the polar bear-shaped erasers. This homeroom did well with creating melodies, but they did not perform the pitches correctly. In my contemplation after the



lesson, I decided to revisit the opportunity for students to create melodies with myself as the performer.

During the fourth week of the study, Room 14 at Cheltenham Elementary used sol and mi to sing “Engine, Engine, Number Nine” with movement and body rhythms. I did not tell the students that la was not in the song because I wanted them to focus on distinguishing between the two pitches. For the remainder of the lesson, students were given more time to individually decode melodies using la, sol, and mi on a three-line staff using the same materials from the previous week. This time most students did well with interpreting the pitches.

At Wyncote Elementary in the fourth week, students in Room 205 began their lesson with a singing review of la, sol, and mi. They also used these notes to sing “Engine, Engine, Number Nine” with movement and body rhythms. Just as in Room 14’s lesson, Room 205 was given more time to individually decode melodies using the same materials and directions from the last week’s lesson. During this week’s lesson, I gave students more time to create melodies in the same manner from the previous lesson. Every student was engaged when they were creating individually. This time, I sang the compositions. One student said that I performed her composition in correctly. The compositions reflected the students’ limited understanding of melodic contour. In my reflection after this lesson, I thought about clarifying how high and low the pitches are in relation to each other. I also noted that melodic contour continues to be covered more in depth in the second grade music curriculum.

In the fifth week of the study with Room 14 at Cheltenham Elementary, the lesson was started with going over la, sol, and mi using body notes and hand signs. The pitches were then used to sing “Star Light, Star Bright” and students individually decoded the melody. I noticed that they were better with decoding 2-note phrases than 3-note or 4-note phrases. The students

then used sol and mi to sing “One, Two, Tie My Shoe” while playing a call and response passing game. Some students sang the correct pitches during this engagement. Room 14 also sang “One, Two, Tie My Shoe” while playing an instrument passing game.

During the fifth week at Wyncote Elementary, the students in Room 205 also went over singing la, sol, and mi. Like Room 14, this homeroom also used the notes to sing “Star Light, Star Bright” and individually deciphered the melody. As an extension of this engagement, the group sang the question, “What do you wish for?”, using a melody I taught them with la, sol, and mi. Individual students used the pitches to sing improvised answers to the question. During this activity, some students sang the correct notes while others sang incorrect pitches or did not use their singing voices. Room 205 also sang “One, Two, Tie My Shoe” while playing a call and response passing game. They were then instructed to sing improvised phrases to rhyme with the numbers in the song. This task was difficult for most students to do proficiently. In my reflection after this lesson, I noticed that my time was better spent substituting creative engagements with Room 205 instead of adding them to my traditional model for instruction.

At Cheltenham Elementary in the sixth week of the study, Room 14 began their lesson with another review of singing la, sol, and mi. The students then used the notes to sing “Lucy Locket” while keeping the beat playing a guessing game. After playing the game, they collectively decoded the rhythm and the melody to the song using a template I created and projected on the smartboard. Stick notation was used for the rhythm and letters were used for the pitches. Room 14 did well with deciphering rhythm and melody as a group. While working together, the students recognized melodic and rhythmic patterns in “Lucy Locket”.

In the sixth week of study at Wyncote Elementary, Room 205 also started their lesson with singing la, sol, and mi as a review. Next, the students were directed to create rhythm

compositions using quarter notes, eighth notes, and quarter rests with stick notation. After this step was complete, students added melodies consisting of la, sol, and mi to their rhythm compositions. Many students did well with composing, but not with performing their creations. However, modeling as a teacher appeared to help set up the students for success with creating.

For both classes, the last lesson in the seventh week of this study was used to administer the post-assessment after a review of singing la, sol, and mi. I used the same test I created for the pre-assessment so that I could measure each homeroom's growth over the course of the unit. Once again, the test was graded on a scale of 0 to 10. At Cheltenham Elementary, Room 14's post-test scores ranged from 3 to 10 and the average score was 6. For this class, the growth between the average pre-assessment score and the average post-assessment score was 1.3 points. At Wyncote Elementary, Room 205's post-test scores ranged from 1.5 to 8.5 and the average score was 4.6. For this homeroom, the growth between the average pre-assessment score and the average post-assessment score was 1.2 points.

## **Chapter 4: Conclusion**

Though they had more opportunities to create, the students in Room 205 at Wyncote Elementary School showed less growth on the assessments than the students in Room 14 at Cheltenham Elementary School. However, each class exhibited about the same amount of growth on the tests. Perhaps as I become more comfortable with incorporating creativity in lessons, students will show more growth over time. Students in Room 205 at Wyncote Elementary were engaged in more critical thinking with their learning, though their growth was only a little less than Room 14 at Cheltenham Elementary. This could be viewed with the value of process over product. The assessment results may not have shown my desired outcome of implementing creativity into the unit of study, but through observation I could see that the students who were creating were more involved in their own learning.

With more training, I could effectively use creative activities to help my students cultivate their musical abilities. This could improve the creative process and the products created in my music classroom over time. I intend to grow in my professional learning with regard to creativity with my students through collaboration with professional peers, workshops, classes, and conferences.

As a result of this study, I aim to look for ways to include creative engagements for other units of study with students at various grade levels. I learned that I do not need to rewrite my entire lesson plan to give students opportunities to compose or improvise. I can simply adapt what I have in place and approach it differently. Creative activities can be an extension of traditional plans, if time allows, or I can substitute them with new adaptations. When emphasis is put on the product, opportunities to create can be used to assess students' level in a certain skill (Scott). Along with other music educators, I need to be willing to step out of my comfort zone

and relinquish control of the product to have students more involved in their own musical learning through creativity (Jacobi-Karna).

In light of this study, I see a need for more training in composition and improvisation to happen in the music education classroom, especially for pre-service teachers (Brinkman). There is a need for a paradigm shift for what music education looks like at all levels so that more educators, students, and future educators become more comfortable and proficient with teaching for creativity (Brinkman). More research must be done so those in the field of music education will have a better vision of how to get students to compose and improvise in accordance to the National Music Standards (Deemer). Students at all levels can only benefit from this knowledge as they are given more opportunities to create.

## Appendix A: Lesson Plans



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF  
**CHELTENHAM TOWNSHIP**

### **School District of Cheltenham Township WEEKLY LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE**

**Teacher:** Margaret McKay

**Course:** General Music

**Period (Grade):** First (Room 14, Cheltenham Elementary)

**Date(s):** 1/11/16-1/15/16

**Learning Goals:**

Students will identify and perform the notes la, sol, and mi.

**Standards Addressed:**

- 9.1.3 Recognize and use fundamental vocabulary within each of the arts forms.

**Instructional Activities:**

- Students will:
  - Take pre-test to identify la, sol, and mi through listening
  - Learn how to sing and sign la, sol and mi using hand signs and body notes
  - Play a game while singing "Cinderella" with instruments

**Materials Needed:**

Words and Music to "Cinderella", Computer, CD Player, chalkboard/whiteboard/smartboard, chalk/whiteboard markers, piano/keyboard, classroom instruments, hand sign visuals for la, sol, and mi, test papers, pencils

**Assessment:** Students will identify and perform the notes correctly.

**Homework (Extension of Learning)**

**Goal:** N/A

**Homework (Extension of Learning) Assignment:**

N/A

**Homework (Extension of Learning)**

**Assessment:** N/A

- Observations/Reflections
  - Most students sang the notes successfully while echoing the teacher and playing the game.
  - The highest pre-test score was 7.5 out of 10.
  - The lowest pre-test score was 0 out of 10.
  - The average pre-test score was 4.7 out of 10.



## School District of Cheltenham Township WEEKLY LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE

**Teacher:** Margaret McKay

**Course:** General Music

**Period (Grade):** First (Room 205, Wyncote Elementary)

**Date(s):** 1/11/16-1/15/16

**Learning Goals:**

Students will identify and perform the notes la, sol, and mi.

**Standards Addressed:**

- 9.1.3.A Know and use the elements and principles of each art form to create works in the arts and humanities.
- 9.1.3.C Recognize and use fundamental vocabulary within each of the arts forms.

**Instructional Activities:**

- Students will:
  - Take pre-test to identify la, sol, and mi through listening
  - Learn how to sing and sign la, sol and mi using hand signs and body notes
  - Improvise with la, sol, and mi using hand signs and body notes

**Materials Needed:**

Computer, CD Player, chalkboard/whiteboard/smartboard, chalk/whiteboard markers, piano/keyboard, classroom instruments, hand sign visuals for la, sol, and mi, test papers, pencils

**Assessment:** Students will identify and perform the notes correctly.

**Homework (Extension of Learning)**

**Goal:** N/A

**Homework (Extension of Learning) Assignment:**

N/A

**Homework (Extension of Learning)**

**Assessment:** N/A

- Observations/Reflections
  - Most students sang the note names while improvising, but did not sing the correct pitches.
  - Many students sang the notes successfully while echoing the teacher.
  - The highest pre-test score was 6.5 out of 10.
  - The lowest pre-test score was 0 out of 10.
  - The average pre-test score was 3.4 out of 10.



## School District of Cheltenham Township WEEKLY LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE

**Teacher:** Margaret McKay

**Course:** General Music

**Period (Grade):** First (Room 14, Cheltenham Elementary)

**Date(s):** 1/19/16-1/22/16

**Learning Goals:**

Students will identify and perform the notes la, sol, and mi.

**Standards Addressed:**

- 9.1.3 Recognize and use fundamental vocabulary within each of the arts forms.

**Instructional Activities:**

- Students will:
  - Review how to sing and sign la, sol, and mi using hand signs and body notes
  - Sing la, sol and mi while reading "Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?"
  - Sing "Doggie, Doggie" while playing a game

**Materials Needed:**

Words and Music to "Doggie, Doggie", Computer, CD Player, chalkboard/whiteboard/smartboard, chalk/whiteboard markers, piano/keyboard, classroom instruments, hand sign visuals for la, sol, and mi, "Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?" book by Eric Carle

**Assessment:** Students will identify and perform the notes correctly.

**Homework (Extension of Learning)**

**Goal:** N/A

**Homework (Extension of Learning) Assignment:**

N/A

**Homework (Extension of Learning)**

**Assessment:** N/A

- Observations/Reflections
  - Students demonstrated some success with singing the notes accurately using hand signs and body notes.
  - Most students sang the correct pitches while singing "Doggie, Doggie".





## School District of Cheltenham Township WEEKLY LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE

**Teacher:** Margaret McKay

**Course:** General Music

**Period (Grade):** First (Room 205, Wyncote Elementary)

**Date(s):** 1/18/16-1/22/16

**Learning Goals:**

Students will identify and perform the notes la, sol, and mi.

**Standards Addressed:**

- 9.1.3.A Know and use the elements and principles of each art form to create works in the arts and humanities.
- 9.1.3.C Recognize and use fundamental vocabulary within each of the arts forms.

**Instructional Activities:**

- Students will:
  - Review how to sing and sign la, sol and mi using hand signs and body notes
  - Sing la, sol, and mi while reading “Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?”
  - Improvise singing responses using la, sol, and mi

**Materials Needed:**

Computer, CD Player, chalkboard/whiteboard/smartboard, chalk/whiteboard markers, piano/keyboard, classroom instruments, hand sign visuals for la, sol, and mi, “Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?” book by Eric Carle

**Assessment:** Students will identify and perform the notes correctly.

**Homework (Extension of Learning)**

**Goal:** N/A

**Homework (Extension of Learning) Assignment:**

N/A

**Homework (Extension of Learning)**

**Assessment:** N/A

- Observations/Reflections
  - Some students struggled with singing the correct pitches during “Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?”.
  - Some students successfully improvised an answer using la, sol, and mi with accuracy.



## School District of Cheltenham Township WEEKLY LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE

**Teacher:** Margaret McKay

**Course:** General Music

**Period (Grade):** First (Room 14, Cheltenham Elementary)

**Date(s):** 1/25/16-1/29/16

**Learning Goals:**

Students will identify and perform the notes la, sol, and mi.

**Standards Addressed:**

- 9.1.3 Recognize and use fundamental vocabulary within each of the arts forms.

**Instructional Activities:**

- Students will:
  - Review how to sing and sign la, sol, and mi using hand signs and body notes
  - Decode melodies using la, sol, and mi on a 3-line staff as a group
  - Individually decode melodies using la, sol, and mi on a 3-line staff

**Materials Needed:**

Computer, CD Player, chalkboard/whiteboard/smartboard, chalk/whiteboard markers, piano/keyboard, classroom instruments, hand sign visuals for la, sol, and mi, visuals of a 3-line staff (for the whole group and for each student), manipulatives to represent notes on the staff

**Assessment:** Students will identify and perform the notes correctly.

**Homework (Extension of Learning)**

**Goal:** N/A

**Homework (Extension of Learning) Assignment:**

N/A

**Homework (Extension of Learning)**

**Assessment:** N/A

- Observations/Reflections
  - Some students were successful, while others struggled with decoding the pitches.
  - Perhaps the students need more individual practice with decoding.



## School District of Cheltenham Township WEEKLY LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE

**Teacher:** Margaret McKay

**Course:** General Music

**Period (Grade):** First (Room 205, Wyncote Elementary)

**Date(s):** 1/25/16-1/29/16

**Learning Goals:**

Students will identify and perform the notes la, sol, and mi.

**Standards Addressed:**

- 9.1.3.A Know and use the elements and principles of each art form to create works in the arts and humanities.
- 9.1.3.C Recognize and use fundamental vocabulary within each of the arts forms.

**Instructional Activities:**

- Students will:
  - Review how to sing and sign la, sol and mi using hand signs and body notes
  - Decode melodies using la, sol, and mi on a 3-line staff as a group
  - Individually decode melodies using la, sol, and mi on a 3-line staff
  - Create melodies on a 3-line staff using la, sol, and mi

**Materials Needed:**

Computer, CD Player, chalkboard/whiteboard/smartboard, chalk/whiteboard markers, piano/keyboard, classroom instruments, hand sign visuals for la, sol, and mi, visuals of a 3-line staff (for the whole group and for each student), manipulatives to represent notes on the staff

**Assessment:** Students will identify and perform the notes correctly.

**Homework (Extension of Learning)**

**Goal:** N/A

**Homework (Extension of Learning) Assignment:**

N/A

**Homework (Extension of Learning)**

**Assessment:** N/A

- Observations/Reflections
  - The students experienced success decoding as a group.
  - The class did well with creating melodies, but they did not perform the pitches correctly.
  - Perhaps I will revisit the opportunity for students to create melodies, but I will perform the compositions.



## School District of Cheltenham Township WEEKLY LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE

**Teacher:** Margaret McKay

**Course:** General Music

**Period (Grade):** First (Room 14, Cheltenham Elementary)

**Date(s):** 2/1/16-2/5/16

**Learning Goals:**

Students will identify and perform the notes la, sol, and mi.

**Standards Addressed:**

- 9.1.3 Recognize and use fundamental vocabulary within each of the arts forms.

**Instructional Activities:**

- Students will:
  - Sing "Engine, Engine, Number Nine" with movement and body rhythms
  - Individually decode melodies using la, sol, and mi on a 3-line staff

**Materials Needed:**

Words and Music to "Engine, Engine Number Nine", Computer, CD Player, chalkboard/whiteboard/smartboard, chalk/whiteboard markers, piano/keyboard, classroom instruments, hand sign visuals for la, sol, and mi, visuals of a 3-line staff (for the whole group and for each student), manipulatives to represent notes on the staff

**Assessment:** Students will identify and perform the notes correctly.

**Homework (Extension of Learning)**

**Goal:** N/A

**Homework (Extension of Learning) Assignment:**

N/A

**Homework (Extension of Learning)**

**Assessment:** N/A

- Observations/Reflections
  - "Engine, Engine, Number Nine" only used the note sol and mi, but I did not tell the students.
  - Most students did well with decoding pitches on a 3-line staff.



## School District of Cheltenham Township WEEKLY LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE

**Teacher:** Margaret McKay

**Course:** General Music

**Period (Grade):** First (Room 205, Wyncote Elementary)

**Date(s):** 2/1/16-2/5/16

**Learning Goals:**

Students will identify and perform the notes la, sol, and mi.

**Standards Addressed:**

- 9.1.3.A Know and use the elements and principles of each art form to create works in the arts and humanities.
- 9.1.3.C Recognize and use fundamental vocabulary within each of the arts forms.

**Instructional Activities:**

- Students will:
  - Review how to sing and sign la, sol and mi using hand signs and body notes
  - Sing “Engine, Engine, Number Nine” with movement and body rhythms
  - Individually decode melodies using la, sol, and mi on a 3-line staff
  - Create melodies on a 3-line staff using la, sol, and mi

**Materials Needed:**

Words and Music to “Engine, Engine, Number Nine”, Computer, CD Player, chalkboard/whiteboard/smartboard, chalk/whiteboard markers, piano/keyboard, classroom instruments, hand sign visuals for la, sol, and mi, visuals of a 3-line staff (for the whole group and for each student), manipulatives to represent notes on the staff

**Assessment:** Students will identify and perform the notes correctly.

**Homework (Extension of Learning)**

**Goal:** N/A

**Homework (Extension of Learning) Assignment:**

N/A

**Homework (Extension of Learning)**

**Assessment:** N/A

- Observations/Reflections
  - Every student was engaged when they were creating individually.
  - This time, I sang the compositions. One student said that I performed her composition incorrectly.
  - The compositions reflected the students’ limited understanding of melodic contour. Perhaps I should clarify this. Melodic contour is also covered more in depth in Second Grade.



## School District of Cheltenham Township WEEKLY LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE

**Teacher:** Margaret McKay

**Course:** General Music

**Period (Grade):** First (Room 14, Cheltenham Elementary)

**Date(s):** 2/8/16-2/11/16

**Learning Goals:**

Students will identify and perform the notes la, sol, and mi.

**Standards Addressed:**

- 9.1.3 Recognize and use fundamental vocabulary within each of the arts forms.

**Instructional Activities:**

- Students will:
  - Review how to sing and sign la, sol, and mi using hand signs and body notes
  - Sing “Star Light, Star Bright” and decode the notes in the melody
  - Sing “One, Two, Tie My Shoe” while playing a call and response passing game
  - Sing “One, Two, Tie My Shoe” while playing an instrument passing game

**Materials Needed:**

Words and Music to “Star Light, Star Bright”, and “One, Two, Tie My Shoe”, Computer, CD Player, chalkboard/whiteboard/smartboard, chalk/whiteboard markers, piano/keyboard, classroom instruments, object to pass, hand sign visuals for la, sol, and mi, visuals of a 3-line staff (for the whole group and for each student), manipulatives to represent notes on the staff

**Assessment:** Students will identify and perform the notes correctly.

**Homework (Extension of Learning)**

**Goal:** N/A

**Homework (Extension of Learning) Assignment:**

N/A

**Homework (Extension of Learning)**

**Assessment:** N/A

- Observations/Reflections
  - Students were better with decoding 2-note phrases than 3-note or 4-note phrases.
  - Some students sang the correct pitches during the call and response game.



## School District of Cheltenham Township WEEKLY LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE

**Teacher:** Margaret McKay

**Course:** General Music

**Period (Grade):** First (Room 205, Wyncote Elementary)

**Date(s):** 2/8/16-2/11/16

**Learning Goals:**

Students will identify and perform the notes la, sol, and mi.

**Standards Addressed:**

- 9.1.3.A Know and use the elements and principles of each art form to create works in the arts and humanities.
- 9.1.3.C Recognize and use fundamental vocabulary within each of the arts forms.

**Instructional Activities:**

- Students will:
  - Review how to sing and sign la, sol and mi using hand signs and body notes
  - Sing “Star Light, Star Bright” and decode the notes in the melody
  - Sing an improvised answer to the question, “What do you wish for?”
  - Sing “One, Two, Tie My Shoe” while playing a call and response passing game
  - Improvise phrases to rhyme with the numbers in “One, Two, Tie My Shoe”

**Materials Needed:**

Words and Music to “Star Light, Star Bright”, and “One, Two, Tie My Shoe”, Computer, CD Player, chalkboard/whiteboard/smartboard, chalk/whiteboard markers, piano/keyboard, classroom instruments, object to pass, hand sign visuals for la, sol, and mi, visuals of a 3-line staff (for the whole group and for each student), manipulatives to represent notes on the staff

**Assessment:** Students will identify and perform the notes correctly.

**Homework (Extension of Learning)**

**Goal:** N/A

**Homework (Extension of Learning) Assignment:**

N/A

**Homework (Extension of Learning)**

**Assessment:** N/A

- Observations/Reflections
  - There is more time for substituting creative activities than adding them on to my traditional model for instruction.
  - Improvising answers for “Star Light, Star Bright” went well. Some students sang the correct pitches. Others sang incorrect pitches or didn’t use their singing voices.
  - It was difficult for most students to improvise rhymes to go with “One, Two, Tie My Shoe”.



**School District of Cheltenham Township**  
**WEEKLY LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE**

**Teacher:** Margaret McKay

**Course:** General Music

**Period (Grade):** First (Room 14, Cheltenham Elementary)

**Date(s):** 2/16/16-2/19/16

**Learning Goals:**

Students will identify and perform the notes la, sol, and mi.

**Standards Addressed:**

- 9.1.3 Recognize and use fundamental vocabulary within each of the arts forms.

**Instructional Activities:**

- Students will:
  - Review how to sing and sign la, sol, and mi using hand signs and body notes
  - Sing “Lucy Locket” while keeping the beat and playing a guessing game
  - Decipher the rhythm and decode the melody to “Lucy Locket”

**Materials Needed:**

Words and Music to “Lucy Locket”, Computer, CD Player, chalkboard/whiteboard/ smartboard, chalk/whiteboard markers, piano/keyboard, classroom instruments, object to pass , hand sign visuals for la, sol, and mi, rhythm visuals

**Assessment:** Students will identify and perform the notes correctly.

**Homework (Extension of Learning)**

**Goal:** N/A

**Homework (Extension of Learning) Assignment:**

N/A

**Homework (Extension of Learning)**

**Assessment:** N/A

- Observations/Reflections
  - The class did well with decoding rhythm and melody as a group.
  - While working together, the students recognized melodic and rhythmic patterns in “Lucy Locket”.





## School District of Cheltenham Township WEEKLY LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE

**Teacher:** Margaret McKay

**Course:** General Music

**Period (Grade):** First (Room 205, Wyncote Elementary)

**Date(s):** 2/16/16-2/19/16

**Learning Goals:**

Students will identify and perform the notes la, sol, and mi.

**Standards Addressed:**

- 9.1.3.A Know and use the elements and principles of each art form to create works in the arts and humanities.
- 9.1.3.C Recognize and use fundamental vocabulary within each of the arts forms.

**Instructional Activities:**

- Students will:
  - Review how to sing and sign la, sol and mi using hand signs and body notes
  - Create rhythm compositions using quarter notes, eighth notes, and quarter rests
  - Add melodies to their rhythm compositions using la, sol, and mi

**Materials Needed:**

Words and Music to "Lucy Locket" Computer, CD Player, chalkboard/whiteboard/ smartboard, chalk/whiteboard markers, piano/keyboard, classroom instruments, hand sign visuals for la, sol, and mi, pencils, paper templates for compositions, rhythm visuals

**Assessment:** Students will identify and perform the notes correctly.

**Homework (Extension of Learning)**

**Goal:** N/A

**Homework (Extension of Learning) Assignment:**

N/A

**Homework (Extension of Learning)**

**Assessment:** N/A

- Observations/Reflections
  - Many students seemed to do well with composing, but not with performing.
  - Modeling as a teacher appeared to help set up the students for success with composing.



**School District of Cheltenham Township**  
**WEEKLY LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE**

**Teacher:** Margaret McKay

**Course:** General Music

**Period (Grade):** First (Room 14, Cheltenham Elementary)

**Date(s):** 2/22/16-2/26/16

**Learning Goals:**

Students will identify and perform the notes la, sol, and mi.

**Standards Addressed:**

- 9.1.3 Recognize and use fundamental vocabulary within each of the arts forms.

**Instructional Activities:**

- Students will:
  - Review how to sing and sign la, sol, and mi using hand signs and body notes
  - Take test to identify la, sol, and mi through listening

**Materials Needed:**

Computer, CD Player, chalkboard/whiteboard/smartboard, chalk/whiteboard markers, piano/keyboard, hand sign visuals for la, sol, and mi, test papers, pencils

**Assessment:** Students will identify and perform the notes correctly.

**Homework (Extension of Learning)**

**Goal:** N/A

**Homework (Extension of Learning) Assignment:**

N/A

**Homework (Extension of Learning)**

**Assessment:** N/A

- Observations/Reflections
  - The highest post-test score was 10 out of 10.
  - The lowest post-test score was 3 out of 10.
  - The average post-test score was 6 out of 10.
  - The growth between the average scores of the pre-test and post-test was 1.3 points.



## School District of Cheltenham Township WEEKLY LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE

**Teacher:** Margaret McKay

**Course:** General Music

**Period (Grade):** First (Room 205, Wyncote Elementary)

**Date(s):** 2/22/16-2/26/16

**Learning Goals:**

Students will identify and perform the notes la, sol, and mi.

**Standards Addressed:**

- 9.1.3.A Know and use the elements and principles of each art form to create works in the arts and humanities.
- 9.1.3.C Recognize and use fundamental vocabulary within each of the arts forms.

**Instructional Activities:**

- Students will:
  - Review how to sing and sign la, sol, and mi using hand signs and body notes
  - Take test to identify la, sol, and mi through listening

**Materials Needed:**

Computer, CD Player, chalkboard/whiteboard/smartboard, chalk/whiteboard markers, piano/keyboard, hand sign visuals for la, sol, and mi, pencils, rhythm visuals, test papers

**Assessment:** Students will identify and perform the notes correctly.

**Homework (Extension of Learning)**

**Goal:** N/A

**Homework (Extension of Learning) Assignment:**

N/A

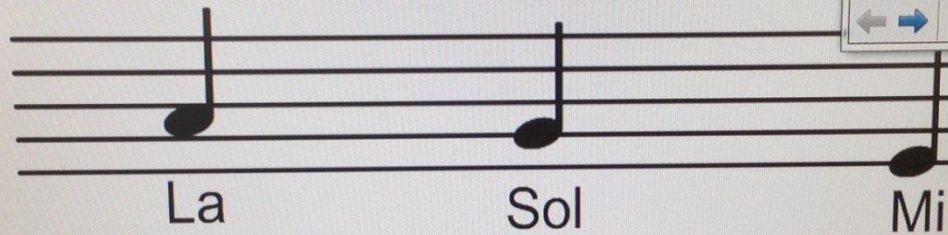
**Homework (Extension of Learning)**

**Assessment:** N/A

- Observations/Reflections
  - The highest post-test score was 8.5 out of 10.
  - The lowest post-test score was 1.5 out of 10.
  - The average post-test score was 4.6 out of 10.
  - The growth between the average scores of the pre-test and post-test was 1.2 points.
  - Room 205 at Wyncote Elementary showed less growth than Room 14 at Cheltenham Elementary.
  - Each class showed about the same amount of growth.
  - Perhaps as I become more comfortable incorporating creativity in lessons, students will show more growth over time.
  - Students in Room 205 at Wyncote were engaged in more critical thinking with their learning, though their growth was only a little less than Room 14 at Cheltenham Elementary. This could be viewed with the value of process over product.

Appendix B: Assessment for Pretest and Post-Test

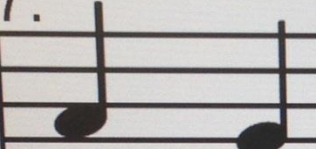
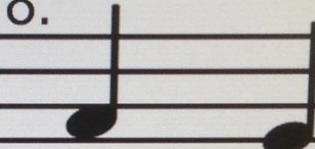
Listen as your teacher plays these 3 notes.

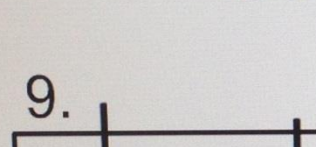
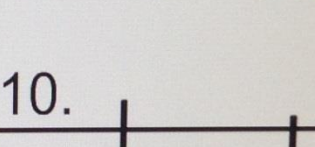


Circle the note that you hear your teacher play.



Circle the **2 notes** that you hear your teacher play.

7.  8. 

9.  10. 

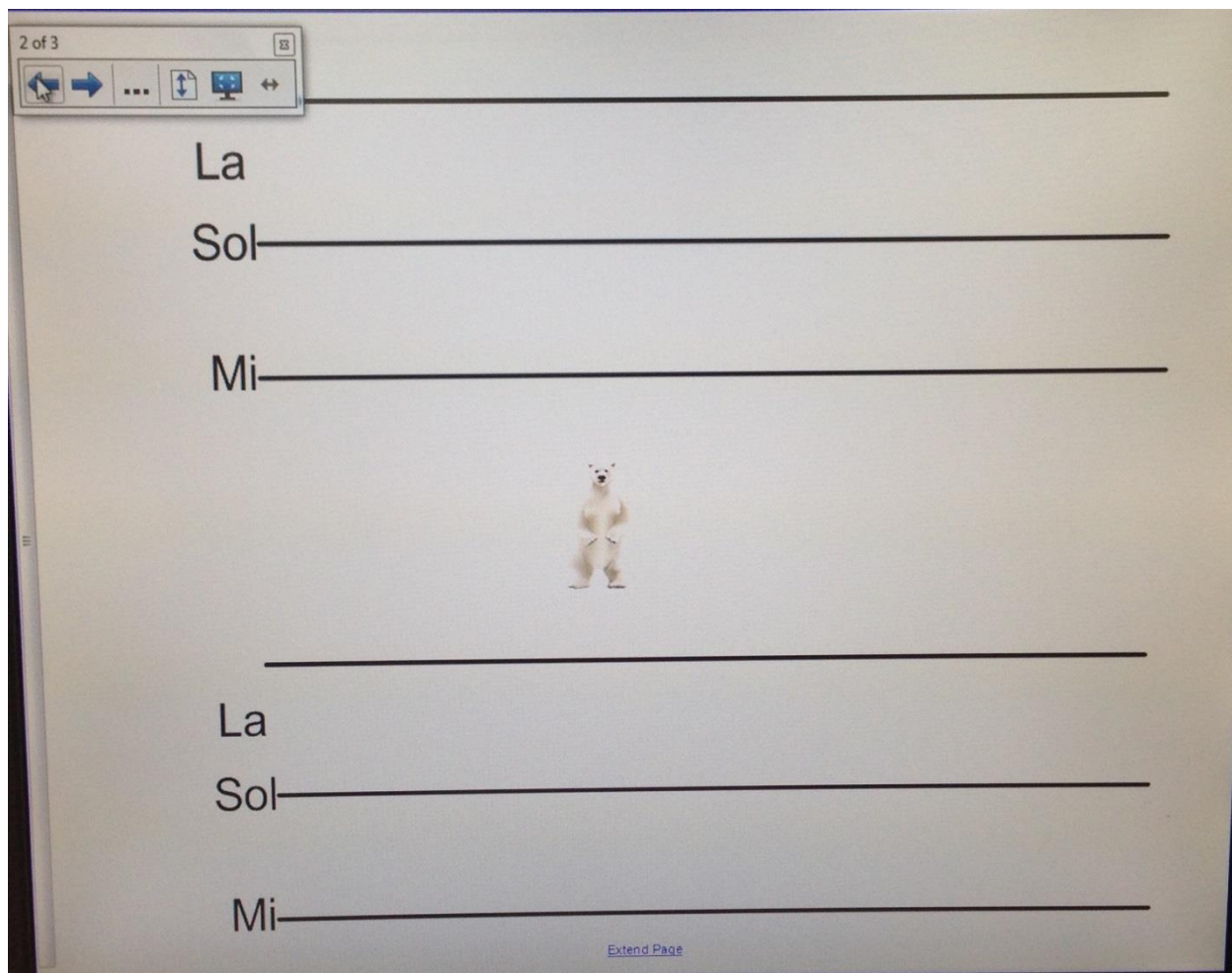
La Sol Mi La Sol Mi La Sol Mi La Sol Mi

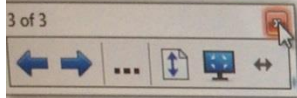
2 of 2

Extend Page



## Appendix C: Composition Templates





La

Sol

Mi

La

Sol

Mi

[Extend Page](#)

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