

Blending Orff and Understanding by Design Principles in the General Music Classroom

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Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this philosophical study is to improve the general music education curriculum for the fifth grade students of the Williamsport Area School District. The Understanding by Design curriculum model will be applied to the Orff Schulwerk classroom to create meaningful lessons that promote true understanding. A unit will be developed using backward design and taught with Orff methods.

Rationale

With high-stakes testing, arts classes must continually prove themselves to be a relevant and rigorous part of a student's education. Unfortunately, not many administrators understand musical language, terminology, content, or intrinsic value. This study will utilize a nationally accepted curriculum design method to create a unit plan rich in musical content that will be in a format and language easily understood by any administrator of any background.

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Chapter 1

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Statement of Purpose

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Rationale

“It has been said that there are two kinds of conductors: ‘those who handle traffic and those who make music.’”

-Frank Battisti, *On Becoming a Conductor*

As I think back to my very first year of teaching general music to grades 6-8, I cringe at the amount of time wasted in echo and rote learning. This teaching style resulted only in imitative music making. My lessons were very teacher-directed and sorely lacked in student involvement, creativity, or depth of knowledge. I was more like a traffic cop, making sure that each group played their rhythm or pitches exactly like the written music directed, rather than an artist who allowed freedom of thought to swirl into a beautiful tapestry of sound. I noticed my “better behaved classes” mindlessly repeating what I taught and my “challenging classes” become completely disengaged and difficult to keep focused.

After that first year, I knew something needed to change. I knew that my job was more than turning students into robots who imitated someone else. What I wanted was to inspire

students with the magic of music-making and help their creative potential come alive, but I did not quite know how to proceed.

Thankfully, after that first year of teaching, I enrolled in a summer Orff Level I class at Villanova University that changed my whole view of teaching. The Orff “process” was exactly what I had been looking for. It helped deepen our classroom music making past imitation and into unique, creative expressions. Empowered with a new philosophy, I began my second year of teaching with new passion and excitement. I saw student growth in skills, creativity, and level of engagement. Over the next two years I kept adjusting and re-writing unit and lesson plans to involve more creative choice and saw growth in myself and my students.

After four years of teaching middle school general music, the district re-aligned our building and grade level structure. I was shifted to an intermediate building to teach general music and choir to grades 4-6. The only “curriculum” I was given was a one-page document for grades 4 and 5 that had vague musical content goals and an outdated list of potential repertoire. I found myself lost in a sea of concepts and skill goals with no real sequence or purpose to guide the learning. As part of survival mode in the first year of that position, I often found my lesson plans full of quality activities with no connection from one class to the next. When a student would ask, “Why are we doing this?” I did not have a good answer. My curriculum at that point lacked emphasis on big ideas that connected musical learning to anything relevant in the real world.

For this graduate project, it is my desire to transform my current general music curriculum into a well-planned roadmap to musical understanding that transfers beyond my classroom door. I want to design a curriculum that is rooted in the big ideas of the standards that extend to the real world. I desire my classroom to be as Jane Frazee describes, “The Orff

classroom is therefore a place where students learn about music by making and inventing it. But in addition-and this is of crucial importance- they also are learning and practicing other essential learning skills as well. These skills transfer to other disciplines and to future work and play” (Artful v-vi).

During a University of the Arts graduate class about curriculum, I learned about the Understanding by Design curriculum model by Grant Wiggins. This model focuses on creating a standards based learning sequence focused on understanding and achievement. This method of designing units and teaching plans resonated with my Orff training. I have always criticized non-Orff curriculum for not having meaningful assessments or performances like Orff teaching does. However, my biggest frustration with Orff-style teaching is the lack of curricular roadmaps. UbD philosophy and Orff philosophy seem to align very nicely and may help to alleviate my frustrations.

During this project I will research the Understanding by Design method and the connection it has to an Orff-inspired music curriculum. I will then align my district’s grade level goals to Pennsylvania state and national standards and redesign a unit using the three stages of planning outlined in the UbD process.

Expected Findings

As a result of UbD planning, student knowledge and skills should increase and be evidenced by their creative products/performances. I expect to find students more engaged, more inspired, and more invested in their learning. I also expect that my quantity of content coverage will actually decrease, but the quality of student interaction with the content will increase.

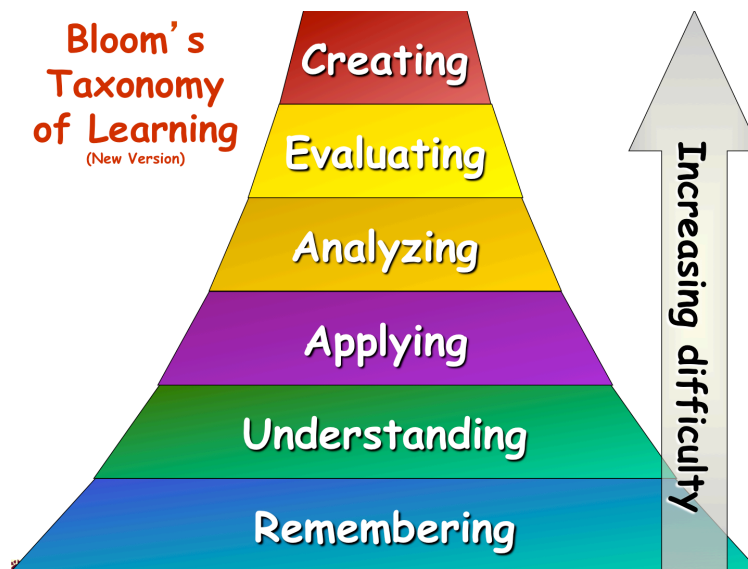
Chapter 2

Principles of Understanding by Design and Orff Schulwerk

The world of education is constantly evolving with new and “better” strategies to increase learning. Even in my limited seven years of teaching, I have seen a shift from bell-ringers, to essential questions, to “I can” statements. All of these different practices seek to accomplish the same goal in different ways: direct student attention to the essential content and skills for learning. This chapter will define the cornerstone of learning theory, Bloom’s Taxonomy, as well as describe the curriculum model “Understanding by Design” (UbD). It will also explain the Orff-Schulwerk process for teaching and how it can connect to the Understanding by Design curriculum model. Lastly, it will show how the UbD curriculum model easily aligns with state and national standards. Such a curriculum will be rigorous and relevant in today’s 21st Century education.

Bloom’s Taxonomy

In the 1950’s an educational psychologist, Benjamin Bloom, and a team of education researchers labeled and defined a hierarchy of skills inherent to any learning process. Although slightly revised, this taxonomy of learning is still the backbone to most educational learning theories and curriculum development. The taxonomy identifies three major domains of learning: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. In each domain, skills are organized into increasing levels of higher order thinking (Sokolowski 29). Many current teaching practices and learning theories are based on the updated cognitive domain sequence below.



In the general music classroom, these levels of thinking skills can be exemplified like this:

Creating	Compose, arrange, improvise, orchestrate one's own music
Evaluating	Critique performances of self and others, interpret a composer's intent
Analyzing	Form identification, distinguishing timbre
Applying	Performing patterns on an instrument, accompanying a melody, sight-reading, using dynamics
Understanding	Identify rhythm or tonal patterns correctly, describing, explaining, or compare/contrasting music
Remembering/Knowing	Music vocabulary for tempo and dynamics, rhythm values, notes on the staff, fingerings

Understanding by Design

“Understanding by Design” is a planning process for curriculum, assessment, and instruction developed by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe. Their framework seeks to most efficiently promote student *understanding* of content beyond *knowing* about content. Traditional curriculum or lesson design tends to fall into pitfalls of “hands-on without minds-on” activity-based teaching or simply just “coverage” of a broad topic. Teachers often start their planning

based on favorite activities or text books. Lessons or units developed from these starting points often lack clear purpose and leave students still asking, “What’s the point? Why should we learn this?”. As an alternative, Wiggins suggests a process called “backward design” (14-16).

Backward design begins with asking “What should they walk out the door able to understand” and “What is evidence of such ability” (17). After determining the primary content goals, teachers go through a three-stage design process. Stage one is to identify desired results. Stage two is to determine acceptable evidence, and stage three is to plan learning experiences or activities that will directly assist students in acquiring, connecting, and transferring the content of the unit (17-19).

The concept of “understanding” is surprisingly ambiguous and widely interpreted. In his workshops, Wiggins found educators often struggled when asked to distinguish between “knowledge” and “understanding” (35). Knowledge is knowing and recalling facts and information. Understanding, however, involves being able to *transfer* knowledge and apply it to new conditions in order to solve a problem or create something new (40). Understanding is proven when students independently transfer their learning during an authentic performance. Indicators like ability to explain, interpret, apply, shift perspective, empathize, and self-assess can prove understanding (84).

The design process is quite complex. In stage one, the teacher identifies the desired results by clearly articulating the established goals, enduring understandings, essential questions, and necessary knowledge and skills (Wiggins 58-59). Goals are formal, long-term, and connected to state and national standards. The difficulty of establishing a clear goal lies in navigating and prioritizing the standards. There are simply too many standards and not enough time to properly teach them all. Some standards are too big for one unit or lesson, and some are

too small and narrow. Still others are ambiguously worded, which leads to varying teacher interpretation. Wiggins suggests that standards/goals be prioritized by sifting through and looking for repeated key nouns, adjectives, and verbs . From the repeated language, one can highlight the “big ideas” essential for understanding a subject (60-63). Big ideas are those that are broad and abstract, universal in application, and timeless. These big ideas often come across as key concepts, themes, ongoing debates, paradoxes, theories, underlying assumptions, recurring questions, or understandings/principles of a field (69-70). They are meant to uncover the “core” of a subject and prompt further inquiry. However, they are often abstract, lifeless, or irrelevant to students. Wiggins says, “The challenge of teaching for understanding is largely the challenge of making the big ideas in the field become big in the mind of the learner” (75).

After goals are established, enduring understandings, or priorities, can be identified. Enduring understandings give content its meaning and connect the facts and skills of a subject. They should be based on big ideas and transferable beyond a specific topic (Wiggins 57, 128). Enduring understandings are often inferences and involve abstract, easily misunderstood ideas (128-129). Understandings are best stated like, “Students will understand *that...*”

Understandings are proven when students can transfer their knowledge in a meaningful, connected way instead of just recalling facts learned. Wiggins identified six specific facets of understanding. Below is a chart to demonstrate the six facets and ways in which understanding can be demonstrated (84).

Can explain	via generalizations or principles; make insightful connections and provide illuminating examples
Can interpret	make the object of understanding personal or accessible through images, anecdotes, analogies, and models
Can apply	effectively use and adapt what is known in diverse and real contexts
Have perspective	see and hear points of view through critical eyes and ears; see the big picture
Can empathize	find value in what others might find odd, alien, or implausible; perceive sensitively on the basis of prior direct experience.
Have self-knowledge	show metacognitive awareness; perceive personal style, prejudices, projections, and habits of mind that both shape and impede our own understanding; reflect on the meaning of learning and experience.

The next step of stage one is to frame a few essential questions. Framing essential questions helps teachers to stay focused on the big ideas and helps students connect and bring meaning to all the knowledge and skills presented to them (Wiggins 105). Questions are considered to be essential if they are: not easily answerable, able to stimulate thought, provoke inquiry or discussion, highlight the big ideas, or push to the heart of a matter (106-107). Essential questions can fall into two categories: topical and overarching. Topical questions lead to specific understandings within the unit. Overarching questions do not mention the specific content of a unit, rather point beyond the specific topic toward a broader, transferable understanding across multiple units or disciplines. Effective units incorporate both types of essential questions (114). An example in the subject of dance could be (119):

Topical Essential Questions: What ideas can we express through dance? How can movement convey emotion?

Overarching Essential Questions: In what ways do artists express what they think and feel? In what ways does the medium influence the message? What can the artist do that the non-artist can't?

Wiggins suggests using only two to five essential questions per unit. The content taught should assist in answering the questions. Assessments should be clearly linked to the questions (121).

The last step of stage one is to identify key knowledge and skills. “Knowledge” refers to the straightforward facts or concepts that students will acquire from the learning and teaching. Skills are techniques or procedures that students may need to be able to solve a problem or perform a task. Teachers must identify the *new* knowledge and skills presented in the unit, but also must realize the “enabling” knowledge or skills necessary to be successful (Wiggins 58-59). For example, if a music assessment requires students to compose an ostinato pattern on paper, students must already know how to write in music notation. Meaningful, transferrable teaching requires content to be viewed as a *means* to true understanding instead of the *aim* of instruction (59).

Stage two of the design process is to determine appropriate assessments. Most curriculum developers or teachers would immediately jump into planning activities to cover the topics/standards identified in stage one. However, by considering the assessment before the activities, instruction can be even more focused and efficient. In stage two, teachers must consider the following questions: What evidence is necessary to prove that the understanding goal is met? What is specifically needed in student responses to prove understanding? Is the evidence “reliable and viable enough” to infer a student’s understanding (Wiggins 146-150)?

Assessments can vary in size, format, and depth. Understanding is best proved when teachers use a wide variety of assessments. Assessments can look like: performance tasks,

academic prompts, tests/quizzes, observations and dialogues, or informal checks for understanding (Wiggins 152). One way to build quality assessments is to first choose a facet of understanding that best illustrates mastery and transfer. Starting with the phrase, “A student who *really* understands...” can help determine which tasks will prove the accomplishment of the instructional goals (161). Essential questions can also help frame assessments. Performances should require students to directly or indirectly answer the essential questions (167).

Unlike traditional tests and quizzes, open-ended prompts and performance tasks do not have one single, correct answer. In order to evaluate student work, criteria must be developed. Criteria spells out exactly what is needed to measure the degree of understanding. This keeps assessments consistent and fair when student responses vary widely (Wiggins 172). Rubrics effectively rate criteria and can help create a scoring guideline. Since most performances require multiple dimensions to be successful, Wiggins suggests using an analytic rubric instead of a holistic rubric. An analytic rubric breaks each performance down into individual skills, traits, or aspects of performance and allows for specific feedback. A holistic rubric simply rates the overall product in one summary (173-174).

Stage three of the design process finally addresses the day to day classroom activities experienced by the learners. Quality instruction is both engaging and effective. One pitfall of “normal” planning usually involves a temptation to use an activity for its entertainment, fun, or comfort factors. Another pitfall is presenting the facts, definitions, and content before engaging the students in any way (Wiggins 191-195). Neither one of these strategies truly draws in the learner or accomplishes true understanding and transfer of knowledge. One strategy for developing engaging and effective activities is to brainstorm an activity that would relate directly

to each of the six facets of understanding (22-223). Wiggins also suggests considering the aspects addressed in the acronym “WHERE TO” (197-198).

W- WHERE is the learning leading and WHY is it important?

H- The HOOK for the learner and how to HOLD their attention.

E- EQUIP students with necessary tools for success

R- Provide opportunities to RETHINK, REFLECT, and REVISE learning.

E- (E2) Guide students in EVALUATING progress with self-assessment.

T- TAILOR or personalize learning experiences.

O- ORGANIZE learning in the best sequence for engaging and effective learning.

When starting a new unit of study, the WHERE/WHY question is the first engagement students should encounter. Without a meaningful answer to this question, student curiosity, attention, and focus may be lost. Therefore, the learning goals must be clear and in student language, while also convincing the students of why they should care and invest in the learning. The HOOK/HOLD is what often gets lost in traditional instruction. Many teachers start with vocabulary, definitions, or concepts that fail to stick with students because the students are not fully drawn into the subject. When students are hooked by puzzles, mysteries, paradoxes, or real-world issues, they are intrinsically motivated to absorb content and reach understandings. EQUIPPING students involves considering their prior knowledge and filling in any gaps that they may need to properly explore the new content/concepts. In the REFLECT/RETHINK/REVISE stage, teachers should constantly challenge their students' current perceptions, opinions, and understandings of an issue. Activities should guide students to think about a topic in different ways. EVALUATING should be an integral part of all activities. Studies have shown that the most successful people have metacognitive skills. These skills involve constantly self-assessing and adjusting until a solution is reached. They find success

because they are proactively identifying what works and what does not work. They naturally work to find how something might be done better. Guiding students in self-reflection automatically increases the quality of learning and understanding. When students assess themselves, they are more invested in their work and more likely to desire improvement. TAILORING learning involves increasing student investment by allowing choices such as working alone or with others, or presenting findings orally, visually, or in writing. Students automatically feel a sense of autonomy and responsibility if they have some control over their work. ORGANIZING the learning involves sequencing activities in the best way to promote engagement. Presenting basic skills, facts, and vocabulary should be saved for the moment when they are necessary to make sense of an experience instead of being presented first. Students must be hooked first, then lead through a thoughtful sequence of activities that build understanding (Wiggins 198-221).

The Understanding by Design method offers teachers an approach to teaching that places the teacher as the coach instead of dictator, and the students as the performers instead of an audience. As performers, the students are the ones active and engaged. In a traditional model, the teacher is more of the central act as the “teller of understanding” and the students are on-lookers (Wiggins 17). As the audience, there is no guarantee that the students are engaged or active in their learning. With backward design, goals are clear and relevant, assessments are meaningful constructs of understanding, and activities are engaging and effectively sequenced towards achieving those goals.

Incorporating this kind of design into the music classroom seems daunting at first. Music curriculum is typically filled with skill-related goals in reading and performing music notation. The most common method of reaching these skill goals is pure rote teaching and student

imitation. Two problems arise from this type of teaching: (1) Students lack the opportunity to explore and create, and (2) true understanding is never clearly shown and never truly realized by the teacher or the students. Liz Gilpatrick, a noted Orff teacher says, “Imitative learning is a useful and necessary first step to acquire new knowledge, *but imitation is not, and never can be, evidence of creativity*. The imitative stage of learning rewards cleverness and obedience, but does little to foster true creativity” (24). Jane Frazee, another expert Orff teacher and author says,

“Teacher-directed musical pieces often overlook the essential students input necessary for exploration and understanding of the musical ideas presented. The inevitable response to the favorite question of teachers interested in student feedback, “What did you learn in music today?”, has been typically activity-related: “I learned to play the xylophone” or “I learned a new song.” While those are legitimate skills, there is a deeper reason for learning a new xylophone part or song—one that reveals essential musical ideas that are used for expressive purposes.” (Artful vi).

Orff Schulwerk

The Orff approach to music education guards against pure imitation and drill activities and also promotes many of the same tenants of Understanding by Design. Jane Frazee says, “Singing, saying, dancing, playing are captivating activities for students of all ages, but they are not ends in themselves. Rather, they are valuable means to music understanding” (Artful 19). The Orff approach was developed in the 1920’s by Carl Orff, a German music composer and teacher, along with Gunild Keetman at the Güntherschule in Munich (Discovering 9-10). Orff’s approach to teaching music is grounded on three central ideas: creating, listening, and performing (Discovering 7).

Creating, in Orff’s view, consists of presenting students with a musical “problem” and expects students to solve the problem by improvising a musical “solution” (Discovering 7). Most Orff teachers accomplish this by asking students to imitate an original rhythm or melody, and then allowing them to explore by changing and adapting the original music into something new

(Artful 17). This aligns with Understanding by Design's goal to present students with real-world problems or experiences and to demonstrate true understanding by applying and transferring knowledge and skills to create a unique solution. Real composers and musicians tackle a similar thinking process every day when they perform, listen, compose, improvise, or analyze music (Artful v-vi).

Listening was important to Orff because his music is most often performed by groups. Participating with others requires one to listen to the sound of others and reflect on whether one's own sound fit in. Self-evaluation, also one of Wiggins' key facets of understanding, is central to the Orff process (7). By listening to their creations/performances, "Students also learn to explore new possibilities, to analyze them, to revise and refine them, and to cooperate with others while doing so" (Artful v-vi). Skilled listening allows the students to self-evaluate as well as analyze the music of others. True understanding can be assessed when a student is able to listen, analyze, and articulate meaningful thoughts about the music they are hearing or making (Artful 21-22).

In an Orff classroom, performing is the primary venue for students to express their learning. Carl Orff rooted his teaching process in child's play and capturing their irresistible playful curiosity for educational goals. Their play easily transfers to performances when students play with musical ideas to create meaning (Artful 15-16). They may play make-believe and create a musical background to accompany it. Another way to play would be using an instrument one particular way, and then adapting it many different ways to create different sounds. Jane Frazee connects musical play with many Understanding by Design elements when she says, "Playing with music, they apply the many ways of thinking and behaving articulated earlier in this book (express, explore, remember, analyze, revise, refine, concentrate, and cooperate) that are useful in the music room, in other classrooms-and in life" (Artful 18).

In her book “Artful-Playful-Mindful, Jane Frazee even suggests a backward planning approach. “The simple secret to accomplishing these goals is, as you have discovered, the subject of this book. You begin with the outcomes you desire (mindful), and work backwards to the musical example(s) you select to achieve the outcome (artful), while adding opportunities to invent new music based on the original (playful)” (21). Her three steps align perfectly with Wiggins’ three stages of design. Stage one, establish goals (Mindful); stage two, determine performance assessments (Playful); stage three, determine specific material/activities (Artful).

Standards for Music Education

In today’s educational world, all curriculum must be aligned to state and national standards. Both UbD and Orff principals naturally and easily align with our current standards. The National Standards for music are laid out in four big ideas called Artistic Processes: creating, performing, responding, and connecting. The first two big ideas, creating and performing, relate to active music making by the student. The creating component involves imagining, planning, making, evaluating, refining, and finally presenting a musical idea. The performing component involves selecting, analyzing, interpreting, rehearsing, evaluating, refining, and presenting a musical repertoire. The second two big ideas, responding and connecting, relate to students experiencing existing musical works. Students select, analyze, interpret, and evaluate music, as well as relate music to its context. The national standards lay a roadmap for artistic processes, but leave musical skill and specific content completely in the hands of each teacher.

The Pennsylvania musical standards are also divided into four big ideas that encompass the artistic process. The Pennsylvania Music Educators Association published a “crosswalk”

between the state and national standards. This document helps to align and streamline the big ideas encompassed by both standards documents.

PA Standards	National Standard
9.1 Production, Performance, and Exhibition of Dance, Music, Theatre, and Visual Arts	Creating and Performing
9.2 Historical and Cultural Contexts	Connecting
9.3 Critical Response	Responding
9.4 Aesthetic Response	Responding

Both the National and the Pennsylvania Standards provide language that relates completely to the UbD curriculum design method. The actions of creating, performing, connecting, and responding easily become the projects and evidence encouraged by UbD to demonstrate student understanding. Lessons and activities planned with the Orff philosophy will provide the hook and the “where-to” sequence of the UbD curriculum design. Weaving these standards, concepts, and teaching philosophies will deepen and enhance my students’ learning and achievements.

Chapter 3

Unit Planning Using Understanding by Design

Planning this unit was similar to doing a puzzle. The start of the process was an overwhelming amount of pieces to fit together. Slowly, as pieces started to fall into place, the design became more clear and the pieces started to connect with more clarity. At first I tried to tackle organizing and designing the whole year's curriculum and the whole process felt cumbersome and confusing. Eventually I found myself focusing on one big idea, and suddenly found the process easy and efficient for planning. I used the three UbD stages to create a unit focusing on practicing, precision, and performance.

Stage One: Identify Desired Results

The UbD process said to first map out the desired understandings and big ideas I wanted to cover. This stage involves determining goals based on content standards and curriculum expectations. I started by looking at general music curricula specifically designed using UbD principles from Boulder Valley School District and Brevard County Public Schools. These examples used the state or national standards as their big ideas. I decided to use our Pennsylvania state standards as the starting place for big ideas. Next, based on the state standards 9.1/Production and Performance and 9.3/Critical Response, I established my specific goals:

1. Students will be equipped with efficient practice strategies to promote successful performances.
2. Students will understand why practice and self-critique in music, as well as other areas of life, is essential to success.
3. Students will be able to assess a performance based on musical criteria.

This unit essentially focuses on the artistic processes used by musicians each and every day. I also found the national standards to be helpful. The national standards break the “create” and “perform” processes down in the sub-points: imagine, plan, make, rehearse, evaluate, refine,

and present. Although the students will engage in the entire artistic process, I decided to focus my enduring understandings and essential questions on the “rehearse, evaluate, and refine” component because I believe better practicing skills will improve performances dramatically.

My desired knowledge and skill outcomes of this unit are that students will know and understand how to create a musical idea, rehearse and refine it, and perform it for an audience. To do this they will need prior knowledge and understanding of steady beat skills, rhythm mastery, and phrase length awareness. To incorporate specific curriculum objectives, I included rhythm mastery of a newer rhythm: du-ta-de in one of the projects. Another important skill to ensure success in group performances is the ability to work as a team. Basic social skills are necessary to share ideas, select ideas, adjust ideas, etc.

Stage Two: Determine Acceptable Evidence

Stage two of the design process was to develop meaningful assessments to showcase true understanding. I developed three projects to guide students through various types of performance, practice, and production. The first project involved creating a rhythm and performing it on cups in a synchronized routine. Throughout the project students will need to imagine a rhythm and choreography, plan how they will combine rhythm with choreography, practice, evaluate, and refine their choreography, and finally present it in a performance. Throughout this project we will develop effective practice strategies that they can use to refine their choreography.

The next project of this unit will be a xylophone theme and variations project. The students will learn a four measure melodic theme. Next, in small groups, they will make a variation by changing one or more rhythms and one or more pitches. Then they will have to practice their changes as a group and apply the strategies developed during the cup project. While performing, the class will be responsible for identifying the two changes.

The last performance assessment/project for this unit will be the keyboard improvisation or composition. Students will work in pairs at a keyboard to create an accompanied melody with an A section and a B section. The student at the lower end of the keyboard will be given two notes as chord roots. That student will use a rhythm pattern of their choice to create a bassline using those two notes. Their partner will have a corresponding pentatonic scale to guide them in improvising or composing a melody on top of the bassline. The students will plan their introduction, section transitions, and ending. After each of these projects, the students will fill out a corresponding rubric to formally assess their performances.

Stage Three: Planning Learning Experiences and Instruction

Stage three is where specific activities and learning sequences are developed. I used the “WHERE-TO” method for the cup rhythms and the xylophone theme and variations to develop these projects more fully. The keyboard activity is one I have been using for years and already have an effective learning sequence. The “WHERE-TO” method really did help me to organize and think about all the important facets of lesson planning and sequencing.

Cup Rhythms and Routines Project:

W- WHERE is the learning leading and WHY is it important?	Leading towards the compose, practice, and production sequence of music performance. (PA Standard 9.1/National MU:Cr1, MU:Cr2, MU:Cr3, MU:Pr5)
H- The HOOK for the learner and how to HOLD their attention.	Cup rhythm/routine from Pitch Perfect.
E- EQUIP students with necessary tools for success	Identify specific practice strategies. Provide a structured framework for compositions.
R- Provide opportunities to RETHINK, REFLECT, and REVISE learning.	While working out routine, encourage group reflection of what worked, which spots need more practice, and which strategy would be most effective.

E- (E2) Guide students in EVALUATING progress with self-assessment.	Have students fill out a project rubric.
T- TAILOR or personalize learning experiences.	Each group gets to uniquely create their routine.
O- ORGANIZE learning in the best sequence for engaging and effective learning.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learn traditional routine/develop practice strategies. 2. Brainstorm unique cup techniques. 3. Groups arrange their own composition. 4. Groups reflect and revise. 5. Groups perform.

Xylophone Theme and Variations Project

W- WHERE is the learning leading and WHY is it important?	Leading towards the compose, practice, and production sequence of music performance, plus critically and aesthetically evaluate other performances. (PA Standard 9.1, 9.3, 9.4/National MU:Cr1, MU:Cr2, MU:Cr3, MU:Pr5, MU:Re7, MU:Re8, MU:Re9)
H- The HOOK for the learner and how to HOLD their attention.	A ‘catchy’ melody that is simple to learn, but enjoyable to play.
E- EQUIP students with necessary tools for success	Learn the original melody as a whole group. Give examples of rhythm and melody changes.
R- Provide opportunities to RETHINK, REFLECT, and REVISE learning.	When practicing their variation, encourage group reflection of what worked, which spots need more practice, and which strategy would be most effective.
E- (E2) Guide students in EVALUATING progress with self-assessment.	<p>Have students fill out a project rubric of their own performance.</p> <p>Have students listen and analyze other group performances to discover their specific variations.</p>
T- TAILOR or personalize learning experiences.	Each group gets to uniquely create their variation.

O- ORGANIZE learning in the best sequence for engaging and effective learning.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learn theme melody by sequential additions of pitches in each measure. 2. Give examples of melody and rhythm changes. 3. Allow groups to create their own theme. 4. Practice verbally speaking pitches together in rhythm. 5. Practice the melody on xylophones using fingers, while singing the melody. 6. Practice together using mallets.
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At the end of implementing the UbD framework, I am most surprised by how it has helped me to understand, directly apply, and connect the state and national standards to my everyday teaching. I am almost ashamed to admit that the standards have usually been an afterthought in my day to day lesson planning. In addition, I feel that this framework has resulted in a unit that is entirely relevant, meaningful, and packed with action-based learning. The learning is properly sequenced to build understanding piece by piece. I am excited to implement this unit and see how it affects student learning.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

Unit Summary

At the beginning of the school year I taught my normal opening units. These units help to establish routines, collaboration, and review basic musical skills. After the introductory units, I began to teach through my UbD inspired “Practice and Performance” unit. The difference in my classroom was astounding. I noticed an increase in willingness to participate as well as an increase in concept awareness. I also noticed students taking on more self-awareness and independence in their learning. However, it seemed that some classes were more successful than others. I believe their success depended mostly on the maturity of their social skills. Overall, this unit was the most engaging and successful unit of my 5th grade curriculum.

The unit started with learning the cup routine that accompanies the song “When I’m Gone” from the movie Pitch Perfect. The students were already familiar with the song and some already knew the routine. It still took a lot of practice for the whole class to be able to perform the routine. Throughout the process, we were able to experience and discuss many practice strategies such as: slowing everything down, breaking a phrase into small chunks, and repeating parts many times in row. In the future I will teach the cup routine in smaller chunks over many more class periods. Students with processing or motor skill difficulties really struggled to keep up with their peers.

Once we learned the official cup routine, I asked them to create their own routines in small groups. This is the first project where my assigned groups did not work out very well. Motor skills, social skills, and steady beat skills were not equal among group members and caused a lot of frustration. To solve this, I let them break into groups of their choice. Most

groups succeeded this way because they were comfortable free to create something at their personal level of ability. Some groups still floundered with the project. My original guidelines were too open and some groups just seemed lost. I found that giving a starting phrase rhythm and choreography set enough structure and foundation for all groups. After those two adjustments to my original teaching sequence, the cup rhythms blossomed into creative, synchronized, and well-practiced performances.

The next project of this unit was a xylophone theme and variations project. The students all learned a four measure melodic theme. Next, in small groups, they had to make one rhythm and one pitch adjustment to the melody. After practicing their change, they performed their variation for the class. The class was responsible for identifying the two changes. This project worked extremely well. The groups already knew how to use appropriate practice strategies and needed very little assistance. The classes successfully analyzed the rhythm and melodic changes for each group. If a performing group made a mistake, we used that opportunity for the class to suggest a practice strategy to help fix that mistake.

The last performance assessment/project for this unit was the keyboard improvisation or composition. Students worked in pairs at a keyboard to create an accompanied melody with an A section and a B section. The student at the lower end of the keyboard was given two notes as chord roots. That student had to create a bassline using those two notes. Their partner had a corresponding pentatonic scale to guide them in improvising or composing a melody on top of the bassline. The goal was to imagine and create an A section and a B section and create a performance together. The students had to plan their introduction, section transitions, and ending as well.

Alignment with Orff Schulwerk and Standards

The projects of this unit were designed to help students make the musical processes highlighted in the Pennsylvania and National Standards come alive. The students had to actually experience the process of imagining a musical idea, planning how to implement that idea, practice and refine that idea, and then present or perform the idea to an audience. The cup project required mostly rhythm and choreography ideas as well as an intense use of practice strategies. The xylophone project gave a rhythm, melody, and accompaniment framework experience, but required application of the previously learned practice strategies. The keyboard project allowed more creative freedom with rhythm, melody, and accompaniment ideas. All of the projects required basic musicianship skills like steady beat and rhythm accuracy to be successful. Although these students did not answer test questions about specific content, their performances and compositions would not have been possible without knowledge and understanding of musical concepts and artistic processes.

Each project also aligned with the Orff philosophy. Each project presented a musical “problem” and required students to find a musical “solution” using a specific process. The projects were guided, but open-ended enough to allow multiple “solutions.” Each project allowed students to “play with” or manipulate the music to mindfully create an artful performance.

Social Difficulties

The only students who really struggled with these projects were those with social, emotional, or learning difficulties. Those with social or emotional difficulties had trouble interacting with partners or in a group. This led to conflict which halted any progress in their composing. Usually these conflicts took my attention away from assisting with musical advice to other groups. Dealing with social drama was definitely the most frustrating part of teaching in

this style. Students with learning disabilities presented other challenges. Some of these students did best when placed with other students at similar levels. This allowed them to create something at their own personal comfort level. However, other students had no idea how to proceed unless they were with a student who had greater musical experience and understanding. The art of teaching is knowing your students and tailoring each activity to meet their individual needs. It is very difficult to individually tailor everything when you teach over 600 students, but it is definitely an area that I need to improve for myself and my students.

Implications for Further Curriculum Design

This unit was by far my most favorite to teach because I saw real, true, and deep understanding and application of musical concepts. I enjoyed watching the students manipulate rhythms and pitches to create their own masterpieces. I saw expressions of pride and joy when performing for their classmates. Learning in this unit was not a chore or an automatic rote practice sequence. Although there were many moments of frustration or tension in the groups, the overall achievement and satisfaction at the end of the projects was higher than other average.

I believe UbD curriculum design provides a solid framework to prevent sub-par learning experiences. I found that the Orff philosophy easily translates to meaningful assessments that track true understanding. A teacher committed to planning units using UbD and Orff principles must also commit to developing social skills and have plans in place for social problems during group compositions. I look forward to redesigning other units in my curriculum to better weave the standards, UbD principles, and Orff-based activities together.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Practice and Performance Unit Plan:

Established Goals:

- Students will be equipped with efficient practice strategies to promote successful performances.
- Students will understand why practice and self-critique in music, as well as other areas of life, is essential to success.
- Students will be able to assess a performance based on musical criteria.

Other music skill goals tied-in: barred sixteenth-eighth combo (du-ta-de)

Enduring Understandings:

Essential Questions:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Through purposeful practice, musicians learn to master and refine skills and techniques necessary for performance. -Assessing our own artistic work is central to artistic growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What are strategies for purposeful practice? -How can purposeful practice improve my performance? -What other areas of life involve practice? -How long should practice take? -How can assessing our own work help us improve? -What criteria can we use to evaluate a performance?
<p><i>Students will know....</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Key terms: practice, performance, critique -Key concepts: practice strategies, rubric 	<p><i>Students will be able to....</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Practice efficiently and make improvements -Perform successfully as a group with precision -Self-evaluate their performance

Performance Tasks:

Other Evidence:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create, practice and perform a cup rhythm and routine. 2. Create, practice and perform a xylophone theme and variation. 3. Evaluate a performance using created rubrics. 4. Collaborate, create, practice, and perform a keyboard improvisation/composition with accompaniment. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Practice strategies list 2. Performance criteria rubric 3. Performance reflection/evaluation |
|---|---|

Practice and Performance Unit, Approximately 8-9 Lessons

EU: -Through purposeful practice, musicians learn to master and refine skills and techniques necessary for performance.
-Assessing our own artistic work is central to artistic growth.

EQ: -What are strategies for purposeful practice?
-How can purposeful practice improve my performance?
-What other areas of life involve practice?
-How long should practice take?
-What criteria can we use to evaluate a performance?
-How can assessing our own work help us improve?

PA Standards: 9.1.G, 9.3.A, 9.3.E, 9.3.F

National Standards: MU:Cr1, MU:Cr2, MU:Cr3, MU:Pr5, MU:Re7, MU:Re8, MU:Re9

HOOK: Cup Song/Cup rhythms

Goal of unit: Without purposeful, efficient practice, we will waste class time and potentially be unsuccessful in our projects or lack any sense of accomplishments. Our goal is to be proud the creations we share. By understanding practice and how to self-evaluate our work, we will improve our performances.

Equip/Experience:

1. Learn the four phrases of the original cup routine. While learning the phrases, implement common practice strategies: slow it down, break it down, speak the pattern, repeat the pattern, highlight the “bridge” between phrases, silent “mime” practice.
2. PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT/EVIDENCE: Cup Rhythm Compositions. In small groups, students will use a starting phrase as a springboard to compose a rhythm and choreography for a group cup routine. During this process, students will need to imagine, plan and make, rehearse, evaluate, refine, and present their rhythm routines.
3. Learn the rhythm du-ta-de (two sixteenth notes barred with an eighth note) and practice reading, speaking, and performing it as large group:
 - a. Echo patterns with voice and on drums
 - b. Read patterns without teacher help
 - c. Play BAM rhythm review game in small groups
4. PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT: Using practice strategies. Use known practice strategies to learn the du-ta-de xylophone melody (application of previous knowledge). Allow each group to change one thing to make each melody unique. Practice and perform for the class. Reflect on practice methods and performance. Discuss what could improve for next time. Evaluate performance using self-created rubric.
5. PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT: Keyboard Composition/Improvisation. With a partner, students will create an accompanied keyboard improvisation (Some may prefer to create a set melody composition instead of improvise). One partner will be the accompaniment and provide a structure for the beat and the chord changes. The other partner will improvise or compose a melody to go along with the accompaniment. Complete projects will have an A section and a B section. The creation process will

involve imagining, planning, rehearsing, evaluating, refining, and presenting their compositions or improvisations.

Assessments:

Formal:

- Cup Rhythm Routines
- Xylophone Performance
- Performance Criteria/Rubric
- Keyboard Improvisation

Informal:

- Progress reading and performing du-ta-de during group practice.

Materials:

- Tubanos
- Du-ta-de rhythm patterns
- Criteria/rubric worksheet
- xylophone music for each group
- xylophones/mallets
- Cups
- Pencils
- Keyboards
- Improvisation guide cards

Group Member Names: _____

Classroom teacher: _____

Xylophone: Du-ta-de Rubric

Criteria	4 - Excellent	3 Good	2 Fair	1 Unacceptable
Rhythm	All rhythms are performed correctly.	Most rhythms are performed correctly.	Many rhythms are performed incorrectly.	Rhythms are un-recognizable.
Melody Notes	All notes are performed accurately.	Most notes are performed accurately.	Many notes are performed incorrectly.	Melody is un-recognizable.
Accompaniment (optional)	The accompaniment blends with the melody rhythmically and harmonically.	The accompaniment mostly blends with the melody rhythmically and harmonically.	The accompaniment blends with the melody rhythmically but not harmonically.	The accompaniment doesn't blend with the melody rhythmically or harmonically.
Steady Beat	All performers maintain a steady beat and tempo throughout the performance.	Most performers maintain a steady beat and tempo throughout the performance.	The steady beat and/or tempo changes throughout the performance or there are big hesitations.	The performance is difficult to follow because of large hesitations in the steady beat.

Group Member Names: _____

Classroom teacher: _____

ddd ff ee c | ddd ff e g

ddd ff ee c | ddd ff e d

1. Choose one or two things to adjust (pitch or rhythm). Mark it above..
2. List the practice strategies you will use:
3. Practice! Evaluate! Refine! Practice again!
4. Perform and grade yourself using your criteria/rubric.

Appendix B: Student Work

Group Member Names: Emi Lili
 Classroom teacher: Mr. Marnon

1. Choose one or two things to adjust (pitch or rhythm). Mark it above.
2. List the practice strategies you will use:

Paper xta phon

saying notes

Playing with fingers

- 3 Practice!
- 4 Perform and grade yourself using your criteria/rubric.

Group Member Names: Emi + Lili

Classroom teacher: Mr. Marnon

Xylophone: Du-ta-de Rubric

Criteria	4 Excellent	3 Good	2 Fair	1 Unacceptable
Rhythm	All rhythms are performed correctly.	Most rhythms are performed correctly.	Many rhythms are performed incorrectly.	Rhythms are un-recognizable.
Melody Notes	All notes are performed accurately.	Most notes are performed accurately.	Many notes are performed incorrectly.	Melody is un-recognizable.
Accompaniment (optional)	The accompaniment blends with the melody rhythmically and harmonically.	The accompaniment mostly blends with the melody rhythmically and harmonically.	The accompaniment blends with the melody rhythmically but not harmonically.	The accompaniment doesn't blend with the melody rhythmically or harmonically.
Steady Beat	All performers maintain a steady beat and tempo throughout the performance.	Most performers maintain a steady beat and tempo throughout the performance.	The steady beat and/or tempo changes throughout the performance or there are big hesitations.	The performance is difficult to follow because of large hesitations in the steady beat.

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