SEQUENTIAL IMPROVISATION INSTRUCTION FOR
MIDDLE SCHOOL CONCERT BAND STUDENTS

By
CHRISTOPHER KEITH THOMAS

SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE:
DR. DAVID C. EDMUND, CHAIR
DR. KEITH P. THOMPSON, MEMBER

A CAPSTONE PROJECT PRESENTED TO THE COLLEGE OF THE ARTS
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MUSIC IN MUSIC EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
2016
Abstract

Improvisation is a vital aspect of music and music education. While improvisation is addressed and instructed heavily in jazz curriculum, it is not consistently addressed in the concert band curriculum. This prevents many students, who play non-traditional jazz instruments, to miss out on this art form. This can happen for a plethora of reasons, including a feeling of insufficient rehearsal time, student discouragement of a difficult subject, or discomfort with the instructor. Through the presentation of eleven activities, which can easily be implemented into a standard concert band curriculum’s daily warmup, this project allows for students to be introduced to the methods of improvisation and find enjoyment in its performance. The intent of these activities is to introduce students to improvisation in an organized method to avoid feelings of being overwhelmed. The activities were designed around middle school concert band repertoire. Activity content and sequence were developed using Poulter’s Seven Principles of Improvisation Pedagogy. Kratus’ Seven Levels of Improvisation were also taken into consideration to develop an effective sequence of activities complimenting the natural progression of improvisation development.

*Keywords: Improvisation, Middle School, Concert Band.*
Sequential Improvisation Instruction For Middle School Concert Band Students

Introduction

Musical improvisation involves spontaneous creation without the intent or opportunity to revise. This can be within the musical context or any performance based presentation. This skill has the potential to be an enlightening experience in which students are able to create their own music, instead of reproducing another musician’s ideas (Poulter, 2008). While this seems to be a great idea, many students do not get this creative experience due to the lack of curricular emphases in modern music education curriculum (Fitzsimmonds, 2002).

Music is an art form based on creativity. The use of notated music, while important in many instructional processes, does not allow for students to fully explore their creative potential on their instrument (Demarco, 2012). While notated music can help the students to perform and appreciate the art, it still only results in the transmission of information from one place to the next through the medium of music. Improvisation allows the students to become an active part of the music and culture being developed (Beitler, 2012). This enculturation of the musician into the music allows the students to feel a sense of ownership with the music being performed.

The Problem

Improvisation provides students with skills not easily attained in other aspects of music education. Students who have studied improvisation have shown improved skills in sight reading skills (Gagne, 2014). Students have also shown an increase in aural skills and ear training which can lead to improved intonation and musicality within an ensemble (Bailey, 1993). While less experienced students do not show these kinds of musical abilities (Watson, 2008), it becomes more apparent how prolonged experience in improvisation impacts high school students’ musical
IMPROVISATION IN CONCERT BAND

abilities (Wilson, 1971). Due to many current instrumental curriculums, many students do not have the opportunity to experience the performance of this art.

Improvisation has traditionally been taught within the context of jazz bands and not within concert bands (Micholajak, 2003). This inherently presents issues with the vast number of students having no introduction to or experience with improvisation. A traditional jazz band only reaches specific instrumentalists (saxophonists, trumpet players, etc.), while the concert band includes the majority, if not the entirety of participants within a band program (Fitzsimmonds, 2002). Teaching and utilizing improvisation within the concert band curriculum will provide many more students the opportunity to learn and perform this art form.

The aforementioned instrumental inclusion issue can cause a domino effect for future educators. Music educators come from different instrumental backgrounds, having received training in voice, as well as woodwind, brass, string and percussion instruments. Some instruments, such as the flute and horn in F, are not usually considered a part of a traditional jazz ensemble and could prevent students from being introduced to improvisation in their educational journeys (Pignato, 2010). This can lead to insufficient comfort in teaching this ability and many times results in the absence of this education in students of the hypothetical flute player (Fitzsimmonds, 2002). For this reason, concert bands should include at least introductory improvisation activities to allow students to attain a well-rounded music education.

The purpose of this project is to develop a set of sequential improvisation activities for middle school students that may be used by other music educators. The activities provide students with authentic improvisation experiences in the concert band setting. This project is based around middle school pieces but can be accomplished with concert band repertoire utilized by middle or high school band programs. This provides a practical method for teaching
IMPROVISATION IN CONCERT BAND

improvisational techniques, while still preparing the ensemble for a public performance. The three pieces utilized for these activities are Ancient Cities of Stone (Vogel, 2007), Rain (Balmages, 2008), and Portrait of a Clown (Ticheli, 1989). The selected literature provides concrete vehicles for improvisation, because of their playability for each improvisational aspect. An activity requiring a higher level of achievement, such as Activity Eight (Appendix B), uses a less strenuous piece of music in order to alleviate some stress on the students. The concepts presented in these pieces can also be applied to other concert band repertoire with similar features.

Improvisation content and sequences were developed using Poulter’s (2008) “Seven Principles of Improvisation Pedagogy.” Kratus’ (1991) “Seven Levels of Improvisation” were also taken into consideration to develop an effective sequence of activities complimenting the natural progression of improvisation development.

Delimitation

The activities and information are written in accordance with the Missouri regulations and standards for curriculum and instruction (Missouri General Assembly, 2015). Different states require varying amounts of instructional time to qualify for a school year. Activities may need to be omitted or adjusted to compensate for these differences.

Review of Literature

The review of literature will cover three main points related to improvisation: Improvisational Instruction Methods, Assessment of Improvisation, and Effects of Improvisational Education. The first section will discuss current practices of improvisation, focusing on the successful aspects of instruction compared to aspects with less success. The
second section will address different methods of teaching improvisation to younger students. The final section includes options to impartially assess the subjective nature of improvisation.

**The Effects of Teaching Improvisation**

An improviser’s use of non-notated music has a direct effect on their abilities when performing notated music (Watson, 2008). Students who are fluent improvisers have been known to show better proficiency in sight reading music. This improvement in proficiency has been attributed to the better development of their aural skills when performing music (Gagne, 2014; Bailey, 1993). Students are able to read rhythms more accurately when they understand the time signature and the relationship a measure has in specific rhythmic figures. They can also hear the resolution of dissonances and other chord changes, due to their increased aural abilities (DeMarco, 2012).

Younger students have not always had these abilities. Rowlyk (2008) performed a study of the effect improvisational training had on the musical literacy abilities of seventh and eighth grade band members (11-14 years old and one to two years of band experience). His results were inconclusive, due to the wide variety of instructional differences and educational emphasis of beginning band programs. These results were inconsistent with a study performed on high school students by Wilson (1971). Wilson found improvisational techniques helped high school age students (14-18 years old and three or more years of band experience) in their abilities to perform notated music. This ability was significantly noticeable in the students’ sight reading abilities. Wilson concluded that high school students with exposure to improvisational activities performed sight reading activities at a higher level than students lacking exposure to improvisation.
IMPROVISATION IN CONCERT BAND

Watson (2008) also provided a look into the comfort level of the two different methods of improvisation pedagogy. The post experiment comfort survey also favored the aural instruction. Students trained using aural methods felt less pressured to play wrong notes and were better able to relax as they performed. The group provided with notation felt more pressured not to play a wrong note leaving students with greater anxiety levels and less comfort with their improvisational techniques. This result is utilized in the sequence of activities within the unit with the lack of notated music in the initial activities. Notated music is not utilized within the sequence of events until Activity Eight (Appendix A, pg. 50). This allows for the students to gain comfort in improvisation with increased freedoms before establishing restrictions within their improvisations.

Improvisation has also led to the increased development of intonation skills among musicians (Bailey, 1993). Students who have studied improvisation show an improved ability to detect chord changes and anticipate the intonation of upcoming notes (DeMarco, 2012). This is due to the subconscious understanding the role of specific notes within a chord structure and being able to adjust to the usage of the notes within an ensemble. This skill is then transferred into other musical settings within music education curriculum. This skill is addressed near the end of the activity sequence when students are asked to incorporate their improvisational skills into notated music.

All of these musical aspects are vital in music creation. They are essential to the music making process and vital to music education. The research provides a solid foundation to increase the amount of improvisation exposure in all aspects of music education beyond the specific needs of the jazz education.
One major issue faced by instructors involves the initial steps of teaching improvisation. The most prominent issue is introducing too much information at the beginning of the instructional process (Micholajak, 2003). One tool used by multiple instructors is the *Seven Levels of Improvisation* introduced by Kratus (1991). The “Seven Levels” are:

1. Exploration – The student tries different sounds in a loosely structured manner.
2. Process Oriented improvisation – The student produces more coherent patterns.
3. Product Oriented Improvisation – The student becomes conscious of structural principals (e.g. tonality and rhythm).
4. Fluid Improvisation – The student manipulates their instrument in an automatic and relaxed manner.
5. Structural Improvisation – The student is aware of the overall structure of improvisation and develops a repertoire of musical and nonmusical strategies for shaping the improvisation.
6. Stylistic Improvisation – The student improvises skillfully within a given style.
7. Personal Improvisation – The musician transcends recognized improvisational styles and develops a new style (p. 35).

The main purpose behind this overall process is to allow development of the student’s ability and to increase the complexity of the improvisation as the student improves his or her craft (Fitzsimmonds, 2002). This process allows students to be exposed and get comfortable with one aspect of improvisation without being overwhelmed allowing students to maintain enthusiasm with the process instead of being discouraged (Inks, 2005). Kratus’ *Seven Levels of*
Improvisation (1991) has been used within this project to create a sequence of activities that compliment these basic steps of improvisational development.

Many methods have been analyzed to determine the best starting point for a student. Watson (2008) compared aural training versus the use of notation at the exploratory level of improvisation. Watson grouped participants based on previous jazz experience and measured the change in the subjects’ comfort level with the improvisational process based on the instructional method. The student's comfort level was tested using a self-reflection test administered to all participants before and after the study. This information is important to curriculum writers because the activities are going to be performed by students with different levels of improvisational experience. The positive side of this is the comfort level of all participants increased after instruction was received.

After being separated into two groups based on previous jazz experience, the students were then split further into groups to be taught using different teaching methods. The first group was taught using aural methods such as vocal repetition and scat singing. The second group was taught improvisation through the use of notation such as chord progressions or scales on a paper. A panel of jazz educators judged the ability of the participants both before and after instruction. While both methods saw an increase, the aural aspects of improvisation saw a much greater level of achievement. Scores based on the aural instruction were almost double when compared to the notation method.

One thing to consider about this study is the small sample size of participants. The researcher used only sixty-two participants. While this is a large number for this type of study, it is a small sample size when divided into four test groups. The four participant groups were identified as follows: Little experience with aural instruction, little experience with notated
IMPROVISATION IN CONCERT BAND

instruction, more experienced with aural instruction and more experience with notated instruction. When divided, this becomes a sample size of only fifteen for each group and significantly decreases the variability within the results and slightly decreasing the reliability of the study.

This study provides evidence to the lack of notated music at the beginning of the improvisational process. The initial activities of the sequence follow the same structure of notation-free music making. These methods can be utilized in both vocal and instrumental music with slight variations based on limitations of the musical mediums. Vocalists may change their voices with ease and may play any specific pitch as well as in between pitches. Instruments must play specific notes and must go through the proper mechanics in order to change pitch.

Poulter (2008) suggested the division of techniques into more manageable pieces, as opposed to simultaneously introducing all aspects of improvisation. He also took the different aspects and ordered them into a hierarchy based on importance, developing an alternative educational progression. The utilization and observation of musical fundamentals is the first item discussed in Poulter's text. It is important for students to maintain the basics of good tone and breath support through any performance, including improvisation. While this is not directly taught with improvisational instruction, it is still important for all areas of performance.

After the initial instruction in musical fundamentals, Poulter begins to discuss the different parts of repertoire-based music. He begins with the understanding pulse and meter even though the music being performed is not notated. He then expands to the subdivision of rhythms within the beat, while maintaining the pulse of the music. This allows for a logical progression into more complex musical variations in improvisation. The suggested progression then proceeds to develop the student's musical abilities of articulation, style, and rhythmic interest or variation.
IMPROVISATION IN CONCERT BAND

It is interesting to note that Poulter teaches these rhythmic facets before introducing the concept of notes into the improvisational process. The concept of note choice only addresses one of sixteen concepts introduced with this method. It also becomes the seventh of these concepts to be introduced and provides a heavy focus on the analysis and performance of rhythm when creating an improvisational solo. The activities are presented with this sequence of learning. Students begin with rhythmic development and gradually add note utilization as they progress through their improvisation development.

After addressing finite aspects of improvisation, Poulter introduces the more macro aspect of soloing, including the development of solos and the interaction of the soloist with the rest of the ensemble. All of these competencies are vital in the development of a good improvised jazz solo. This progression was used as the foundation of the activity sequence presented in this project.

Assessment of Improvisation

Assessment of skill and achievement is a critical consideration for all educators (Pignato, 2010). This is compounded with the varied components of jazz improvisation and the subjective nature of the art form (Gagne, 2014). It is important to develop a solid form of assessment for students to allow the teacher to document progress, but it is just as important for students to see and analyze their own progress with any evaluation tool (Inks, 2005).

There are multiple ways students can be assessed in a meaningful manner to monitor progress and develop as a performer and improviser. The first assessment method is participation. For many students, improvisation can be a stressful, daunting experience. This is especially true when a new idea is experienced in front of peers or a teacher (Poulter, 2008). The application of credit for participation, no matter what product is created, alleviates some of this
IMPROVISATION IN CONCERT BAND

stress and allows students to explore a new idea without fear of failure in the strictest sense. The chance of peer ridicule still exists, but that must be monitored and managed by teachers within the classroom setting (Pignato, 2010). It is recommended participation only be used to assign actual grades to students for the activities in this project.

One of the more traditional methods of assessment within a performance setting is a playing test. This is a very basic way to show if a student understands and can execute a specific aspect of performance. The issue with improvisational playing tests is the variety of answers and the varying degrees of success within an improvisational performance (Poulter, 2008). This type of assessment is utilized when specific notes and rhythms are essential in creating a good improvisation experience. This is used to assess majority of the activities within the sequence of events.

One assessment strategy suggested by Poulter (2008) is to create rubrics to determine the degree to which a student accomplishes improvisation and performance. This means different categories would be established such as rhythms, note selection and style changes. The rubrics would then be used to determine different levels to which the student succeeded or required improvement in each category. Rubrics are also useful in understanding different areas needing more emphasis. This gives students feedback and can be utilized to create a practice schedule for all individual students. Example rubrics have been created for the formal assessments present within the activities used in this project (Appendix B).

All of these assessments do not have to be conducted by the instructor. Self-assessments performed by the students can be just as effective, if not more effective as simple feedback given by the teacher (Poulter, 2008). It allows students to self-analyze their performances and begin the process of developing their critical thinking skills through self-reflection. Though this type of
reflection takes a longer time to analyze the performance, it gives the students a chance to practice critical thinking skills while performing improvisation.

Not all assessments need to be formal. Informal assessments can be used by the teacher to provide more immediate feedback after a performance (Inks, 2005; Micholajak, 2003). This feedback can be very useful in time management, if it is quick and concise (Manfredo, 2006). This type of feedback can lead to different emphasis needed in rehearsal. It can also give students different ideas evaluate beyond their own performances. Students can perform self-analysis as other students are receiving feedback, analyzing their own performances to evaluate if the feedback being given can apply to their own performances.

One danger in this type of assessment is the possibility of too much negative feedback. While immediate feedback can be the most effective way to provide a quick evaluation for students it also has a chance to cause negative feelings to be associated with improvisation or any aspect of music being performed by students (Holsberg, 2009). Developing vocabulary to improve student’s performances while still maintaining positivity is the most effective way for teacher to help students both improve and maintain interest in the different musical concepts being explored (Manfredo, 2006).

The Activities

The activities presented in this paper will be written for a middle school band class. Students will range from twelve to fourteen years old and have at least one year of band experience. The class will contain all classical concert band instruments: Flute, Oboe, Bassoon, Clarinet, Saxophones, Trumpet, Horn in F, Trombone, Euphonium, Tuba, and Percussion. Percussion will be participating in the improvisational activities on keyboards but the type of keyboard instrument used does not affect the outcome of the activities.
The class schedule will be a “block schedule,” meaning students have four classes per day for an hour and a half and alternate schedules every other day. This will provide an hour and a half of instructional time for the entire class period. It does, however, decrease the total number of class periods available for instruction. All of these classes will be leading to a final performance.

For the purposes of curriculum development and activity progression, the ensemble will have twenty class periods. This assumes the length of a school year is 174 days and approximately 43 days or eight weeks per quarter (Missouri General Assembly, 2015). The “block schedule” format will provide a total of five rehearsals every two weeks. This does not take into account possible holidays or “off-days” for students.

**Activity Design**

Full descriptions of the activities may be found in Appendix A. All activities are designed to be administered during the first 15-20 minutes of class. The average time allotted for a traditional course schedule is 10 minutes of warm-up for a 50-minute class period (Manfredo, 2006). With the utilization of the block scheduling of 90 minutes per class period, overall construction time increases by 80%. This would increase the warm-up allotment by the same 80% and give a total off 18 minutes for warm-up. It is also customary for an instrumental teacher to provide five minutes for set-up and tear down of instrument (Manfredo, 2006). Since that time does not need increasing it also provides an additional four minutes of flexibility within the class period. This can allow for additional warm-up rehearsal time depending on the needs of the ensemble.

Each activity will be given a sample basic warm-up exercises corresponding to the improvisation exercise to be performed. Though this project will concentrate on three specific
concert band pieces, the activities can be reworked to incorporate other pieces of the same genre or styles.

The activities have been divided into four basic categories: Rhythmic Activities, Aural Activities, Developing Melodic Improvisation and Final Assessment Activities. These categories are developed using both Kratus’ (1991) and Poulter’s (2008) methodologies. They begin with basic ideas of music and increase in difficulty as students begin to master aspects of the craft. These activities also follow the natural progression of students’ improvisation levels in order to prevent the feeling of being overwhelmed.

**The Rhythmic Activities (Activities One Through Three)**

The beginning activities are designed to increase the student’s comfort with improvisational style by starting them on very simple exploration exercises. This philosophy is based on the Exploration step of Kratus’ (1991) “Exploration” Level and the ideas of Poulter (2008) where improvisation is divided into more manageable pieces. The first activity (Appendix A, pg. 42) isolates rhythm, eliminating the task of producing pitches or proper sounds on an instrument. This methodology breaks down the ideas to smaller components than those originally presented by Poulter (2008). This includes the length of excerpt as well as the beginning difficulty of the excerpts presented. The instructor will perform these excerpts with body percussion (clapping, snapping fingers, etc.) and the students will repeat them back. The first activity does not involve improvisation, but is meant to develop students’ sense of time before granting them more freedoms with improvisation. Rhythms should begin with basic ideas involving quarter notes and groups of two eighth notes (Figure 1). With students becoming
more comfortable rhythms can begin to include dotted notes and basic syncopation (Appendix C).

After the introduction of these basics of improvisation, the second and third activities (Appendix A, p. 42) are meant to add the small increment of playing a single note. This keeps the same basic ideas as the body percussion without the need to concentrate on producing different notes. This is still within the idea of Exploration in Kratus’ (1991) Levels of Improvisation. It also introduces the first two aspects of the Poulter (2008) methodology of both characteristic sounds and rhythmic improvisation. The rhythmic examples provided for Activity One may be reused for Activity Two.

The final opening activity in the rhythmic activities takes the second activity and adds an accompaniment figure using the piece *Ancient Cities of Stone*. The percussion will be required to play their parts in the piece while other students improvise over them. This does not require anything different on the part of the student performer. The only difference is adding the accompaniment to what students have already played. This method adds only a different mental state for the students and also acts as a benchmark for the students as an assessment point for the rhythmic improvisations created with these initial activities.

After these initial three activities it provides an ideal spot for the student’s first formal assessment of improvisation. This assessment also acts as a transition to other improvisational methods as well as giving students feedback before advancing to the next set of improvisational activities. The chosen assessment for this is a hybrid between participation and a playing test (Appendix B). The participation grade is based on the student’s ability to take their performance seriously while the playing test portion provides both the student and instructor official feedback.
IMPROVISATION IN CONCERT BAND

to build upon in future activities. For the purposes of grading, it is recommended the participation score be the only recorded score.

**Aural Activities (Activities Four and Five)**

The next set of activities expands upon the previous rhythmic activities but focusing upon the aspects of pitch selection within improvisation. This is designed in accordance with the theory presented by Poulter (2008). Pitch is recommended to be the second aspect of music addressed when introducing students to improvisation. Students are asked to include the aspect of different pitches when performing rhythms such as those performed in the previous set of activities. Students completing these activities will show signs of progression from Kratus’ (1991) “Exploration” level of improvisation to “Process Oriented” improvisation.

The students repeat the rhythmic figure performed by the instructor while trying to find the note being played. Theoretically students will have accomplished the task of repeating rhythms in the previous activities. The students should transfer this skill to Activity Four (Appendix A, p. 45). The instructor will repeat the same rhythm on the chosen note multiple times. It is important for the instructor to notice the number of students finding the right note and how many students are struggling. After a majority of the students are finding the correct note it is recommended the instructor ask the students to identify the concert pitch of the note and perform it one more time until all students can successfully perform each excerpt at least one time.

When changing to a different excerpt the instructor has the option to ask the students to identify if the new note is higher or lower than the previous note. This can be done quickly and efficiently by conducting an informal poll with the students. This will allow students to start associating note relationships and developing aural skills for future activities with improvisation.
The instructor may choose to repeat this activity multiple times if one session is not enough for the students to develop an acceptable proficiency.

Activity Five (Appendix A, p. 46) continues to build on the principles developed in Activity Four. After students developed their ear by finding one singular note it is only a slight extension for students to begin developing their ear for multiple notes and changing between them. Activities continue to build on themselves as students are introduced to the changing of stepwise notes and leading into the changing of thirds. While this is the last formal interval developed within the curriculum students can still explore other interval jumps in future activities.

The instructor should begin with simple examples involving a small variety of notes and progress to utilizing more notes throughout the examples (Figure 2). It allows students to hear a single pitch and add a pitch each time an example is played. Other examples could use more complex rhythms or small jumps instead of stepwise motion (Appendix C).

The aural development created through Activities Four and Five becomes essential when students participate in future activities. Students will begin to develop full melodies including the development of intervals and melodic lines with multiple notes. These activities will not only draw upon the aural training but will synthesize it with the rhythmic improvisations performed in Activities One through Three. One of the most important things to remember is using small steps. The instructor should take care not to overload students with too much information in one activity.
Developing Melodic Improvisations (Activities Six through Nine)

An important part of improvisation is the choosing and performing of changing pitches with the rhythmic activities already introduced (Poulter, 2008). This type of exposure begins with Activity Six. Activity Six has a component of prior instruction needed for students to be successful in their improvisation. Students must be taught and become relatively comfortable with the pentatonic scale. The suggested warm-up for this activity includes the instruction of this scale based on the degrees of the E-flat concert scale.

Giving the students this scale to use has two benefits. The first is to ensure students do not have to worry about too many new elements at one time. Reducing the number of possible notes from twelve to five within the scale accomplishes this goal (Fitzsimmonds, 2002). The second benefit stems from Orff techniques utilized in elementary school music instruction (Micholajak, 2003). When any of these notes are played at the same time there is significantly less dissonance than other intervals such as the augmented fourth (tritone) or minor second. This provides the students with the opportunity to improvise in a group setting without fear of being completely dissonant with their classmates.

Activity six and seven (Appendix A, p. 47) include a call and response factor with the pentatonic scale. They are, in essence the same activity with the only difference being to play the exercises with the entire ensemble or individually. The instructor must make it perfectly clear this activity is not a repeat of the model; it is a response. One way to ensure clarity is to compare the activity to a conversation. If a person is asked a question they do not answer by repeating the question, but they use a different combination of words and inflections as an answer. This is an analogy that may be used throughout the student's improvisation careers.
The instructor will begin these activities by performing an excerpt of a 4/4 measure to which the students will answer with what they believe to be a proper improvised response. To the listener it may sound like chaos but it is important to concentrate on two specific things. The first is making sure the student is maintaining the sense of time. Simply hearing the student's end in time will accomplish this task. The teacher may also hear slightly stressed beats in the answer. The second is the utilization of the pentatonic scale. If there are notes not found within the scale, it is important to point this out to the students. Generalizations may be used for this correction. Phrases such as, “Let’s make sure we are only using the five notes of the scale,” or, “I’m hearing a few extra notes,” are quite effective for illustrating the point. It is important, even at this stage, to maintain positivity (Holsberg, 2009). Students are still being exposed to an unfamiliar art form and may feel uncomfortable. We want to avoid dampening their spirits as much as possible. To assist students in the feeling of a question and answer format, it is recommended the instructor end examples on a note other than the tonic pitch (Appendix C).

Activity Seven is, for all intents and purposes, the same as Activity Six. The difference is the student is presenting these responses individually instead of having the comfort of the entire group. The overall plan is to split these presentations into two days but may require more or less depending on the size of the band.

This activity provides an opportunity for the student to be evaluated and receive individual feedback from the instructor. This is another activity that may be used as a formal evaluation for grading purposes. The suggested form of evaluation for this has two parts. The first is to use a rubric to view progression of the skill (Appendix B). A rubric allows the student to view their progress in three main categories: Rhythm and Time, Note Utilization, Response Style. The first two sections of this assessment address the physical mechanics of the
IMPROVISATION IN CONCERT BAND

performance. It is important to note the rubric allows for mistakes by the students. To receive a perfect score for note utilization the rubric allows for one mistake in playing notes. This acknowledges the activity as a process and allows for future development. The final category highlights, specifically, the creativity of the student and the way they answered the teacher. Because it is nearly impossible to accomplish this part of the assessment objectively, there are three specific levels to choose from within this category. The teacher must be able to support his/her decision in assigning a grade to the student. One of the most effective ways for the teacher to make a fair evaluation is to record the performances. This allows the teacher to revisit his assessment should he/she be questioned.

It is also suggested the instructor utilize a self-assessment for this activity. The beginning of the self-assessment (Appendix B) will be identical to the instructor. This method is important to see how the student believes they are doing and compare it to the instructor’s assessments. This allows the instructor to evaluate his/her teaching and assessment as the student progresses. The second part of the self-assessment is based around the student's comfort with improvisation. This is not evaluated for a grade but can be used to assess general feelings of discomfort within improvisation as well as possible feelings of self-consciousness during the performance of the unit.

Activity Eight (Appendix A, p. 50) is the first time students will improvise using notes with an accompaniment. This uses the chords in Rain to give the students a framework of notes rather than using a common scale. This activity also introduces the concept of changing chords within a piece. The student must keep track of their music and follow the chord changes within the phrase. While style is important with every improvisational method it is not the essential for the purpose of this activity. The point of creating this activity is again to slowly add
characteristics to the student's improvisation experience. This follows the methodology of Poulter (2008) by slowly exposing students to new experiences in improvisation.

Activity Nine (Appendix A, p. 52) introduces students to a different method of improvisation. This activity also provides a superb time to educate the student on a specific period of music history. This activity is based on the research and activities presented by Yoo (2015). Yoo developed a method of introducing baroque improvisational methods into other forms of music. While the modern definition of improvisation involves the creation of completely new notes and rhythms (Bingham, 2007), the baroque period improvised using ornamentation. Ornamentations include the addition of grace notes, melismas and broken chords not specifically notated within the music (Yoo, 2015). Typically this would be utilized on a repeat of the melody where the audience has already experienced the raw melody the first time. This style then used and was developed further in the improvisation styles of Louis Armstrong in the 1920s (Gagne, 2014).

The activity will utilize Portrait of a Clown as the base melody for the student's improvisation. Portrait of a Clown offers many places for the students to include ornamentations and demonstrate their ability to use this improvisational concept. The instructor assigns specific instruments particular measures to play. This permits all students to improvise with the melody already being used in the piece for performance. The only additional material needed is the transposed horn part (Appendix D).
IMPROVISATION IN CONCERT BAND

The students will begin by playing the melodic idea as written. This will allow students to hear the melody and understand the basic form of the improvisation to be performed. The instructor will first play the assigned examples provided (Figure 3) while introducing each of the four concepts prior to the performance. The instructor should rehearse beforehand to provide the best example for students listening. The students will then be given an opportunity to perform using these examples and creating their own version of an improvisation. The instructor will then divide the class into three groups based on instrument families. While one group is performing the ornamented version of the melody the other two will perform the melody as-written with no ornamentation. This will provide students with a foundation and prevent them from straying too far from the melody. After a few examples from each section the instructor may ask for individual volunteers to perform the solo activity. The number of students allowed to perform will be determined based on the remaining time available for the warm up activity.

**Final Assessment Activities (Activities 10 and 11)**

The final two activities in these units are designed to provide the student with ability to better assess their performance and also explore more advanced improvisational techniques.
Improvisation in Concert Band

Activity 10 (Appendix A, pg. 53) is a partner activity recreating the dynamic and style of Activity Seven. This is a collaborative activity but also serves as an entertaining medium for improvisation with other students. The recommended duration of this activity is three class periods but may be lengthened if needed for a larger ensemble. Students will conduct a conversation with their instruments based on a scenario selected by the teacher. These scenarios provide background information for both students and the hypothetical circumstance in which they meet. The first day establishes the assignment and provides the students with ample practice time with their partner. One thing needing to be stressed to students is to decide who is “Student A” and who will be “Student B.” This is important as it determines the roles students are given within the scenarios.

Specific notes and rhythms are unnecessary for the students’ performances. One way to describe the "conversation" about to take place to the students is to reference the adults from the Peanuts cartoons being performed by a trombone with a cup mute. The nonsensical sounds with inflected notes aptly describe the goal of this specific activity. The students should develop a syntactical symmetry to language when performing these improvisations. Choose a random scenario (Examples provided in Appendix C) to have them perform. After the performance is over the students should be able to discuss their conversation with actual words. The main reason for doing this activity is to use the idea of improvisation in a new way based around a different medium.

After all of the groups have had a chance to perform the instructor should hand out a questionnaire (Appendix B) to all of the students. The questionnaire is designed to get students thinking about the process and identify the most challenging and the easiest parts of this exercise. This type of critical thinking allows students to truly reflect on their improvisation to help them
IMPROVISATION IN CONCERT BAND

in future improvisational performances. The questionnaire can also be used for the teacher in assessing the overall effectiveness of their teaching (Poulter, 2008). It will allow the teacher to find any issues in the assignment and discover weak points of instruction. For grading purposes, this questionnaire should be given participation points based on the successful completion of the questionnaire and the seriousness of the answers.

The final activity (Appendix A, pg. 54) in this sequence embraces all of the improvisation techniques previously introduced and combines them with the last facet of practical improvisation, combining improvisation with the background material. The students are given the lead sheet appropriate with their instrument (Appendix D) and are instructed to use the accompaniment as a conversational piece in their improvisation. Individual instrumental sections will be required to read different sections in Portrait of a Clown to provide a complete accompaniment for the soloist. The first day will be reserved for the student to practice this technique and the remaining days will be for individual performances of improvisation with the background accompaniments.

On the first day the student will be performing with their instrument families (i.e. woodwinds, brass, and percussion) to practice this technique. It is important for the student to remember all of different improvisational methods practiced in class: the use of scales to create a melody, baroque method of improvising around the existing melody, and conversationally working with the accompaniment. The student may use any of these methods in their assessed improvisation but are encouraged to try all three of these methods in the practice time provided. The goal of this is to provide students comfort in numbers while attempting different styles. Eliminating the anxiety of solo performance is important to continue immersing students into improvisation.
The recommended number of days for the assessment of this activity is two days but may be increased or decreased as needed for the size of the ensemble. The student will be assigned a day to perform with the instructor conducting the entire ensemble. The student is allowed to choose any of the methods for improvisation and each style will be assessed and graded with the same material (Appendix B). The dynamic limitations of some instruments may require smaller accompaniments to maintain balance. The instructor may choose only specific sections to accompany the soloist as long as all chord notes are present in the ensemble. This could mean only the clarinets and saxophones accompany the flutes or having only the brass accompanies the percussion. The size of the full ensemble will determine the number of sections and instrumentation used for the accompaniment portion.

The individual performances of this activity shall also serve as the final assessment for the student’s improvisation. Each student will be assessed using the “Final Improvisation Assessment” rubric (Appendix B). This will be used as the final grade for the unit. Again, it is important to note the amount of points available for the student based on effort. Improvisation can still be viewed as challenging for the students participating. It is important any criticism be constructive while informative to maintain energy and enthusiasm with such a challenging subject. This allows for the best chance of further exploration and improvement beyond the prescribed activities.

Discussion

Teaching improvisation goes beyond simply teaching musical ideas and presenting information. It is also important to present the information to students in an effective manner. It is important to remember most students participating in these activities have not had training in improvisation before the participation in this unit. Positive feedback becomes even more vital
than before, when approaching this complicated subject. It is important to remember students will progress at individual rates based on their current position within Kratus’ (1991) levels of improvisation. Some also require differentiation in training based on their specific learning needs. These must be accounted for in the instruction of the teacher.

**Delivery of Feedback**

The primary goal for these activities is to provide a gradual exposure to improvisation for the student without overwhelming them with every aspect in the process (Poulter, 2008). As mentioned previously, this can be very effective in creating a positive experience in improvisation as well as creating excitement for future improvisational activities. This effect can be compounded with the use of constructive criticism during the process (Holsberg, 2009). Subconsciously students will associate their experiences with the emotions they have during their performances. Even small criticisms can have an impact on a student’s future feeling towards an activity. Pointing out mistakes by using language such as, “You played a wrong note,” can be damaging.

One way to provide better critical feedback is to associate learning and corrections as a group effort instead of making it personal. Simply using a phrase like, “We need to work on removing those notes,” gives the feeling of a group effort. This allows the student to understand they have allies in this venture and do not have to accomplish their goals on their own (Holsberg, 2009). Students will be more apt to try new things and possibly leave their comfort zone when they have peers and comrades on their side to help.

While it is important to be constructive and take time for every student, the instructor must also be aware of the amount of rehearsal time being used for these activities. A balance must be found between being personal with every student and maintaining an efficient rehearsal
preparing for the final concert. This can be accomplished with short and distinct feedback. A good simple rule is to try and make sure there is more instrumental performance than instruction time (Manfredo, 2006). This will allow for the students to maintain a rigorous rehearsal and provide the greatest opportunity for improvement. This will also keep students busy and prevent possible discipline issues (Manfredo, 2006).

Concentrating on one aspect instead of an entire performance will help accomplish this goal. As a student is finishing their performances the instructor can give one piece of feedback such as making sure the student stays in time or plays the correct number of notes. This one comment will give the student an objective but also keep the class moving so rehearsal time is not wasted. The instructor can also decide to not give any criticism on the days involving a formal assessment. Students will be receiving their feedback in paper form from the instructor and repeating the same information verbally would just be redundant.

The use of aural development for the beginning activities is designed to increase the comfort level of the students. Fewer restrictions are placed on the students for these activities allowing them the opportunity to explore improvisation without fear of failure. This helps to better develop internal senses of time and chord structure without overwhelming students with too much information at the beginning of the process. This progression of improvisation was based on the research presented by Watson (2008).

**Progressing Beyond Kratus’ First Two Levels**

The main characteristic addressed with the sequence of activities is the progression and addition of skills to create an all-encompassing improvisational experience. But it is also important to monitor the individual progress of the student and their comfort level with this skill. While understanding the concepts and adding skills based on the methodology by Poulter (2008)
IMPROVISATION IN CONCERT BAND

should be relatively universal, the progression of improvisational comfort and flow based on Kratus’ Seven Levels of Improvisation (1991) may allow progress on a more individual basis. The progression of activities is created to follow these levels but it may take the student more time to progress through some levels.

The first activity is meant to cultivate and develop the student solely on level one, “Exploration.” The utilization of an abstract concept not involving the mechanics of music and playing helps the students concentrate on creating a unique improvisation using techniques taught at a much younger age. As the student progresses through the next two activities the instructor should notice an increase in comfort level for the student in creating their product. Students that struggle maintaining a steady beat at the beginning of the process should see an improvement in their sense of timing and realize the importance of tempo and rhythm within the context of improvisation. This realization and solidification would mean the students can progress to Level Two, “Process Oriented Improvisation.”

Level Three of Kratus’ methodology, “Product Oriented Improvisation,” takes a little more work on the part of the student and instructor than getting to the second level. The key to this level is the addition of possible key signatures and solid rhythmic figures within improvisation. The rhythmic portion of this should begin during the first three activities. The second set of activities is designed to take this foundation and develop it using the rhythms with pitches. This is done in an attempt to utilize the methodologies presented by both Kratus (1991) and Poulter (2008). The theory is to advance students to the next level of improvisational skill while maintaining a comfort level in the amount of information being presented.

The development of the aural skills of the student is a method meant to prepare them for their use of all possible notes within the improvisation. The slow addition of notes will allow the
IMPROVISATION IN CONCERT BAND

student ample time to develop their ear as well as making forward progress in the improvisational goals. This is still intended to maintain a balance between the two main methodologies of Kratus (1991) and Poulter (2008).

The first time a student has freedom in pitch selection is when the instructor begins to utilize the pentatonic scale. Limiting the number of notes is based on the methodology presented by Carl Orff for elementary aged students. The difference in methods is that the student is not able to make mistakes in their ensembles because the notes not utilized in the pentatonic scale are physically removed. With a normal band instrument, notes cannot be removed, only not performed. It is important for the instructor to remember this because it is almost guaranteed a student will play a note not found in the pentatonic scale. This should not be a concern for the instructor during the initial attempts of these activities. It is important to bring the student's attention to the inappropriate note in order for the student to decrease these mistakes for more successful improvisational attempts. As the instructor begins to hear fewer wrong notes it becomes an indication of the student's understanding and the concepts presented by the teacher. This also shows solidification in the third level of Kratus’ Seven Levels of Improvisation (1991).

There are no specific activities for the progression beyond the first three levels but directors should observe steady progression. As the student becomes more comfortable they will automatically become more fluid and be able to improvise without having to expend energy thinking about how it is accomplished. The student can then begin to develop their skills in other forms of improvisation using additional styles. This is addressed with the ninth activity, developing the baroque method around the melody.

While many of these activities lend themselves to progress the student through Kratus’ Seven Levels of Improvisation (1991), the ability to excel in these activities is not dependent on
The student's being at these levels. It is more important the student be exposed to only a few parts of improvisation at a time. Maintaining the comfort level of all students is the most important objective of these activities. Poulter (2008) emphasizes the maintenance of student comfort in instructing improvisation. Preventing the student from being overwhelmed is the best way to keep them interested and prevent discouragement.

**Instructor Preparation**

The activities presented were included with consideration made to both the students and the instructors. There are many musical instructors who feel uncomfortable with the idea of improvisation. This can be for many reasons but the most common is the lack of improvisational exposure for the instructor. Traditional improvisational instruction has been mostly limited to jazz ensembles because of its prominence within the jazz style. Non-traditional jazz instruments have little chance of being exposed and not all of the instructors who play these instruments participate in jazz band. This lack of exposure can cause instructors to have reservations in teaching students.

Instructors unfamiliar with the improvisational process can also experience many of the cautions and pears possessed by students. Much of Poulter’s (2008) methodology can be utilized by the instructors as well as the students. While there must still be preparation, such as personal practice on the examples, the instructor is able to progress along the same lines as the students. This includes the adding of small aspects of improvisation as the program progresses.

One of the most important things an instructor can do when in this situation is to make sure they are fully prepared for each of the activities before leading them. Trying to provide examples of the different activities without proper preparation will be detrimental to the education of the students. The samples measures provided (Appendix C) are meant to be starting
IMPROVISATION IN CONCERT BAND

points for the improvisational examples given to students but they can also be the only examples used for the instructor. They provide good examples for students to emulate and use with their own improvisations.

One are of caution is for the teacher moving too fast in their own preparation and go beyond the student’s progress. While students are not required to be proficient on all aspects before moving on to the next activity it is vital for the instructor to understand each aspect before they move to the next activity. It is important for students to understand the process around the development of improvisation skills. The use of the instructor as an example is key in the progression of these activities. If the student does not feel the instructor is comfortable with the process they will feel they do not need to be as proficient and could lead to a lack of effort (Pignato, 2010).

Accommodations

Learning and education is not universal through all students. Students are better at learning using some methods more than others. There are some students requiring additional accommodations in their learning. In some cases this can involve an Individual Education Plan (IEP) which legally required the instructor to adjust instruction to provide the maximum potential learning of the student (IDEA, 2004). These adjustments do not always require lessons to be adjusted for struggling students but may also be required in order to challenge students who are performing at a more advanced level.

Gifted

The National Society for Gifted and Talented (2015) defines the term “gifted” as a student possessing exceptional talent or natural ability. They are a society founded to bring awareness back to the gifted students while the rest of society and government are concentrating
on raising the test scores of the lower students. It is important for the advanced students to be challenged just as much as students who struggle.

Accommodations for these students are naturally built into many of the activities presented. Many of the days provide a time at the end for the student to perform individually for the class. Many times these are the students who readily volunteer. They may also be selected by the teacher as demonstrators. This method would work for all of the activities in which there are examples of improvisational repeats or responses. The student may also be given a chance to perform a solo of greater length to further stretch their abilities.

For the individual activities such as Activity Nine the instructor may choose to challenge the student by requiring them to demonstrate multiple styles. This could include requiring them to play one example of a melisma and broken chords in the same performance. The additional challenge of incorporating two styles will stretch the students beyond the minimum expectation and allow the instructor to determine if the student not only understands the multiple styles but is also able to apply them to his or her performance.

There is one additional category that may be added to this group. Some students may begin these activities with some prior experience and skill with this art form. Most likely this prior experience came from their participation in jazz. These students may appear to be combined with the talented or naturally gifted but there is an extra component of these students that must be addressed. These activities are meant to be done in a classic concert band style of performance. Students with experience in jazz improvisation may find it difficult to perform these activities without letting their jazz experience influence their performances. The instructor must notice this situation as soon as possible and point it out to the students for them to be fully successful with these activities.
IMPROVISATION IN CONCERT BAND

English Language Learners (ELL)

Speaking a different language than the student can make communication difficult. This is compounded when the subject being taught is new and even more so when the new subject has the potential to be intimidating for the student. When the instructor is put in the situation of teaching a student with this language barrier the most essential thing the instructor must remember to remain patient. Realizing there will be times communication is lost and difficult will help the instructor remain calm when this happens and adjust accordingly.

The first thing that can be done is to make sure the student is comfortable with the basic material before beginning the process of improvisation. If the student is comfortable performing basic rhythms and the pitches notated, it will be easier for them to perform when they are not reading it off a page. The next thing to remember is music is a universal language. Notation of western music is the same in all parts of the world. What could help the student with some of these concepts is to notate the possibilities on the board. This provides a common language between the instructor and student and could assist in the learning process.

One thing that possibly may come up is the manifestation of different cultures in Activity 10 (Appendix A, p. 53). If the student does not speak the same language as the rest of the class it is safe to assume the student’s cultural background will be different. This should be made aware to the student in this activity and the student should prepare their response together to better understand the nuances of their different backgrounds.

Learning Disability

This modification encompasses a wide range of students with special needs from Highly Functional Autism to Down Syndrome. Many of the frustrations experienced by these students come from the anxiety associated with the unknown. The Highly Functional student may have
success by receiving the information for the activities the day before instruction and performance. Other students may need more preparation time for the actual assessments of the different activities.

With activities involving teacher examples, the instructor may choose to only perform examples involving simple rhythms such as quarter notes and half notes. This will give the student a strong beat to maintain while repeating the rhythms and will add to their abilities to perform accurately. When changing pitches the instructor should utilize a limited number of notes. This number may vary based on the severity of the student's needs but it is acceptable for these students to only play two notes at a time when performing these excerpts.

When the activities involve accompaniment the student should be allowed to notate their improvisational ideas instead of creating them in the performance. While this is not the strict definition of improvisation it still allows the student to be creative while performing. If the student chooses to notate and still feels uncomfortable with the thought of performing in front of his or her peers the instructor may elect to perform this notated solo with the student to help alleviate some of these insecurities.

When performing Activity Nine the anxiety of not knowing the scenario may hinder the student's ability to perform. In this situation the student, and their partner, may be given their specific scenario in advance. This will allow each student to prepare their conversation and even notate it for their own comfort. It would also help the student to pair them up with an individual with whom they feel comfortable performing. It would be ideal if a relative was available for this partnership but a very close friend would also be acceptable. This will help give the student a sense of security while performing.
Attention Deficit Disorder

While Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) is not officially a disability according to the *Individuals With Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA, 2004) and does not require an official accommodation be made, the prominence of this diagnosis in modern schools warrants a discussion on how to accommodate these students. This is especially important with these activities because a lot of them require students to spend a lot of time sitting while other students are performing or being evaluated.

One of the most effective ways to accommodate these students is to have the entire class give a peer evaluation on all students. This will keep everyone engaged while the rest of the class is performing. This can also permit students the opportunity to self-reflect on their own performances (Davison, 2006). Students are able to hear some of their own shortcomings in the playing of other students and can use it to correct their own performances. Many times this can be done by simply speaking with the student to listen for one specific characteristic but a students diagnosed with ADD it is much more effective to give them a short questionnaire, allowing them to organize and record their thoughts (Appendix D).

Expanded Uses

The activities presented were created with the *Ancient Cities of Stone, Rain*, and *Portrait of a Clown* as base compositions but the concepts may be applied to other pieces. Beginning band percussion heavy pieces are becoming quite popular and these concepts may be used with any one of them. Concert preparation and programming dictate a slower piece should be utilized on every concert to add diversity among the repertoire. The chordal activities based on *Rain* could be used for any of these pieces. If the music for this style does not contain the long tones of *Rain* the instructor may create a new lead sheet based on the chords written in that specific
IMPROVISATION IN CONCERT BAND

piece. *Portrait of a Clown* provides multiple sections in which the entire band performs the melodic figure. This is not necessary in selecting a piece to utilize these activities. The instructor can create a transposed part, like what was done for Horn in F, and hand it out to the members of the ensemble that do not have the melodic figure in their part.

If the instructor chooses, he or she may choose to utilize the final activity as part of a scheduled concert. Adding repeats from measure 58-66 will allow for multiple students to showcase their improvisational styles in front of an audience. The instructor may also choose to perform these excerpts as a piece by themselves. They should tell the audience what the students are doing and then perform any of the activities for the audience. It is recommended for the ensemble to perform the true piece before presenting the improvisations so the audience is provided with a context for these activities.

**Conclusion**

Improvisation can be very daunting to many students, but the instructional benefits can help ensemble participants achieve many aspects of music previously elusive to them. The key to managing the daunting nature of improvisation is to slowly immerse students into this art form by gradually adding simple musical ideas to help keep students from feeling overwhelmed (Poulter, 2008). When done in this manner, students are more open to trying this new art form and advance their musical abilities from the very basic ideas to complex musical passages (Inks, 2005).

By using simple activities within the initial ensemble warm up, it is possible to include improvisation into the curriculum without compromising any other aspects (Fitzsimmonds, 2002). This small amount of instruction and performance time is perfect for students to learn the skill but still allows the class to learn their full repertoire. One thing to remember is for the class
Improvisation is an important part of the creative curriculum in music education. It provides students with an additional outlet for their creative desires and solidifies many musical concepts such as tempo and chord structure (DeMarco, 2012). The benefits of students understanding can also help the capabilities of your traditional ensemble with intonation and balance. This comes from the ear training developed during the improvisational process (Watson, 2008). With all of these facets affected in a positive way the benefits of improvisation make it a perfect avenue to expand the musical abilities of any middle school ensemble.
References


IMPROVISATION IN CONCERT BAND


IMPROVISATION IN CONCERT BAND


**STANDARDS AND LEARNING QUESTIONS**

**Standards:**
- **MU:Cr1.1.E.5a:** Compose and improvise melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives that reflect characteristic(s) of music or text(s) studied in rehearsal.
- **MU:Cr3.2.E.5a:** Share personally developed melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives – individually or as an ensemble – that demonstrate understanding of characteristics of music or texts studied in rehearsal.
- **MU:Pr6.1.E.5a:** Demonstrate attention to technical accuracy and expressive qualities in prepared and improvised performances of a varied repertoire of music.

**Essential Questions:**
- What clues can be used to determine the rhythm being performed?
- What is the importance of strong and weak beats when performing a rhythm?

**Students will know or be able to:**
- Repeat rhythms performed by the teacher at the tempo provided by the metronome.

**ASSESSMENTS**
- Students create their own measure of rhythms for the class to repeat.

**LEARNING PLAN**

**Materials:**
- Amplified Metronome set to 84 beats per minute (bpm)

**Suggested Warm-up:**
- N/A

**Activity Description:**
1. Have students safely put instruments to the side of their chair out of the way.
2. Using different parts of your body, have the students repeat basic rhythms (half notes, dotted quarter notes, quarter notes and eighth notes).
   a. Examples of body percussion
      i. Clapping
      ii. Knee slaps
      iii. Snapping fingers
   b. Examples should all be in 4/4 time at a comfortable tempo for your ensemble.
   c. Examples should be one to two measures in length (Figure 1 or Appendix C).
3. Do three or four examples with a metronome.
4. Going down the rows, students make up their own measure rhythms (the addition of a downbeat on second measure is optional).
Rehearsal Needs:
Begin rehearsal of all three pieces after this activity but be sure to address *Ancient Cities of Stone* in preparation for Activity Three.

ACTIVITY TWO – Repeated Rhythms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDARDS AND LEARNING QUESTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Standards:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>MU:Cr1.1.E.5a:</strong> Compose and improvise melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives that reflect characteristic(s) of music or text(s) studied in rehearsal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>MU:Cr3.2.E.5a:</strong> Share personally developed melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives – individually or as an ensemble – that demonstrate understanding of characteristics of music or texts studied in rehearsal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>MU:Pr6.1.E.5a:</strong> Demonstrate attention to technical accuracy and expressive qualities in prepared and improvised performances of a varied repertoire of music</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential Questions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What clues can be used to determine the rhythm being performed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How is this similar and different to performing these rhythms on body percussion?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What is the importance of strong and weak beats when performing a rhythm?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students will know or be able to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Repeat rhythms performed by the teacher at the tempo provided by the metronome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Perform improvised rhythms while utilizing a characteristic tone of their instrument</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSESSMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Students create their own measure of rhythms for the class to repeat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEARNING PLAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Materials:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Amplified Metronome set to 84 beats per minute (bpm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Respective Instruments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher Instrument for examples (middle range instrument suggested, i.e. trumpet, clarinet or saxophone)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggested Warm-up:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Rhythmic Scale (Optional round with sections)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Description:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. After warm-up is complete assign students a specific concert pitch (e.g. Concert F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Using only basic rhythms (half notes, dotted quarter notes, quarter notes and eighth notes) have the students repeat one measure examples of rhythms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Break students into instrument families (woodwinds, brass, percussion) and repeat step 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Break students into groups based on specific instruments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. If time allows, ask for volunteers to perform on their own for the class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Rehearsal Needs:**
After activity is finished concentrate on percussion parts at beginning of *Ancient Cities of Stone* in preparation for Activity 3.

**ACTIVITY THREE – Rhythmic Improvisation Based on Percussion Accompaniment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDARDS AND LEARNING QUESTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Standards:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>MU:Cr1.1.E.5a</strong>: Compose and improvise melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives that reflect characteristic(s) of music or text(s) studied in rehearsal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>MU:Cr3.2.E.5a</strong>: Share personally developed melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives – individually or as an ensemble – that demonstrate understanding of characteristics of music or texts studied in rehearsal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>MU:Pr6.1.E.8a</strong>: Demonstrate attention to technical accuracy and expressive qualities in prepared and improvised performances of a varied repertoire of music representing diverse cultures and styles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>MU:Re7.2.E.8a</strong>: Describe how understanding context and the way the elements of music are manipulated inform the response to music.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential Questions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What clues can be used to determine the rhythm being performed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How is this similar and different to performing these rhythms on body percussion?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What is the importance of strong and weak beats when performing a rhythm?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How does the structure of the accompaniment affect the improvisational process?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students will know or be able to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Repeat rhythms performed by the teacher at the tempo provided by the metronome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Perform improvised rhythms while utilizing a characteristic tone of their instrument.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Understand the basic role of accompaniment in the context of improvisation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSESSMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Students perform the measure demonstrated by the teacher in instrument families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students will perform individually and be assessed using template provided (Appendix B).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEARNING PLAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Materials:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Amplified Metronome set to 84 beats per minute (bpm).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Respective Instruments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher Instrument for examples.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggested Warm-up:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Rhythmic scale with percussion accompaniment using percussion parts at beginning of <em>Ancient Cities of Stone</em>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity Description:
1. Assign students different concert pitch than the one used in Activity 2 (e.g. Concert B-Flat)
2. Using only basic rhythms have students repeat one measure examples of rhythms from the instructor
   a. Percussion plays the parts written at beginning of Ancient Cities of Stone
   b. Have certain percussionists pause their rhythms and repeat rhythms with the teacher
      i. This may be accomplished by pointing to specific students
      ii. The order of this may also be assigned before activity begins
3. Repeat step to in instrument families
4. Have individual volunteers perform one measure rhythmic improvisations with percussion accompaniments (playing the downbeat of second measure is acceptable)

Rehearsal Needs:
No specific Rehearsal needs for today.

ACTIVITY FOUR – Rhythmic Repeat Find-the-Note

STANDARDS AND LEARNING QUESTIONS

Standards:
• MU:Cr1.1.E.5a: Compose and improvise melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives that reflect characteristic(s) of music or text(s) studied in rehearsal.
• MU:Cr3.2.E.5a: Share personally developed melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives – individually or as an ensemble – that demonstrate understanding of characteristics of music or texts studied in rehearsal
• MU:Pr6.1.E.8a: Demonstrate attention to technical accuracy and expressive qualities in prepared and improvised performances of a varied repertoire of music representing diverse cultures and styles.

Essential Questions:
• What clues can be used to determine the correct note being performed?
• How does adding aspects to the improvisational process add difficulty to the overall process?

Students will know or be able to:
• Repeat rhythms performed by the teacher at the tempo provided by the metronome
• Determine the how their pitch relates to the one performed by the instructor and adjust accordingly

ASSESSMENTS
• Students will use a certain number of attempts to locate the correct note while performing the rhythm provided by the instructor
## LEARNING PLAN

**Materials:**
- Amplified Metronome set to 84 beats per minute (bpm)
- Respective Instruments
- Teacher Instrument for examples

**Suggested Warm-up:**
- Unison Rhythmic B-Flat Concert Scale

**Activity Description:**
1. Instruct the students all notes played will be concert B-Flat, C, D, E-flat, or F
2. Using simple rhythms perform one measure examples on one of the given pitches
   a. Repeat same pitches, giving students a chance to adjust their note and find the correct pitch
3. Slowly add option of Concert G, A and B-flat 8va until full range of scale is used
   a. Still performing rhythms on one note at a time

**Rehearsal Needs:**
No specific Rehearsal needs for today.

---

### ACTIVITY FIVE – Repeating Rhythms While Changing Notes

**STANDARDS AND LEARNING QUESTIONS**

**Standards:**
- **MU:Cr1.1.E.5a:** Compose and improvise melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives that reflect characteristic(s) of music or text(s) studied in rehearsal.
- **MU:Cr3.2.E.5a:** Share personally developed melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives – individually or as an ensemble – that demonstrate understanding of characteristics of music or texts studied in rehearsal
- **MU:Pr6.1.E.8a:** Demonstrate attention to technical accuracy and expressive qualities in prepared and improvised performances of a varied repertoire of music representing diverse cultures and styles.

**Essential Questions:**
- What clues can be used to determine the correct note being performed?
- How does adding aspects to the improvisational process add difficulty to the overall process?
- How do different intervals sound when being performed?

**Students will know or be able to:**
- Repeat rhythms performed by the teacher at the tempo provided by the metronome
- Determine the how their pitch relates to the one performed by the instructor and adjust accordingly
- Hear the difference of intervals when being performed
IMPROVISATION IN CONCERT BAND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSESSMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students will use a certain number of attempts to locate the correct note while performing the rhythm provided by the instructor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEARNING PLAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Materials:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Amplified Metronome set to 84 beats per minute (bpm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Respective Instruments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher Instrument for examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suggested Warm-up:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unison Rhythmic B-Flat Concert Scale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Activity Description:**
1. Inform students the starting note will always be concert B-Flat
2. Perform rhythms no longer than one 4/4 measure using only quarter notes in stepwise fashion
   a. Start with simple B-flat, C B-flat in quarter notes
   b. Advance to B-flat, C, D, C B-flat
   c. Progressively gain difficulty as students master the idea of the activity
3. When students show progress in stepwise motion add thirds
   a. Begin with a simple B-flat, D, B-flat
   b. Play a B-flat major triad up and down
4. Mic these two ideas to provide more challenging rhythmic patterns
5. Ask for volunteers to perform individually

**Rehearsal Needs:**
No specific rehearsal needs for today.

ACTIVITY SIX – Ensemble Call and Response Using the Pentatonic Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDARDS AND LEARNING QUESTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Standards:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>MU:Cr1.1.E.5a:</strong> Compose and improvise melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives that reflect characteristic(s) of music or text(s) studied in rehearsal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>MU:Cr3.2.E.5a:</strong> Share personally developed melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives – individually or as an ensemble – that demonstrate understanding of characteristics of music or texts studied in rehearsal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>MU:Pr6.1.E.8a:</strong> Demonstrate attention to technical accuracy and expressive qualities in prepared and improvised performances of a varied repertoire of music representing diverse cultures and styles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Essential Questions:
- What clues can be used to determine an appropriate response to the call?
- How does adding aspects to the improvisational process add difficulty to the overall process?

### Students will know or be able to:
- Answer rhythms performed by the teacher at the tempo provided by the metronome
- Determine the how their pitch relates to the one performed by the instructor and adjust accordingly
- Respond musically to a motif provided by the instructor

### ASSESSMENTS
- Students will use a certain number of attempts to locate the correct note while performing the rhythm provided by the instructor

### LEARNING PLAN

#### Materials:
- Amplified Metronome set to 84 beats per minute (bpm)
- Respective Instruments
- Teacher Instrument for examples

#### Suggested Warm-up:
- E-flat concert scale in unison or round, introduction of the E-flat Pentatonic Scale

#### Activity Description:
1. Introduce the idea of group improvisation using Dixieland ideas
   - a. Find a good example of a Dixieland band improvising on YouTube
2. Inform the students this is like a conversation
   - a. It is not a repeated pattern, it is a conversation
      - i. Analogy: Person 1: “How are you today?” Person 2: “How are you today?”
3. Perform an excerpt using the five notes of the E-flat pentatonic scale and have the students answer with a one measure excerpt using the same scale.
4. After multiple excerpts ask you one or two volunteers to try it on their own

#### Rehearsal Needs:
While there is no official suggestion for rehearsal with this activity it is important to note the use of *Rain* in the coming lessons. Students should continue to increase their familiarity for with this piece.
ACTIVITY SEVEN (2 Day) – Individual Call and Response Using the Pentatonic Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDARDS AND LEARNING QUESTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Standards:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• MU:Cr1.1.E.5a: Compose and improvise melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives that reflect characteristic(s) of music or text(s) studied in rehearsal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• MU:Cr3.2.E.5a: Share personally developed melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives – individually or as an ensemble – that demonstrate understanding of characteristics of music or texts studied in rehearsal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• MU:Pr6.1.E.8a: Demonstrate attention to technical accuracy and expressive qualities in prepared and improvised performances of a varied repertoire of music representing diverse cultures and styles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Essential Questions:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What clues can be used to determine the correct note being performed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How does adding aspects to the improvisational process add difficulty to the overall process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students will know or be able to:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Repeat rhythms performed by the teacher at the tempo provided by the metronome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Determine the how their pitch relates to the one performed by the instructor and adjust accordingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Respond musically to a motif provided by the instructor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ASSESSMENTS**

• The instructor will use the template provided (Appendix B) to give feedback to students and formally assess their improvisation.

**LEARNING PLAN**

**Materials:**
• Amplified Metronome set to 84 beats per minute (bpm)
• Respective Instruments
• Teacher Instrument for examples

**Suggested Warm-up:**
• E-flat concert scale in unison or round, introduction of the E-flat Pentatonic Scale
Activity Description:
1. To recall previous information have the students repeat exercise from previous activity
2. Choose either woodwinds or brass and have them perform individually with a response to the teacher’s prompts
   a. The other group will have their opportunity during the next activity
   b. Have percussion participate with the small of the two families to save instructional time
3. Ask the students reflection questions after second day
   a. Do you think you did well?
   b. Where could you make improvements?
   c. What conversation were you having with the instructor?

Rehearsal Needs:
No specific needs for these activities but Rain must be familiar with students by next activity.

ACTIVITY EIGHT – Improvisation Using Rain Chords

STANDARDS AND LEARNING QUESTIONS

Standards:
• **MU:Cr1.1.E.5a**: Compose and improvise melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives that reflect characteristic(s) of music or text(s) studied in rehearsal.
• **MU:Cr3.2.E.5a**: Share personally developed melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives – individually or as an ensemble – that demonstrate understanding of characteristics of music or texts studied in rehearsal
• **MU:Pr6.1.E.8a**: Demonstrate attention to technical accuracy and expressive qualities in prepared and improvised performances of a varied repertoire of music representing diverse cultures and styles.
• **MU:Re7.2.E.8a**: Describe how understanding context and the way the elements of music are manipulated inform the response to music.

Essential Questions:
• How can the accompaniment help move your improvisation along?
• What context clues are available through the chord structure of the accompaniment figures in music?

Students will know or be able to:
• Perform Improvisation with chords as accompaniment
• Understand the timing of chord changes when performing an improvisation

ASSESSMENTS
• The instructor will give feedback to students on their performance of the sequence and their ability to move with the chord changes in Rain.
## LEARNING PLAN

### Materials:
- Individual Instruments
- *Rain*

### Suggested Warm-up:
- Warm-up Chorales in the key of B-Flat to match *Rain* chords

### Activity Description:

1. Have the students play the section in *Rain* from mm. 58-66
2. Instruct the students they will be doing group improvisation like they did with the Pentatonic scale only with the chords in *Rain*
   a. Note the change of notes in parts and the need to change note options while performing
   b. 
3. Have students attempt improvisational method in groups
   a. Suggested groups
      i. Flutes and double reeds
      ii. Clarinets
      iii. Saxophones
      iv. Trumpets
      v. Horns and Low Brass
      vi. Percussion
   b. Students not in the improvisational group will be performing notated music within *Rain* itself
   c. Percussion must perform improvisation exercise on mallet instruments but are welcome to use assigned percussion when not improvising

### Rehearsal Needs:
No specific needs for this activity but make sure *Portrait of a Clown* is familiar for next activity.
**STANDARDS AND LEARNING QUESTIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>MU:Cr1.1.E.5a:</strong> Compose and improvise melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives that reflect characteristic(s) of music or text(s) studied in rehearsal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>MU:Cr3.2.E.5a:</strong> Share personally developed melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives – individually or as an ensemble – that demonstrate understanding of characteristics of music or texts studied in rehearsal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>MU:Pr6.1.E.8a:</strong> Demonstrate attention to technical accuracy and expressive qualities in prepared and improvised performances of a varied repertoire of music representing diverse cultures and styles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>MU:Re7.2.E.8a:</strong> Describe how understanding context and the way the elements of music are manipulated inform the response to music.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential Questions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• How can original material in the pieces help with the improvisational process?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Students will know or be able to:**

- Perform Improvisation using the melody as a starting point
- Identify different styles of baroque improvisation

**ASSESSMENTS**

- Students will perform the excerpt individually for the class

**LEARNING PLAN**

**Materials:**

- Individual Instruments
- *Portrait of a Clown*

**Suggested Warm-up:**

- Major Scale in a round
Activity Description:
1. Introduce ornamentation methods common in Baroque music
2. Demonstrate how it can be used to improvise around the provided melody
3. Have students play through assigned sections of music at the same time to establish melody
   a. Mm 17-25: Flutes and Altos (Percussion given flute part)
   b. Mm77-84: Clarinet
   c. Mm 85-92: Trumpets, Trombones, Euphonium, Tuba, Low Woodwinds
   d. Horns transposed part
4. Give individual sections a chance to utilize baroque methods in specific sections while other students perform notated background figures (all students playing at same section in music but melody is the ones improvising)
5. If time, allow volunteers to perform method individually

Rehearsal Needs:
No specific needs for this activity

ACTIVITY 10 (3 Day) – Question and Answer Improvisation

STANDARDS AND LEARNING QUESTIONS

Standards:
• MU:Cr1.1.E.5a: Compose and improvise melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives that reflect characteristic(s) of music or text(s) studied in rehearsal.
• MU:Cr3.2.E.5a: Share personally developed melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives – individually or as an ensemble – that demonstrate understanding of characteristics of music or texts studied in rehearsal
• MU:Pr6.1.E.8a: Demonstrate attention to technical accuracy and expressive qualities in prepared and improvised performances of a varied repertoire of music representing diverse cultures and styles.

Essential Questions:
• How can you use the material provided previously to influence your improvisation?
• What are effective ways of communicating with the audience?

Students will know or be able to:
• Work with a partner to provide a good performance
• Communicate ideas with audience members through improvisation

ASSESSMENTS
• Students will perform their improvisation duets for the class and complete questionnaire (Appendix B)
## LEARNING PLAN

**Materials:**
- Respective Instruments

**Suggested Warm-up:**
- N/A

**Activity Description:**
1. Have the students choose a partner for this activity
2. Instruct the students they will be representing normal conversations on their instruments
   a. Students will be given scenarios of meeting each other in public
   b. The conversation will be drawn out of a box on the day of the performance
3. Students will be assigned a day to perform their “conversation” on one of the next two class periods
4. On the first day students will be given a chance to practice
5. The students will then perform their conversations on the assigned days

**Rehearsal Needs:**
No specific needs for this activity

---

ACTIVITY 11 – Final Assessment Improvisation

### STANDARDS AND LEARNING QUESTIONS

**Standards:**
- **MU:Cr1.1.E.5a:** Compose and improvise melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives that reflect characteristic(s) of music or text(s) studied in rehearsal.
- **MU:Cr3.2.E.5a:** Share personally developed melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives – individually or as an ensemble – that demonstrate understanding of characteristics of music or texts studied in rehearsal.
- **MU:Pr6.1.E.8a:** Demonstrate attention to technical accuracy and expressive qualities in prepared and improvised performances of a varied repertoire of music representing diverse cultures and styles.
- **MU:Re7.2.E.8a:** Describe how understanding context and the way the elements of music are manipulated inform the response to music.

**Essential Questions:**
- How can the accompaniment assist in helping with the improvisational performance?
- How do all aspects discussed in the activities work together to create improvisation?

**Students will know or be able to:**
- Perform Improvisation using the melody and accompaniment as a starting point
- Fully improvise a chorus based around *Portrait of a Clown*
### ASSESSMENTS

- Students will perform the excerpt individually for the class and be assessed using rubric (Appendix B)

### LEARNING PLAN

**Materials:**
- Individual Instruments
- *Portrait of a Clown*

**Suggested Warm-up:**
- N/A

**Activity Description:**
1. Accompaniment and chordal “lead sheet” transcriptions are given to all students for backgrounds of *Portrait of a Clown* mm 68-75
2. Students are instructed to interact with the backgrounds being performed with the rest of the band
3. Give students a chance to practice with the band by switching brass, woodwinds and percussion in a group improvisation style
   - a. Make sure students are resting or playing a long tone over the band hits
   - b. Emphasize need to work with the ensemble
4. On Day 2 and 3 of the activity, have the students perform their improvisation individually
   - a. This will serve as their final assessment on the improvisation unit

**Rehearsal Needs:**
No specific needs for this activity
## Activity 3: Rhythmic Improvisation Based on Percussion Accompaniment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Excellent (3)</th>
<th>Good (2)</th>
<th>Needs Improving (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rhythm and tempo</td>
<td>The student displayed awareness of the tempo and used correct rhythms throughout the entirety of their excerpt</td>
<td>The student lost a sense of tempo or used inappropriate rhythms once or twice during their excerpt</td>
<td>The student did not have a feeling of tempo or rhythm when performing their excerpt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blend with Accompaniment</td>
<td>The student used appropriate material to compliment the accompaniment figure</td>
<td>The student stayed with the accompaniment but used inappropriate material that failed to compliment the accompaniment figure</td>
<td>The student played their excerpt with little or no regard for the provided accompaniment figure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundamentals</td>
<td>The student played with good tone and air support at an appropriate volume through their entire excerpt</td>
<td>The student played with either a good tone or proper volume but not both</td>
<td>The student played with neither a good tone or an appropriate volume for their excerpt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments:

## Activity 7: Individual Call and Response Using the Pentatonic Scale (Student and Instructor)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Excellent (3)</th>
<th>Good (2)</th>
<th>Needs Improving (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Note utilization</td>
<td>The student used only the notes of the pentatonic scale with only 1-2 mistakes</td>
<td>The student used the pentatonic scale with only 3-5 mistakes</td>
<td>The student had more than 5 mistakes in the improvisation excerpt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhythm and Tempo</td>
<td>The student displayed awareness of the tempo and used correct rhythms throughout the entirety of their excerpt</td>
<td>The student lost a sense of tempo or used inappropriate rhythms once or twice during their excerpt</td>
<td>The student did not have a feeling of tempo or rhythm when performing their excerpt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>The student’s response was appropriate for the example given including style translation, dynamic selection and rhythmic mimicry</td>
<td>The student’s response did not have any aspects of the example given in every aspect but most</td>
<td>The student’s response did not show any consideration towards the example provided by the teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundamentals</td>
<td>The student played with good tone and air support at an appropriate volume through their entire excerpt</td>
<td>The student played with either a good tone or proper volume but not both</td>
<td>The student played with neither a good tone or an appropriate volume for their excerpt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments:
IMPROVISATION IN CONCERT BAND

Activity 10: Question and Answer Improvisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Excellent (3)</th>
<th>Good (2)</th>
<th>Needs Improving (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>The students showed preparation in who would speak first</td>
<td>The students did not show signs of preparation</td>
<td>There was no evidence of working with their partner in the communication exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue</td>
<td>The students showed different aspects of syntactic inflection with their conversation and responded appropriately to their partner’s playing</td>
<td>There was evidence of working with the other student but there were moments the communication was inappropriate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundamentals</td>
<td>The student played with good tone and air support at an appropriate volume through their entire excerpt</td>
<td>The student played with either a good tone or proper volume but not both</td>
<td>The student played with neither a good tone or an appropriate volume for their excerpt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments:

Activity 10 Questionnaire

On a scale of 1-10 how confident are you in your improvisation skills? ____
What can we do to help improve this score and hopefully reach a level 10?

What parts of improvisation do you feel need more practice (e.g. rhythmic pulse, note selection, etc.)?

Was it harder or easier to perform this Activity without the hindrances of specific notes or rhythms?

How difficult was it to communicate with your partner during your performance? Why?
### Activity 11: Final Assessment Improvisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>The student used only the notes of the pentatonic scale with only 1-2 mistakes</th>
<th>The student used the pentatonic scale with only 3-5 mistakes</th>
<th>The student had more than 5 mistakes in the improvisation excerpt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Note utilization</td>
<td>Rhythm and Tempo</td>
<td>Rhythm and Tempo</td>
<td>Rhythm and Tempo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The student displayed awareness of the tempo and used correct rhythms throughout the entirety of their excerpt</td>
<td>The student lost a sense of tempo or used inappropriate rhythms once or twice during their excerpt</td>
<td>The student did not have a feeling of tempo or rhythm when performing their excerpt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blend with</td>
<td>Fundamentals</td>
<td>Fundamentals</td>
<td>Fundamentals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accompaniment</td>
<td>The student used appropriate material to compliment the accompaniment figure</td>
<td>The student stayed with the accompaniment but used inappropriate material that failed to compliment the accompaniment figure</td>
<td>The student played their excerpt with little or no regard for the provided accompaniment figure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The student played with good tone and air support at an appropriate volume through their entire excerpt</td>
<td>The student played with either a good tone or proper volume but not both</td>
<td>The student played with neither a good tone or an appropriate volume for their excerpt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments:**
IMPROVISATION IN CONCERT BAND

Appendix C

Example Excerpts

Activity One and Two

Activity Four and Five

Activity Six and Seven

Activity 10 Example Scenarios

1. Student A runs into a friend (Student B) who they have not seen for a long time.
2. Student A is trying to sell Student B a used car.
3. Student A and Student B are having an argument over which is better, cake or pie.

If there is an odd number (three person group)

Student A and Student B are the parents of Student C and all are driving to Disney world in their small car.
Appendix D

Additional Materials

Lead Sheets for Activity Eight

Flute/Oboe

Clarinet/Trumpet/Bassoon

Alto Sax

Horn in F

Bass Clarinet

Portrait of a Clown Horn Transposed Part

Questionnaire:

Please rate your ability to improvise between 1 and 10 (10 being the best).

Why do you give yourself this rating?

What successes do you believe you have had with improvisation?

What specific things could still be improved with your improvisation?