

Manitoba Arts Education Curriculum Programming “Exemplars of Learning”



This exemplar includes



appropriate for grades

K

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

**Jazz Band Group Composition:
12-bar Blues Head**



This exemplar includes student experiences in

Music

Music Language and Performance Skills

Students demonstrate understanding of and facility with a variety of tools for improvising simple melodies and instrumental pieces.

Understanding Music In Context

Students demonstrate understanding of ways in which music reflects and influences the identity of individuals and groups.



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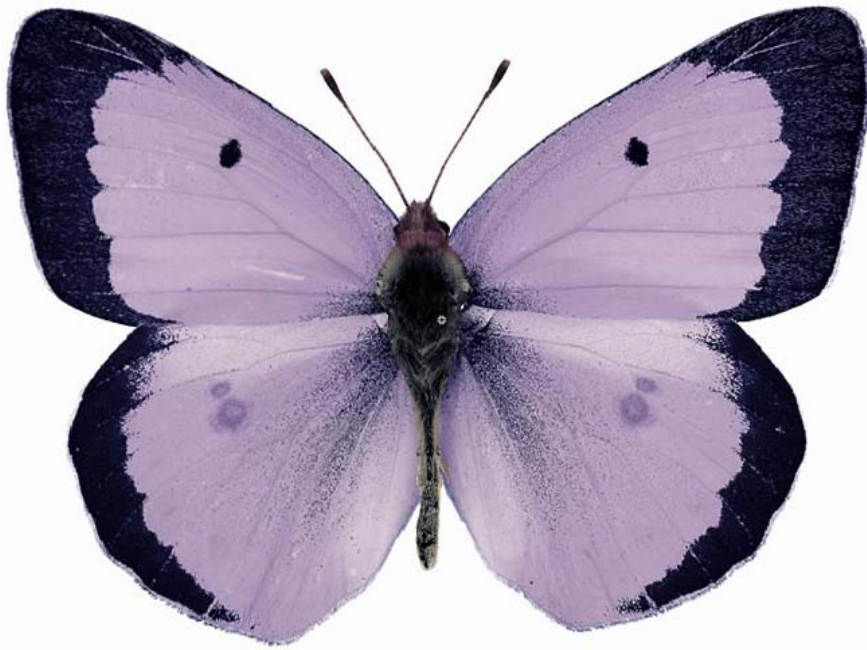
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Creative Expression in Music

Students select, organize, and use a combination of ideas, elements, and techniques for composing and arranging musical pieces (e.g., select, refine, and organize motifs, choose form, dynamics, tempo, articulation).

Valuing Musical Experience

Students form personal responses to and construct meaning from their own and others' music.



Every student is a music maker, one whose growth and learning are best realized within rich, meaningful, hands-on music-making experiences. In becoming young musicians, students learn to sing and play the music of a variety of places, times, and peoples, as well as to improvise, arrange, and compose music. As increasingly reflective and artistic music-makers, students gain skills, understandings, and attitudes that enrich them in many ways, enabling and inspiring them to continue making music for the rest of their lives.

Every student is a creator and composer. Students must be given opportunities to tap into their creative capacities and express themselves through the creation and sharing of their own music. As they become capable of generating and developing ideas in the process of music creation, students learn to think with flexibility and imagination.



The Learning Context

The Big Idea As a group, students will make musical decisions through composing, arranging, refining, and performing their own piece in the form of a 12-bar blues.

The students comprise a middle years jazz ensemble, and are in their second year of playing their instruments and their first year of jazz instruction. The students are part of a developing band program in a junior high school setting.

Prior learning Students learned the 12-bar blues progression and played the blues scale. Students played by ear and improvised over a 12-bar blues, applying the concept of three 4-measure phrases. Also, the students learned a brief history of the blues, and performed three commonly-played, pre-composed blues heads (by rote and through written notation). **See Appendix.

The classroom context In both concert band and jazz band, students engage regularly in listening activities, call and response, improvisation, and playing by ear. Creativity and risk-taking are valued and supported in the classroom environment. In jazz band, students have had a basic exposure to the rhythms and articulations appropriate to various styles. These activities are administered in classes scheduled both inside and outside of regular school hours.



Overview

of teaching and learning experiences

First, the students generated ideas for their group composition in a variety of ways. This included call and response (both teacher and student-led), and individual and group improvisation.

Next, the students shared their ideas with the group by playing them for each other, and provided feedback.

Then, the students made decisions about which material to include in the composition, and tried several different versions. They considered form, melody, harmony, and rhythm in the construction of the piece.

Finally, they all learned the composition by rote, played it together and decided on the final version.

As an extension, the students made decisions about the arrangement and performed the composition at a concert.



To activate learning

, students listened to examples of pieces in 12-bar blues and had learning conversations about the historical and cultural context of the music.

Prior student learning included:

- History of the blues, including time(s), place(s), and culture(s)
- Purpose and meaning of the blues, including lyrics
- Characteristics and traditions within the genre

Teacher Comment: *Although this lesson does not address a “variety” of styles, as specified above., it does address one style/genre and a set of traditions in a very in-depth way, one of many that they might encounter within the course of an entire school year. Blues form/history/traditions is “music in context” although this lesson, in itself, does not demonstrate a “variety” of styles.*





First, the students generated ideas for their group composition. The material was based on the Concert B-Flat blues scale. Students used a variety of means to generate ideas, such as:

Teacher-led call and response:

The teacher plays a 2-measure phrase using select , pre-determined notes from the blues scale, and the students play it back by ear.



In Music Language & Performance Skills, students demonstrate understanding of and facility with a variety of tools for improvising simple melodies and instrumental pieces 5–8 M–L1.6



Individual improvisation and experimentation



In Creative Expression in Music, students generate multiple ideas for music making through constructive experimentation with music and sound 5–8 M–C1.1

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Musical “conversations” in partners

One student plays something to their partner, and their partner must respond by playing something related but different—much like a conversation using words.



In Creative Expression in Music, students collaborate with others to develop and extend musical ideas
K–8 M–C2.5



Group improvisation: Jazz Party

Students move freely around the room interacting in groups, imitating an actual party. Except, instead of speaking with words, they “speak” to each other by playing their instruments.



In Creative Expression in Music, students demonstrate a valuing of risk-taking as a component of the creative process (e.g. take risks, support the risk-taking of others) K–8 M–C2.3



Next, the students shared their ideas with the ensemble by playing them for each other, and provided feedback.

A student sharing her musical idea by playing it for another student in the group.



In Valuing Musical Experience, students provide and respond to constructive feedback based on appropriate criteria for assessing musical experiences 5–8 M–V4



Students engaged through listening to an idea being shared (played) by another student in the group.



In Creative Expression in Music, students demonstrate understanding of experimentation and improvisation as a valuable component of the music-making process 5–8 M–C1.2



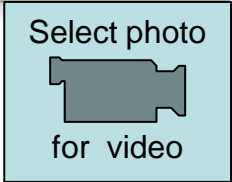
The trombone section plays an idea for the group.



In Music Language & Performance Skills, students demonstrate appropriate interpersonal skills for making music collectively K–8 M–L1.9



Students share their individual ideas by playing them for the group.



In Creative Expression in Music, students rehearse, revise, refine, and share own and others' music 5–8 M–C3.3



Then, the students made decisions about what material to include in their composition and how to organize it.

They incorporated elements of form, harmony, and melody in order to make appropriate musical decisions.



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In Creative Expression in Music, students make interpretive musical decisions, demonstrating an integrated understanding of expressive devices and music elements 5–8 M–C3.1
In Valuing Musical Experience, students assess own music-making process and product using appropriate assessment criteria and tools 5–8 M–V4

Finally, the students taught each other the final version of the tune by rote, played through their composition, and decided that it worked.



In Creative Expression in Music, students make appropriate decisions as to whether own work is “finished”
3–8 M–C3.4



One student teaches the others, by rote, one of the “licks” the group uses in the composition



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In Music Language & Performance Skills, students play and sing by ear, reproducing melodies, rhythms, accompaniments, and harmonies with increasing accuracy, complexity and expression 5–8 M–L2.1



With some teacher guidance, one student teaches the others, by rote, the material that will form the “main melody” of the new composition. The melody is based on this student’s original individual idea, and was refined through feedback from the group.



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As an extension, the students made decisions about the arrangement and performed a final version of their piece at a concert.





The arrangement included an introduction and ending, different instrument groups playing different sections, background figures, solos, and repetition of the head (main melody).





To further explore learning in

Music Language and Performance Skills

- students could write down their composition using notation

Understanding Music in Context

- students could further study of blues form including lyrics, history, musician biographies, etc.

Creative Expression in Music,

- students could participate in a form of summative assessment

Valuing Musical Experience

- students could reflect on their learning in a written reflection, self-evaluation, checklist/rubric, etc.



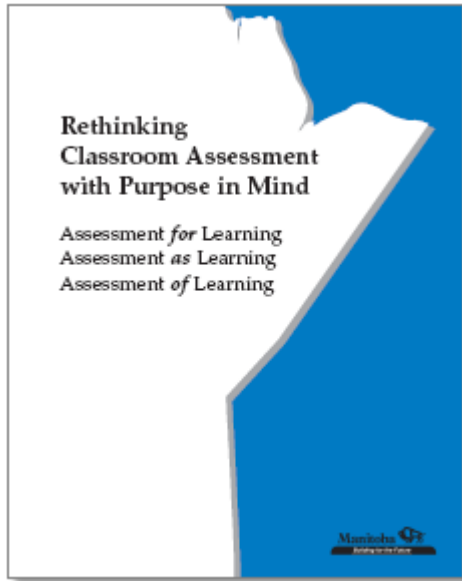
Appendix: Resources

Examples of commonly-played blues heads suitable for beginners:

- C-Jam Blues
- Sonnymoon For Two
- Tenor Madness
- Now's The Time
- Blue Monk

Appendix: Manitoba Education Resources

Rethinking Classroom Assessment with Purpose in Mind



For more information, see [Assessment and Evaluation](#)

“Assessment as learning is a process of developing and supporting metacognition for students. Assessment as learning focuses on the role of the student as the critical connector between assessment and learning. When students are active, engaged, and critical assessors, they make sense of information, relate it to prior knowledge, and use it for new learning. This is the regulatory process in metacognition. It occurs when students monitor their own learning and use the feedback from this monitoring to make adjustments, adaptations, and even major changes in what they understand.”

Rethinking Classroom Assessment with Purpose in Mind, page 13

Why was this exemplar a valuable learning experience?

Music Language and Performance Skills

Students develop understanding of and facility with elements, concepts, and techniques for making music

Creative Expression in Music

Students collaboratively and individually generate, develop, and communicate ideas in creating original and interpretive music for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Understanding Music in Context

Students connect music to contexts of time, place, and community, and develop understanding of how music reflects and influences culture and identity.

Valuing Musical Experience

Students analyze, reflect on, and construct meaning in response to their own and others' music.