



SCHEME OF WORK 5

Key Question:

How can Composers and Performers be best used as a resource in the classroom?

What are the specific aims of this project/scheme?

- To inspire pupils' composing through inquisitive explorations of specific instruments¹.
- To encourage pupils to create their own compositional challenges and pathways, question what they aim to achieve while composing and continually evaluate their success while doing so.
- That both teachers and pupils should gain confidence throughout this project, promoting transferable skills through devising their own future projects with different instruments or (mixed) groups of instruments.

Key outcomes:

- Develop creative thinking and compositional skills.
- Can the instrument inspire particular musical ideas while composing?
- Build on previous knowledge of performance and composition.
- Experience, extend and develop creative approaches to composing as well as building their own skills to create original pieces of music.

¹ This could include voices, though for the purposes of this project it would be recommended that text was not used, or formed a subsidiary component (e.g. Alleluia settings, certain Classical Indian forms, etc.) Performers should be of a professional standard, drawn from the performing professions, although where appropriate they may be peripatetic instrumental teachers or higher-level conservatoire/university pupils. The piano/keyboard is not an ideal instrument for this project.

Expectations and Differentiation:

Embedding: learners will have gained an understanding the basic capabilities of the instrument they have composed for, creating music which demonstrates some recognition of the instrument's unique qualities. They will have reasonable understanding of their compositional processes and how they relate to the instrument.

Enhancing: most learners will have a good understanding of the medium they have composed for, its range, idioms and technical capabilities. They will be able to compose effectively for the instrument and successfully evaluate and explain their compositional decisions.

Extending: some learners will have gone further than this and will have a thorough understanding of the instrument they have composed for, employing a full range of the instrument's capabilities for expressive effect. They will have demonstrated some initiative in effectively relating their compositional choices to the medium being written for, clearly explaining the rationale for their creative decisions.

Success Criteria:

- **Engagement:** The learners compose standalone works to be performed and recorded in class by a performer, having successfully conveyed their musical intentions through notation that the performer can interpret.
- **Performance:** of work in progress will allow pupils to gauge their work throughout the process. These works will demonstrate genuine engagement with the medium being written for, and that a surprising variety of styles and genres can be explored within any instrument.
- **Assessment for learning:** The learners will be able to reflect on the intrinsic connection between their creative work and the instrument being composed for. They should be able to question in what ways the outcome might have varied had they composed for a different instrument.
- **Confidence:** Learners will develop their confidence leading to more independent and original compositions.
- **Creative thinking skills:** They should also be able to find creative means of applying this process to new situations, such as composing for their own instruments (where possible), and in solo and group composition situations.

Prior learning:

It is helpful if learners have:

- Introducing the project to the pupils in advance of the first lesson is important; revealing which instrument all students will compose for becomes the starting point of preparation. Encourage different means of researching the instrument. These should include both individual and group activities. Group activities might usefully include an online forum (to which the teacher can contribute) where they share ideas and ask questions.
- Motivating the students to ask questions about an instrument with which they are unfamiliar will encourage inquisitiveness, essential throughout the process. Exploration of online media should be encouraged, such as YouTube for practical demonstrations of instruments.
- Fostering openness in pupils' questions will be key to the success of this preparation. In a sense, there are no naïve questions and even apparently obvious questions ("what is the lowest note you can play") will lead to useful discussion and prepare them for their first lesson. For example, in the case of a saxophone, can it play more than one note at a time? (In this case, yes, but not just 'any' collection of notes- i.e. multiphonics.)

Personalised learning:

Differentiation: While it may never be possible to introduce an instrument that *no* pupil in the class plays, it is useful to depersonalise this project wherever possible. Pupils should initially feel that they are writing for the 'professional', not for themselves. Nevertheless, across a range of standards pupils can be encouraged to prepare for this project by asking questions (such as those above in 'Prior Learning') about their own instrument(s). It is preferable for this project that pupils don't draw immediately from their own performances/improvisations into composing.

Effective teaching and learning: This project aims to be as inclusive as practical, standard 'western' music notation is not a requirement, indeed if the pupils push the boundaries of what the instrument can do they will frequently find that more conventional westernised notation needs to be stretched anyway. As a resource, the teacher would find examples of scores by composers such as Luciano Berio helpful (particularly *Sequenza III* and *Sequenza V*), demonstrating that when classical composers have pushed instruments to their limits they have often had to employ novel forms of notation, relying more on graphic and textual information (i.e. performance directions).

Beyond the classroom: Could you offer learners opportunities to develop their skills in/outside the music context to support the whole musician? Could you encourage the musician to join local networks or develop collaborations?

Personal Learning and Thinking Skills

This scheme of work explores **creative thinking processes**. One particular challenge in composing is accepting that not only is there no *correct* way of creating a piece, there is also the possibility that any given piece can go in several directions at any time. Through focussing on composing for one particular instrument there is a directed approach to the pupils' creative energies; they will learn to **problem solve** when writing for the instrument. This project also aims to demonstrate that 'thinking small' at the outset of composing can successfully allow for initial ideas to be built upon. Beginning a piece of music can be hard for any composer; this project encourages the pupils to make a start, no matter how apparently 'simple' or 'uninteresting' and work **creatively to build** that into a larger work. The learners will **work confidently with others** forming collaborative and **reflective** relationships where they will review their progress and act on outcomes.