

SCHEME OF WORK 5: How can Composers and Performers be best used as a resource in the classroom?

LESSON 1

TOPIC AND PURPOSE	OBJECTIVE	ENGAGEMENT	STICK-ABILITY
Lesson one exploring how Composers and Performers best be used as a resource in the classroom?	'Practicing' composing. It is taken for granted that in order to successfully sing or perform a great deal of practice is required. But, how does a composer practise? This session will explore various compositional starting points, teaching that any particular idea (theme) is not intrinsically successful or otherwise, but that the <i>development</i> of that idea is valuable and that much can be gained from this process.	Explore different means of committing ideas to paper and developing them. Learners will listen to and give feedback to each other. Using notation, learners will create music for the performer to play .	The generation of ideas. The development of these ideas through notation and performance.

DIFFERENTIATION

Embedding:

Learners will explore their personal ideas and themes. They will begin to consider notating these ideas and realising them through a composed piece.

Enhancing: Some learners will go further than this and creatively expand their personal ideas. They will begin to compose and notate their piece.

Extending: A few may go well beyond this and create a piece for the performer to play with strong notation skills.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Introduction from composer: how does a piece begin? Is there only one way?

Small group workshops with learners discussing their ideas and 'translating' some of them into musical 'themes'.

Composer plays through each short theme on piano/keyboard, encouraging discussion of the theme's 'character' with the whole class and suggesting various ideas for development.

STARTER

Introduction to the scheme of work and objectives.

ASSESSMENT

Ideas for developing themes will be discussed and explore individually and collectively as a group.

In the halfway point of the session, the performer will play through all the ideas composed so far. Observe how learners evaluate their work and develop their piece based on advice.

For developing ideas, consider:

What gives this theme character?

Is there anything that makes it particularly memorable?

ACTIVITY ONE

Led by the composer, learners will have prepared in advance some abstract ideas/themes they have been working on which they think could be translated into effective musical ideas. They could include colours, emotions, shapes etc. though narrative ideas should be avoided if possible.

Commentary on Activity One:

ACTIVITY ONE CONTINUED

Learners will explain the abstract non-musical ideas they have chosen and why. They will listen to and give feedback to each other. Without committing musical ideas 'to paper' initially, they will discuss whether their abstract ideas suggest any particular musical ones. When writing short initial ideas they will receive a great deal of feedback on strategies and techniques for developing an idea.

It is useful for the learners to break into small groups where each introduces their ideas, with all taking notes and working on their concepts throughout. The composer can move from group to group, not commenting on particular ideas per se (and certainly avoiding any sense of attaching value to a particular idea over another) but asking learners if there are any particular musical ideas that complement the ideas they discuss. Learners are encouraged to comment on others' as the learning in this project is cumulative and community-based.

Commentary on Activity Two:

Composers always learn from others' work and no one can compose in a musical vacuum. Throughout the project, learners will be encouraged to listen as intently to comments made on their colleagues' work by the composer and performer, as they will be able to apply many of the concepts discussed in others' work to their own.

ACTIVITY TWO

The learners will already know the instrument they will write for but this session is focussed instead on different means of committing ideas to paper and developing them.

Different forms of notation may be used, including graphic, depending on the class dynamic and range of abilities. The rationale for using notation is that the pupils will be creating music for the performer to *play* and they will learn throughout the project different means of conveying their intentions to the performer. Elements of improvisation can certainly be built into the notation however.

Where practical, learners should use handwriting to notate their ideas. Notation software should be avoided, as it can confine the pupil to various musical parameters (such as time signatures, key and tempo) before a note has been written. Where software is the only option for the pupil encourage them to think about what they might want to hear (what pitch, how long, how loud? etc.) before inputting notes.

Commentary on Activity Three:

Please see additional resource for this lesson with examples.

HOMEWORK

To continue to develop, experiment and take risks with their ideas.

RESOURCES:

Classroom instruments;
Learners' own instruments;
Lesson resources sheets.