

Middle School Instrumental Music Lesson Plan

National Standard: Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

GOAL: To develop students into independent, critical thinking, decision making individuals.

REPERTOIRE: “Giant Steps” by John Coltrane as found on page 74 of The Real Book.

OBJECTIVES: Students will develop the necessary skills to fulfill the following roles:

1. Define the four cultural forces (social, political, religious, and economic) and define how music can be narrative.
2. Research (with good guidance from the teacher/librarians) two cultural forces that the student has chosen, organize their facts and compose the proper bibliography according to the handout
3. Use their research to develop their own “interview” questions on the way culture can influence the music making of its people.
4. Participate in a class discussion on music and culture.

PREREQUISITE KNOWLEDGE:

1. Students must know how to find hard copies in the library and to conduct meaningful and useful research on the internet.
2. Students must know how to compose an electronic or hard copy source bibliography in MLA format.

MATERIALS:

1. Pencil, scratch paper
2. Music in Relation to Culture Handouts
3. “Giant Steps” Portfolio
4. Access to collection of music books in a library or on an electronic database (preferably one specific for music such as Grove Music)

INSTRUCTIONS AND ACTIVITIES:

1. Introduce the topic to the students by asking them to define the word, “culture”. Then ask them to think of ways that music can be a part of a given culture. Finally, ask them if they can think of any ways in which a culture may influence the music being made during that time period.
2. Facilitate the discussion further and ask students how music with lyrics may be considered a narrative for its time. Have them think of ways that lyrical and strictly instrumental music can be different. Ask if they believe that even music without lyrics can still “narrate” ideas about a culture.
3. Write the four “cultural forces”, as described on the first page of the handout, on the board. Explain that these are four things that have the potential to strongly influence music that is written in a

particular culture.

4. Discuss “music as narrative”
5. Relate this discussion to the piece. Tell them that John Coltrane was an American born man living in New York City when this piece was written and recorded. It was finally recorded with Columbia records in 1959.
6. Pass out the, “RESEARCH ON THE CULTURE CONTEXT OF ‘GIANT STEPS’” handout to the students and explain the process to them step-by-step.
7. Take the students to the computer lab/library or a place where all will have access to hard copy or electronic resources. Be sure that you are available to help them with their research and to ask any questions.
8. After the research portion is complete, pass out the handout entitled, “MUSIC AND CULTURE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS” and discuss the instructions with the students.
9. Assist the students in developing their interview questions. You may want to consider having the students do a final copy of the questions.
10. Lastly, pass out the “SELF-INTERVIEW” page to the students. Explain that they are going to use the questions they just developed to interview themselves (this may also work with having the students interview each other).
11. Discuss their findings. Perhaps bring up some of the similarities they see between the cultural forces of the past and the present. Be careful not to facilitate a discussion that preaches of “universals” of music and culture or can alter the authenticity of the project.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS:

1. Students defined the cultural forces and narrative intelligently.
2. Students conducted useful and honest research and filled out the research form appropriately and thoroughly (MLA form is correct, page numbers are noted...)
3. Students used their research to make direct connections to the the interview questions they formulated.
4. Students answered the self-interview questions intelligently and honestly.

FOLLOW-UP:

1. Students use the knowledge gained from this project to develop a better understanding of the relationship between culture and music.
2. Students can use the interview questions they developed for future projects (perhaps, interview each other and publish the interviews into a mini-journal...)

