

As described in Professional Growth Experience (PGE) 2, I incorporated tablet technology in the music classroom to promote student interest and engagement, teach basic musical concepts and develop creativity through improvisation and composition. In this component, I applied my professional growth in the design and implementation of the unit, the specifics of the lesson and with the techniques used to manipulate the technology. The unit design evolved directly from my review of sources mentioned in PGE 2 (Burton, Freedman, Hickey). The acquisition of technology techniques began at the workshop, and I developed skills through repeated practice to promote my own fluency. The trajectory of the lesson was directed by what I determined students would need to know, understand, and be able to do in order to complete the summative project, and the specifics of the lesson were guided by my formative assessment of prior student knowledge and adjusted based on how students achieved benchmarks along the way.

The featured lesson was from a unit I developed to teach students about a specific type of song, the “Alma Mater.” The high school mixed class seen on the video is comprised of students from grades nine through twelve. In a broader context, the instruction was designed to lead students to an understanding of the alma mater and song (verse and refrain) form and of the role of text/lyrics in a song, as well as to apply their knowledge and understanding by creating a “remix,” or an original arrangement.

My first goal for the lesson was for the students to explore different college alma maters and draw conclusions about tonality, meter and tempi, as well as how the theme of the song is conveyed. This activity was accomplished with a homework assignment leading up to the lesson. Through their research, the students concluded the reoccurring themes (anthems of praise, nostalgia, school spirit, pride) were reinforced by the compositional components of major tonality, duple rhythms and slow tempi. To illustrate the role that text plays in conveying the

song's message, I asked each student compose a rap. To model the intended rhythm and inflection, students performed their raps in class. This segment appears first on the video.

The long-range goal of the unit was for each student to produce an original work to demonstrate understanding of the form and also the knowledge and skill to create original tracks and manipulate pre-recorded tracks. To that end, students were given the chord sequence of the pre-recorded tracks and guided in practicing the sequence to a steady pulse (80) to be able to keep tracks aligned to the same tempo. This segment of the lesson appears next in the sequence. Noting some difficulties in performing together, I asked students to count beat partials both out loud and silently, and to self-assess if they were ahead or behind the pulse. This teaching technique increased success. Later in the lesson, we revisit a process called *quantization*, which resolves misaligned rhythms to the quarter-, eight-, or sixteenth-note degree of accuracy. Once learned, this technique will give students the ability to edit minor rhythmic inaccuracies in their compositions without re-recording tracks. Some students previously discovered this feature in their own tinkering with the app, but as we uncovered in the course of the lesson, the topic needed to be revisited and practiced in greater depth.

The instruction, at this point in the unit, is important in order to give students the musical knowledge and skill to perform the original tracks they would use in their compositions. The skills explored in this lesson and evident in the video include: composing original text in meter and with expression, understanding of the harmonic progression of a given track, performance of that progression to a steady pulse and tempo, differentiation of verse/refrain in song form, and application of the quantization technique.

Throughout the lessons and unit, I was able to ensure equity of access among students by providing tablet devices (school-issued iPads) and digital content (apps), so that specific features

such as “smart” instruments and “auto play” could be used by students who may not have the prerequisite instrumental skills. By equipping students with the knowledge of compositional concepts and skill of musical performance needed to complete the project, I fostered equal opportunities to succeed by providing one-on-one instruction time for each learner, to help with differentiation of process and product. When I grouped the students in peer-to-peer pairings, more advanced students assisted others in the learning process and shared techniques they uncovered. The Alma Mater project began with an easily identifiable song that I asked students to arrange and make their own. At the culminating recital, it was clear the opened-ended design of the project allowed for multiple creative solutions of varying levels of achievement, and produced final compositions that were as individualized as the learners. The activity promoted appreciation of diversity among students as they witnessed the success of their peers, and showed their support and encouragement as members of a respectful audience. (I)

In viewing the video, student learning is first evident in the performance of the original rap by a pair of student composers. The composer (on the left), demonstrated understanding of rhythmic flow and repetition in the design of the rap. The pair demonstrated their collaborative skills in a “duet” of alternating discourse. Those students watching were engaged in the performance and clearly entertained. As I reviewed the requirements of the project, comments like “can we recruit (beat boxers)?” and “we got this,” indicated students had begun planning and were feeling confident about the project. When practicing the chord sequence of the verse/refrain, progress between the first and second attempt was evident as the student performance aligned with the steady pulse. After the first try, students self-assessed as being “ahead” of the beat, whereas the second attempt was nearly “on-point.” Students were able to

recall and identify the quantization feature as a setting, which might help with the potential rhythmic inaccuracies.

As the lesson progressed, I realized the students demonstrated varying levels of understanding of the quantization technique, and it would be necessary to review the process. As we began the review, by first quantizing to the quart-note and then the eighth-note, the students demonstrated uneven understanding of the technique. After I gave the directions, the first student demonstrated the technique immediately, while the second student needed a little prompting to succeed. For the third student, the process appeared to work. In the fourth student's demonstration, only quarter notes were evident. It took some digging on my part to determine if the source of the error was from data entry or data manipulation. As it turned out, we determined the student only entered quarter-notes, so quantization was not possible at the eighth-note level. As I guided the student, she was able to enter and edit correctly. All four students demonstrated different levels of understanding and skill, which prompted my differentiated instruction and individualized responses.

When viewed as a whole, the video demonstrates my certificate-specific content knowledge in musical performance, analysis, improvisation and composition. (IV) The lesson reflected teaching and learning about song form, performing instruments to a given harmonic accompaniment and a steady pulse/tempo, and utilizing specific compositional techniques to achieve a musical outcome. The lesson sequence integrated non-traditional resources with traditional teaching methods. In place of song lyrics, rap was used to be culturally responsive to the student demographics. Instead of traditional instruments, students used tablet technology to perform, accompany and compose. Finally, acquiring the technological skill of quantization, students gained the ability to edit performance errors in their musical works.