



Unit Planning Template

Unit Designer: Robert Allwarden

Title: Picture the Blues – A Multi-Disciplinary Approach to Literacy

Grade Level (s): 6-12

Discipline(s): Literacy, History, Music

School: SmART Schools Institute, August 15-19, 2011

Time Frame: 2-3 60 minute blocks; 1-2.5 hours

STAGE ONE: Identify Desired Results What do we want students to know, understand, and be able to do?	
<p>Unit Overview <i>What will be studied and why?</i></p> <p><i>How does this study ask fundamental questions about the content or discipline(s) being studied?</i></p>	<p>Students will study a prescribed topic (the instructor’s example will be the “Freedom Riders”) and explore it through picture books, related texts and media, and through the composition of an original blues song. “Intensely visual media such as text messaging, video games, television and computers are ubiquitous in students’ everyday lives. In a world where students increasingly engage with visual texts, picture books represent a valuable addition to the secondary curriculum” (Burke and Peterson) Picture books are valuable at getting at the emotional and human element of a topic before the students move to more complex texts. Students will engage in the improvisation of blues music melodically and lyrically and use this experience as a lens to analyze and respond to text. Through this process the students will tease out the paramount features of the text and represent it through their original blues composition.</p> <p>Students will use the study of blues composition and the visual media as a way to get at the core elements of text and topic and differentiate this learning in a meaningful and creative way that not only shares their learning but brings emotion and depth through the music. This process will build background knowledge in very accessible ways so that the students will be able to summarize and synthesize information from simple to more complex texts and support these outcomes through song.</p>
<p>Enduring Understandings <i>What are the big ideas that give meaning and importance to the facts studied?</i></p> <p><i>What are the big understandings that reside at the heart of the study, that you want students to uncover and attempt to understand through this study?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A song can get to the core of a complex issue. • One person can make a difference.
<p>Essential Questions <i>What are the relevant, meaningful questions that will encourage deep exploration of ideas?</i> <i>What universal, compelling question(s)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you find your voice? • How can songs help people overcome hardship? • Where can we find connections between history, literature and song? • How is my understanding of what I read connected to my voice in song?

<p><i>will focus the study and the final performance of student learning?</i></p>	
<p>Desired Outcomes for Student Learning/ Standards</p> <p><i>What do I want students to know, understand, and be able to do?</i></p> <p><i>What skills or insights do I expect them to gain?</i></p> <p><i>How do these ideas align to state and/or national standards and/or graduation requirements? (Include all standards for all disciplines being assessed that align with desired outcomes)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will tease out the paramount features of the text and represent it through their original blues composition, including lyrics and melody. • Students will use this experience as a lens to summarize, synthesize, analyze and respond to text - from simple to complex. • Students will engage in the improvisation of blues music melodically and lyrically, with emotion and depth. • Students will perform the compositions they create. <p>Rhode Island Writing GSEs: W-8-2.1 In response to literary or informational text, students show understanding of plot/ideas/concepts by selecting and summarizing key ideas to set context (Local) W-10-2.1: In response to literary or informational text, students show understanding of plot/ideas/concepts by selecting and summarizing key ideas to set context, appropriate to audience (State)</p> <p>Rhode Island Reading GSEs: R-5: Analyze and interpret elements of literary texts, citing evidence where appropriate. (grades 8, 10 and 12- state assessed GSE at grade 10) R8: Analyze and interpret informational text, citing evidence as appropriate. (grades 8, 10 and 12- state assessed GSE at grade 10) R-16: Student generates a personal response to what is read through a variety of means. (for grades 8, 10, and 12)</p> <p>Common Core Standards – Reading: Key Ideas and Details Grade 8: 2. Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text. Grades 9-12:2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.</p> <p>Common Core Standards – Writing: Production and Distribution of Writing Grade 8:5. With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed. Grades 9-12:5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.</p> <p>Rhode Island Music GSEs: Music Enduring Understanding 1 Artistic Processes – The human experience can be created and recreated through sound.</p> <p>M1 (7-8)-1 Students show evidence of music literacy (reading, writing, and understanding of the symbols of sound) by...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. reading, writing, and performing rhythmic patterns using standard notation, including: augmentation and diminution b. reading, writing, and performing patterns in a variety of meters, including: 3/8, 2/2, changing meters c. reading, writing, and performing patterns of pitch (pentatonic and diatonic major, minor, and modes) and known songs using solfege (e.g., <i>Deep in the Heart of Texas, Yonder Come</i>

Day) and absolute pitch letter names (e.g., recorder, barred instruments, guitar)

M1(7-8)–2 Students show evidence of improvising, composing, and arranging by...

- a. improvising simple harmonic accompaniments
- b. composing original melodies with expanded parameters (e.g., full major/minor scale, expanded rhythms)
- c. arranging existing music by for another ensemble (e.g., SSA choral music written for Woodwind trio) or by changing style, tempo, or instrumentation (E.g., changing elements of music using software)

M1 (9-12) –1 Students show evidence of music literacy (reading, writing, and understanding of the symbols of sound) by...

- a. reading an instrumental or vocal score of up to four staves
- b. transcribing simple songs when presented aurally into melodic and rhythmic notation
- c. accurately and expressively sight- reading music with minimal rhythmic, pitch, and dynamic errors at a grade span below full ensemble/class performance level (e.g., music that might be performed by middle school band/ensemble)

M1 (9-12) – 2 Students show evidence of improvising, composing, and arranging by...

- a. improvising rhythmic and melodic variations on given pentatonic melodies in major or minor keys, or improvise stylistically appropriate harmonizing parts (e.g., guitar or keyboard accompaniments)
- b. composing original melodies using accepted compositional devices (e.g. melodic variation, diminution, augmentation) or creating accompaniment for original or existing melodies (e.g., harmonizing using diatonic chords, use o
- c. arranging music by manipulating musical elements (e.g., manually or using music software)

Music Enduring Understanding 2 Cultural Contexts – Music connects and expresses history and culture around the globe.

M2 (7-8)-1 Students show evidence of cultural and historical understanding of (familiar and unfamiliar) music by...

- a. listening to and describing the distinguishing characteristics of representative musical genres and styles from two or more cultures
- b. explaining how music has historically reflected social functions and changing ideas and values

M2 (7-8)-2 Students show evidence of connecting music to the arts and other disciplines by .

- a. identifying similarities and differences in the meanings of common terms used in various arts and other subject areas

M2 (9-12) –1 Students show evidence of cultural and historical understanding of (familiar and unfamiliar) music by...

- a. classifying, by genre or style and historical period or culture, unfamiliar but representative aural examples of music and explain the reasoning for the classification
- b. identifying the sources of various musical genres, tracing the evolution of those genres, and citing well-known musicians associated with them

M2 (9-12)-2 Students show evidence of connecting music to the arts and other disciplines by . . .

- a. explaining how elements, artistic processes, and organizational principles are used in similar and distinctive ways in the various arts
- b. creating a music score using technology that appropriately enhances or contrasts works of selected visual art (e.g., MasterTrax, Finale,iMovie, PowerPoint)

STAGE TWO: Determine Acceptable Evidence

How will we know if students have achieved the desired outcomes and met the standards?

What will we accept as evidence of student understanding and proficiency?

Assessment

How will I know if students have achieved the desired outcomes and met the standards?

What will I accept as evidence of student understanding and proficiency? How will I communicate this to students?

How will I evaluate student evidence of learning the desired outcomes?

How will I offer students the opportunity to expand on and apply what they've learned?

How will students have an opportunity for self-evaluation and/or revision?

The students main focus will be to create a set of blues lyrics that will reflect the core of the subject studied. In conjunction with the lyrics the students will compose a blues melody. The final project will be a performance of the original lyrics with melody.

Evidence of learning will also include drafts of the lyrics and drafts of the melody to see the process of revision. (some of this will come in the form of in class improvisation) Reflection will be built into the unit to bring to light the Why and How their composition connects to the text. This reflection may be oral, written or embedded in the song. Through the work of composition the students will also show an understanding of the basic structure of a blues song.

STAGE THREE: Plan Learning Experiences and Instruction

What teaching and learning experiences will equip students to demonstrate the targeted understandings?

<p>Develop the Instructional Plan</p> <p><i>What is the scope and sequence of activities that lead to student success on the assessment(s) and academic rigor?</i></p> <p><i>Do activities require that students ask deep questions about their learning?</i></p> <p><i>Are there opportunities for students to develop language and conceptual understandings related to content?</i></p> <p><i>Are there opportunities for meaning-making and personal reflection on the part of students?</i></p> <p><i>Are students encouraged to revise and produce quality work?</i></p> <p><i>Do the activities provide multiple entry-points and accommodate for different learning styles?</i></p> <p><i>Is the teacher spending her time coaching, conferencing, leading, participating, and sharing responsibility for learning with the students?</i></p>	<p><i>This lesson is based on the gradual release model. With the teachers example being taught to the class as a whole, before gradually releasing the independence over to the students.</i></p> <p>A) Intro</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boomwhacker Blues- Introduce participants to the Blues • Participants pick a boomwhacker and move through space, hitting floor, body, other boomwhackers. • Chart is pointed out with blues progression, participants continue, following the progression with boomwhacker and appropriate color to scale degree • Instructor adds keyboard and voice as participants play through the progression. <p>Blues-Personal connections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do we know? (this will be done in an arc continuum from little to strong- left to right) • What are your personal connections to the blues? • What experience have you had listening too or playing the blues? <p>Blues Roots and Beginnings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A brief look at the roots of the blues • Modern influences • Resources, guides and links (hand out provided) <p>B) Playing the Blues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruments are set up in a pentatonic scale. A five note scale that gives us the “blue” notes we need. The quick and easy way to find a pentatonic scale is to play the black keys on a keyboard. To get the blue notes from this particular pentatonic scale start on the second note of the set of two. You will see that the keyboard has a pattern of two black keys, then three black keys. Start with the second black key and you have the E flat, starting here you have a basic E flat blues scale. • Our scale is set up as C pentatonic. CDE GA. In this scale our root is the last note, A. Thus with the C pentatonic we have a basic A blues scale. This is an easy scale to set up with xylophones and works well with boomwhackers and is easy to play on a keyboard. • Besides the scale for melodic work we need the basic 12 bar blues progression. • This is what we used in the intro with the boomwhackers. • The progression is the order of chords the guitar or keyboard is playing. • This is the basic 12 bar blues we will be following. I / IV / I / I / IV / IV / I / I / V / IV / I / I / <p>In our song the I is the A7, the IV is a D7 and the V is an E7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning the Melody (The Head) • Notice the first two lines of the melody are the same. The last line is a slight variation of the first two. Once the melody is learned on the instruments, add the words. • The lyrics have the same form as the melody-AAB (first two lines the same, third different and typically rhymes with the first two.) The lyrics of this blues song are based on the Freedom Riders which will be discussed in letter D, below. • This form of AAB is once again a very common form of melodic and lyric construction for the
--	--

12 bar blues. This is the form students will be using for their original composition.

C) Improvising to facilitate composition

- Now we will mix the melody up using the same notes in any order you like
- Repeat notes, use space, speed is not important
- Have fun with the improvisations and explore
- Experimenting with improvisation will make the composition process more accessible.

D) Examining Text and Topic. Materials used to compose the blues song used as the class exemplar

Freedom Riders Resources for students to examine (from simple to more complex)

Picture Book: Freedom Riders: John Lewis and Jim Zwerg on the Front lines of the Civil Rights Movement

Song: "He was my Brother" Simon and Garfunkle (Based on the Freedom Riders)

USA today Article from 5/6/11: Freedom Riders Mark 50 Years"

The Washington Post, Article from 1961: "Jailed Freedom Riders Refuse Food in Jackson"

Website: www.pbs.org/wgby/americanexperience/freedomriders

This web site has the full pbs documentary on the freedom riders as well as articles and links to other sites and teacher guides. Included in this is the 2011 Student Freedom Riders- "50 years later, 40 Students Get on a Bus."

Class discussion of Freedom Riders and how Instructor came up with lyrics for song from the resources mentioned.

E) Writing the Blues- Extracting the Meat of the Text and Putting it into Lyrics

- Class is split up into smaller groups. Using the resources provided, they discuss key elements of the text.
- Start with the picture book in order to get the big picture and build background knowledge in an accessible format.
- Move into the more complex texts and discuss key points and issues.
- Move into summary and synthesis and develop lyrics based on class model.
- The class model was AAB. The B line usually rhymes with the first two lines, but does not have to.
- Students are also working on the melody to go with the lyrics by exploring the instruments provided.
- What comes first? The words or the tune? This is something many composers struggle with. Explore this within your group to see what may work.
- Groups focus on the Why and How their composition connects to text. (This will be looked at further in the alignment and reflection stage of the plan)
- Share with entire class at the end if the comfort level is there.
- Pieces can be recorded by small groups if they do not want to perform for the class.

Identify Materials and Resources

What materials and resources—including student handouts, books, periodicals, media, software, URLs—are required to implement this unit?

Are the materials and resources sufficient for exploring the topic and directly related to the essential question?

Handouts

Instruments:

- Boomwhackers
- Xylophones

Resources: The resources needed for the teachers example are listed in letter D above.

Smaller break out groups will have other resources:

Group 1

- Bang, Molly. Nobody Particular: One Woman’s Fight to Save the Bays. New York: Holt, 2000.
- (Formatted in a comic-book style, this book chronicles Diane Wilson’s Successful campaign to force Formosa Plastics Corporation to curb its discharge of chemicals into the Gulf of Mexico, where she is a commercial shrimper)
- USA today 8/7/11- “Gulf Oil Spill Victims Weary of Wait for Payouts”
- <http://www.edf.org>
- <http://www.cnn.com/2010/US/05/03/timeline.gulf.spill/index.html>

Group 2

- Gerstein, Mordicai. The Man Who Walked Between the Towers. Brookfield: Roaring Brook, 2003. (As the World Trade Center was being completed, Philippe Petit, a young Aerialist, walked on a tightrope between the two towers. Part of the memory of the twin towers is this daring high wire walk)
- “Man on a Wire,” Documentary film about the same subject.
- Guardian article July 2011- “9/11 Widows Shun Spotlight as 10th Anniversary of Attacks Approaches”
- www.911day.org

Group 3

- Hathorn, Libby. Way Home. New York: Crown, 1994.
- The lines, colors, shapes and textures of Gregory Roger’s illustrations show the dark, uncertain environment of a boy who lives on the street.
- Scott Pelley's "60 Minutes" report “Hard times generation: homeless kids” (youtube) Los Angeles Times, January 8th 2011- “In tough times, schools try to keep homeless students’ education on track”

STAGE FOUR: ALIGNMENT and REFLECTION

Do the various pieces of my Unit Plan align with and support each other?

Upon completion of my unit: How did it go? What might I do differently next time to improve the unit and my practice?

Implementation Alignment and Reflection

How do the instructional activities support the achievement of the desired outcomes?

How do the assessment methods demonstrate achievement of the desired outcomes?

AFTER THE UNIT IS COMPLETE:

What worked?

What didn't work?

What would another teacher need to know in order to enact this curriculum?

Alignment

- Looking back at our essential questions did our activity give us insight into some possible answers?
- Does this activity work for non-musicians?
- Did this activity help to tease out the core components of our texts/topics on hand?
- Did it help to bring emotion forward that might be missing from a non-integrated unit?

Reflection

- In what ways have you already integrated the artistic discipline presented in this workshop in your own classroom? What ideas do you have to offer others?
- How can you adapt the arts practice you experienced in this workshop to your own classroom setting? What would you add or change?
- What are the natural connections between this artistic discipline and the subject-area you teach in your classroom?