Digital Songwriting
Deeper Learning Postcard

Georgie D. Tyler Middle School, Windsor VA, 23487
(757) 242-3229
Contact: ahazel@iwcs.k12.va.us

Highlights

Vetted Project: Expose students to songwriting possibilities using music theory.
1. Launch: Dr. Tfirn, a composition professor at CNU came in to talk about electronic composition and how you can create music using sound clips. He demonstrated the process for us as well as showing us some of his work.
2. African Drums: Discussed the different types of African drums, what they were used for, how traditionally, each drum plays a different repeating part and it builds up. This included actually playing the drums using repeated phrases.
3. Ostinatos: (a repeated musical phrase or rhythm) We discussed what an ostinato is and how layering them is a way to compose music. Using clapping and drums, students experimented with this technique as a whole class.
4. Form: Students were expected to end up with a song with A-B-A form, although they were not limited to it. We discussed what that means: a. A is the first section, setting the vibe for the song; b. B is a different section, although it may contain aspects of the A section; and c. The second A section is a variation of the first section. They used a function on the iPads when creating their songs called FX to change the original A section. They could also add another ostinato to change it up.
5. GarageBand: We used an app on the iPad to create our songs. Each "icon" is it's own loop, or ostinato, that they could arrange however they wanted. Each column can play its whole section, so many students chose to make column 1 their A section and column 2 their B section, with other columns serving to hold other ostinatos that they may have sprinkled into their songs throughout. There were parameters set for the minimum requirements of length, how many loops required, FX required, and A-B-A form required.
6. When the songs were completed, students sent their songs to me (which proved to be an adventure) along with a picture to be their "cover photo." They were arranged in iMovie, made into YouTube videos, and then a QR code was made to link to the video. Students picked backgrounds for their icons, wrote descriptions of their songs, created a title for their song, and the QR code was ModPodged onto their icons.

Sustainability: Kids were able to creatively make their own songs and realize they were able to do so. They realized their creative abilities. We were able to link history and music theory to popular song writing. The songs live on via YouTube.

Driving Question: How can we combine individual sounds to create music?

Student Reflection: Students enjoyed being able to work on their own and having a lot of choices within the program. Students were split between wanting more time and feeling like they had too much time. Students did not enjoy providing peer feedback. Students enjoyed the support they received from their teacher and experimenting with instruments.

Teacher Reflection: I was pleasantly surprised by the products that I received from the students as well as their eventual enthusiasm.

Digital Songwriting
Deeper Learning Postcard

On a scale of 1 to 5, this project is a 5 (I would definitely recommend it).

Lessons Learned: With this specific project, I would make sure I knew ahead of time how to get students to send me their final products. I would also like to make the processes leading up to the song writing more involved in the product. I would like to find a better way to launch the project that would be more engaging for students.

W A N T S

I. Category
Other included: Peer revising.

Performing
Musical Performance / Recital
Demonstrating
Exhibit / Contest
Producing / Revising
Execute Multiple Drafts
Presenting
Utilize Visuals

II. Media Produced
Other included:
Computer-based: QR Codes Electronic Music
Artistic Composition: Music created with an app
Technical Writing: Song description

Internet Media
Website
Digital Content
Audio Content

III. Challenging Problems
Questions
Self Reflection & Evaluation
Topics: Humans in the World
Civilizations & Cultures
Modern Living
Work & Careers

IV. Achieved Literacy Skills
Information / Technology
Master Uses of Technology
Media
Utilize Media Creation Tools
Project / Work
Address Setbacks / Criticism
Take Initiative for Personal Success

Digital Songwriting
Deeper Learning Postcard

N E E D S

I. Parameters & Feasibility
Project Timeframe
5-6 Weeks
Assessment Timeframe
More than a Class Period
# of Project Members
Individual
Grade Level
Middle School (Grades 6-8)
Authentic Audience / Evaluators
Peers
Parents
Teachers & Administrators
Community Members
Industry Representatives
Special Test Accommodations
Presentation of Materials / Directions
Student Response
Timing / Scheduling

II. Intended Learning Outcomes
Creativity
Brainstorm
Design / Create
Elaborate / Expand
Improve / Refine
Communication
Engage Creatively
Terms, Concepts or Calculations
Collaboration
Develop Trust
Encourage Others
Incorporate Feedback
Critical Thinking
Assemble Parts of a Whole
Overcome Obstacles
Instilled Citizenship Values
Habits of Mind & Heart
Personal Responsibility
Strong Personal / Work Ethic

III. Success Skills & Depth of Knowledge
Cognitive Demand
Identifying / Remembering
Comprehending / Understanding
Applying
Analyzing
Evaluating
Creating
Social & Emotional Skills
Self-awareness
Self-management
Learning Styles / Intelligences

Intrapersonal / Introspective
Musical / Rhythmic
Assessment Structures / Resources
Checklists
Interviews / Conferences
Rubrics

IV. CTEs & Disciplines
Career & Technical
Arts & Entertainment
Authorship & Composition
Information Technology
Arts
Music Studies