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District: Los Angeles Unified School District
School: Nora Sterry Elementary School
Subject: General Music
Grade Level: Kindergarten
Date of Lesson taught: 12/1/14
Lesson Plan No: 2

National Standards for Music Education

1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
3. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.
6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

California Visual and Performing Arts Content Standards

- 1.0 ARTISTIC PERCEPTION - Processing, Analyzing, and Responding to Sensory Information through the Language and Skills Unique to Music
- 2.0 CREATIVE EXPRESSION - Creating, Performing, and Participating in Music
- 3.0 HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT - Understanding the Historical Contributions and Cultural Dimensions of Music

Objectives:

1. to understand the concept of improvisation and how it can be performed within the different elements of music (melody, rhythm, dynamics)
2. to improvise an 8-beat rhythmic pattern within a song by using body percussion
3. to explore different styles of improvisation throughout different cultures (jazz, classical, raga)

Equipment and Supplies:

1. piano
2. tracks of improvisation from different cultures
 - a. Wynton Marsalis-improvised trumpet solos
 - b. Valentina Lisitsa-Rachmaninoff Concerto No. 1 cadenza
 - c. Raga Shivranjani on Bansuri
 - d. Esperanza Spalding-Chacarera

Procedures:

1. Begin with "good afternoon" song. Make sure children sing with proper tone and stance.
2. Pick several students to select a number 1 to 6. Mention that each number correlates with a note in the scale.
3. Have students stay where they are and head to piano to do short improvisation off the created melody.

4. Introduce improvisation definition and short improvisation song (“improvisation is thinking on the fly, improvisation, and now why don’t you try?”)
5. Pick few students to use “forte” and “piano” cards to sing the song in dynamic improvisation.
6. Move on to body rhythm improvisation. Sing improvisation song while clapping and then have one student improvise body rhythm beat for 8 counts. Demonstrate first before having them try.
7. Show different styles of improvisation from different cultures.

Evaluation:

1. The children did not participate very much in the warm-up activity; it would have been a better idea to create a more engaging warm-up that involved more activity.
2. Students did not really understand the reasoning for picking numbers, mainly because I did not take the time to explain it beforehand. I should be sure to specify the ways the numbers connect to pitches, the students had a better musical understanding of what they were doing.
3. The classroom did not participate very actively in the rhythmic improvisation activity, and I believe it is because I lacked a strong rhythmic structure for them to work around and also did not provide them with examples of body percussion.
4. The students enjoyed and interacted within the dynamic change activity more, and they seemed to really like being the person controlling the rest of the class with the cards. They began bunching up because I forgot to sit them back down, so I should remember only to have the cardholder standing.
5. Students did not respond very well to the jazz listening, and did not understand what they were supposed to be listening for. I should have provided a sort of activity that helped them listen closely to the improvisational elements of the piece.
6. The class seemed quite confused with the last activity, and it ended up turning into another volume-changing activity rather than a tempo-changing one. I should have been more clear with instructions and provided a visual that was clear about singing slowly or quickly. I also realized afterward that this was not exactly an activity that would work very well with a group.

Extension:

1. Within a jazz standard, have students try to pick out exactly when an instrument is having a improvised solo. Create a soundtrack within which students can also perform an improvised solo.
2. Utilize an activity that uses call-and-response to give children a chance to sign an improvised ending to a melodic line.