

Introduction

The formal curriculum, designed by the school district or state department of education, establishes the major goals, competencies, and outcomes mandated by the governing body (state school board, legislature, or other ruling entity). Teachers develop the elements of the formal curriculum, create a more focused curriculum for their own classrooms, and identify the personal method or methods to achieve the goals through daily lesson plans. Lesson plans are the teacher's realization of the objectives and methods employed to reach the long-term goals of the formal curriculum. Because of this, the lesson plan maps out immediate learning experiences that align with both the short-term objectives and long-term goals. When the elementary teacher plans to include music activities in a lesson, they must include awareness of and reinforcement of previous music learning.

Learning activities should move from simple to complex, from sound to symbol, and from the known to the unknown. Every lesson should begin with an activity that "grabs" the students' attention and motivates them to participate in the class activities. Then throughout the lesson, a variety of activities should be included to keep students' interest and hold their attention.

There are many formats or outlines for lesson plan construction. The common elements, in order, for lesson plans are as follows:

- Goals and observable behavioral objectives
- Materials
- Procedures
- Closure
- Assessment

Goals

Goals are broad, general, and concise statements indicating long-term outcomes. Long-term goals articulate the selection of learning activities and subject matter. Usually, goals for music instruction are addressed by district, state and/or national standards and can apply to all grades. Long-term goals

are generally few in number and reflect the teaching model for the curriculum and program. Short-term goals are more specific statements of what the students will learn and specify a desired development or growth over a given period of time. These should be measurable. Short-term goals can be thought of as small steps taken toward the long-term goals. See the following example.

Long-term goal

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of rhythmic patterns

Short-term goal

- Students will identify different rhythmic patterns by selecting the appropriate symbol/label
- Students will clap and say different rhythmic patterns of quarter notes and eighth notes
- Students will read and perform rhythmic patterns with 90% accuracy

Once the short-term goals have been determined, the lesson plan begins with a statement of behavioral objectives for the specific day's class. The teacher establishes and states the objectives in two ways. First, a determination of the musical concept to emphasize; second, the behavior by which the teacher expects the child to demonstrate an understanding of the concept. To review, objectives must be stated clearly in terms of observable behavior. They should be worded so that the teacher can observe the students demonstrating what they have learned.

For example, *"Students will demonstrate an understanding of rondo form by selecting and using geometric shapes to outline the design of the composition "Rondo Alla Turca" by W. A. Mozart" or "Students will demonstrate their understanding of quarter note rests by clapping their hands on the rests in the song 'Good News.'"*

Can you write a long-term goal that fulfills each of these behavioral objectives?

In order to write an effective behavioral objective, it should contain a verb (an action or behavior that will take place) and an object that describes the knowledge or skill students are expected to acquire or construct. It is helpful to have a table from Bloom's Taxonomy nearby as a reminder of the various cognitive processes available to teachers. The original taxonomy was revised in 2001 (A Taxonomy for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment) that introduced more action-oriented words to describe the cognitive process itself. The objectives, or learning goals, help to plan and deliver instruction as well as present a design for a valid assessment. The result is that instruction and assessment are aligned with the objectives.

These charts are a concise representation of Bloom's Taxonomy of Action Verbs and the Bloom's Revised Action Verbs.



[Bloom's Taxonomy](#)



[Bloom's Taxonomy Action Verbs](#)



[Bloom's Taxonomy Revised](#)



[Bloom's Taxonomy Inside Out: From LSU Center for Academic Success](#)



[Bloom's Taxonomy in the Classroom](#)

Materials

Items necessary to teach the lesson should be gathered in the classroom before the students meet. Careful preplanning, including the collecting and checking of physical materials, will avoid needless delay and confusion during the class.

The list of materials for each lesson plan is usually formulated as the last step in lesson planning after all the procedures and activities have been planned. This list is usually placed near the top of a written plan, after the objectives and before the procedures. This enables the teacher to determine easily what materials will be needed for the lesson.

A typical list of materials might look like the following:

- Copy of the song "The Farmer in the Dell" – on either whiteboard, overhead projector, large poster, or flip board
- Recording of "The Farmer in the Dell" accompaniment on CD "Music for Second Grade," track 4
- Rhythm instruments (maracas, triangle, rhythm sticks, wood block)

Procedures

Selection of materials and procedures should be made with reference to age- and grade-appropriate activities, organization of these materials and activities into a logical sequence, and varied methods of presentation. The following points should be considered when selecting materials and instructional procedures for the lesson plan:

- The class' physical and emotional readiness
- How to apply the principles of conceptual learning
- Methods to present the musical experiences that will be meaningful and purposeful to the class

The lesson plan procedures are the specific activities and approaches implemented by the teacher to teach the concept, skill, or material.

Procedures for the lesson may be organized in many ways; however, these should proceed in a logical sequence. A common method is to organize learning activities into four stages:

- Review: These activities would be a re-examination of previous material and perhaps include favorite songs or listening selections previously used for classroom instruction.
- New material: The teacher would move from review to new material that should grow logically out of the review. If children cannot master the review material, the teacher must monitor, adjust, and change the plan to revisit material not yet mastered.
- Assessment: Evaluative devices should be incorporated to provide the teacher with means of measuring students' achievement.
- Summary or Closure: The plan should include time at the end of the lesson for students to review the lesson material. Another summary activity would be to review well-known or familiar activities again.

A three-stage plan for the organization of instructional procedures might be organized in this manner:

- Opening statement or demonstration. This is an invitation to learning that should challenge or stimulate the students. It can be a question, the presentation of an object or picture, or a review of a preceding lesson that leads to the lesson for the day. Often it is merely a song sung by the teacher or a recording played for student listening.
- Activities that teach the concepts. This section is the development of skills. In formulating these activities, the principle of sound-before-symbol should be employed.
- Closing statement or activity. Often this activity can serve as an evaluation of the success of the activities in meeting the lesson objectives.

Note how these instruction procedures are presented in this lesson plan.



Closure and Assessment

As closure, the teacher should review the main points of the lesson or plan an activity that brings the learning activities together. In other words, the close of the lesson should "wrap up" what has taken place during the lesson. For example, it might consist of a summary of the main ideas, or questions to the students about specific points in the lesson. It also might be singing through a new song that was learned in its entirety. Closure statements may also include plans for future activities that relate to the lesson. The goal of the final activity is to leave students with positive thoughts about the learning experience.

Assessment and evaluation occur in a wide variety of contexts and settings. Assessment is used to measure progress toward goals and to guide future learning. It may also serve to stimulate effort and produce information helpful in guidance and curriculum revision. In general, assessment can be divided into two categories — informal and formal. Informal evaluation is a natural part of daily instruction; formal evaluation infers testing to measure achievement or aptitude.

Assessment by observation is the most common structure of informal assessment and evaluation. When a student performs in class or answers a question, the teacher's response involves evaluation techniques. These evaluations can be recorded for individual students or for general observations of the entire class. In addition to a verbal response, informal observation includes the results of improvised and other creative endeavors, chalkboard activities, results of cooperative learning activities, and responses to written assignments. When the entire class is observed, its progress could be placed on a simple dated form that shows the objective and describes the teacher's reaction to the students' skills and understanding. The progress of the class could also be noted on the lesson plan, providing evidence for possible adjustments to the plan.

An informal assessment can be effective if combined with a short checklist as in this following example:

Students recited the words to the song with confidence.

YesNo

Students passed the bean bag on the pulse with accuracy.

YesNo

Or, if a more specific assessment of student success would help to determine student growth and development, the statement can be evaluated with a Likert rating scale as in the following example:

Needs Improvement Best

Students were able to sing the song "Drummer Hof" on pitch.

1 2 3 4 5

A rubric would also help to make the assessment more objective since it articulates the teacher's expectations by listing the criteria, or what counts, and describes levels of quality from excellent to poor. Rubrics help the teacher to make dependable judgments and can also be used to help teach by guiding students to develop understanding and skill about the quality of their own work. As part of a formative, student-centered classroom, rubrics can be useful benchmarks for ongoing feedback. Consider the following rubric as a model for the performance of a song.

SINGING IN TUNE	YES	SOMETIMES	NO
	Singer holds the pitch the entire song and does not stray from the pitch in any part of the song	Singer holds the pitch for the majority of the song, but has a few moments where the pitch is questionable	Singer does not hold the pitch for the majority of the song, and the pitch is questionable throughout
LYRIC MEMORIZATION	ALL	SOME	NONE
	Singer remembers all the words and never visually or verbally struggles to say or remember a word	Singer remembers most of the words, but once or twice struggles to remember or say a word in time with the music	Singer can not remember the lyrics to the song, and for most of the performance struggles to sing the correct words
TONE	VERY PLEASING	AVERAGE	UNPLEASANT
	Singer has a tone that is easy to listen to or unique in quality, and may sound similar to someone on the radio or other impressive performance	Singer has a tone that is easy to listen to, but it doesn't stand out as being extra special or unique	Singer has an unusual tone that may be difficult to listen to for a long period of time

Song Performance Rubric

 [Enlarge](#)

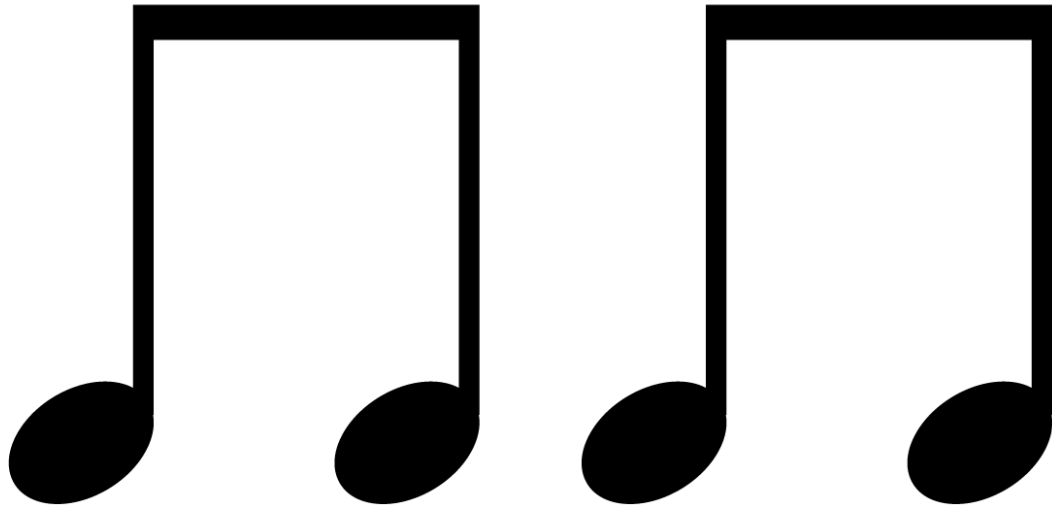
Formal assessment — written quizzes and tests — has a place in assessing and evaluating student achievement and should be used to balance assessment by observation, especially when letter grades are assigned in the subject.

Regardless of whether the assessment is informal or formal, the teacher should refer to the behavioral objectives when evaluating individual student progress, the progress of the entire class, or the overall success of the lesson. For example, if the behavioral objective is "the student will identify different patterns by selecting the appropriate symbol/label" then the assessment should determine whether the student was able to select the appropriate symbol or label or the degree to which the student could accomplish the task.

Cooperative Learning Activities

Music experiences easily lend themselves to cooperative learning activities. As students work together, they can provide new insights into the concepts, correct misinformation and understanding, and reinforce the other students' responses. Some of the following cooperative learning activities are appropriate for older students in grades three through grade six, who have experienced a solid foundation in music concepts.

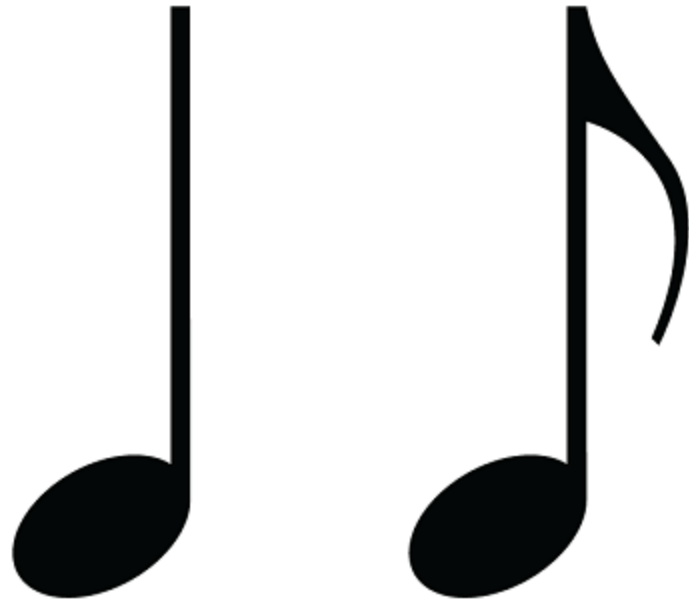
- Students work in groups to decide and mark where the accent groupings occur in a well-known chant/rhyme/song then perform together as a group for class with body percussion
- Student groups are given a 4-6 measure rhythmic line with different rhythmic combinations. Each group is assigned a "topic" i.e. flowers, trees, animals, etc. appropriate to grade level and are asked to find different types of their assigned topic for each rhythmic combination



Gla - di - o - la

Gla-di-o-la

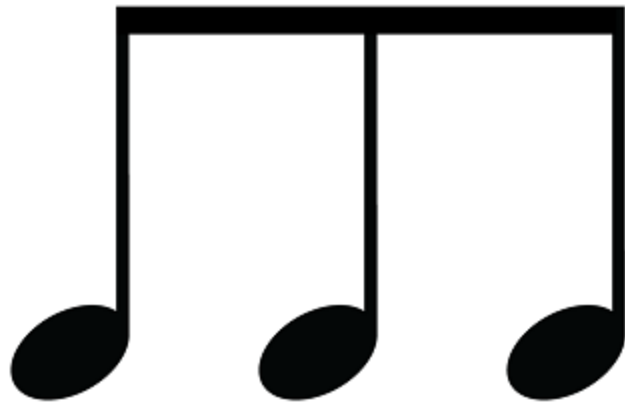
 Enlarge



Dai - sy

Dai-sy

[↗ Enlarge](#)



Mar - i - gold

Mar-i-gold

[↗ Enlarge](#)



Hol - ly Hock

Hol-ly-hock

[↗ Enlarge](#)

Technology is an important informal and formal assessment tool in music instruction, especially because of the high student-to-teacher ratios in the elementary music classroom. Audio and/or video recordings of classroom activities can be used to review work in the class, or even to review teacher presentation. A distinct advantage of a recording is that it can be reviewed outside of class time. Uninterrupted and unlimited time for review aids the teacher in identifying strengths and weaknesses of individual students, of lessons, or of teacher preparation.



Technology can assist in all types of assessment

[Enlarge](#)

A strong curriculum is the responsibility of the music educator. Teachers must understand how to identify age- and grade-appropriate goals, write sound behavioral objectives, select high-quality materials and resources, and write lessons based on effectively sequenced activities. This class outlined the development and design of curriculum for creating effective, integrated music lessons for active learners.