Secondary Curricular Framework

For Rhythm Section-Based Ensembles and Classrooms

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PlayTheGroove Curricular Framework

The purpose of this research and report is to educationally ground the PlayTheGroove initiative in the National Core Arts Standards of 2014. These standards are enacted on a voluntary basis with some teachers following them, or those of their state/district, and still others do not teach to standards specifically. Teacher reactions spring from many grounds: a personal inclination to grow and learn; the administration’s expectation that the standards be addressed; a need to legitimize music education efforts, particularly with new, experimental types of ensembles and music; a desire to respond to modern educational thought or a changing student demographic; and a sense that the standards can or cannot catalyze 21st-century leadership and understanding.

The wide range of educators’ reactions to the standards underline the simple truth that not everything is for everyone. There are excellent jazz educators who consistently produce award-winning ensembles and develop well-rounded, highly successful musicians and global citizens — educators who see the new standards as “same as the old but with new wrapping.” For those teachers who find fresh value in the standard’s guidance, are needing to understand how they function and support learning and creating music, this report shows the ways in which PlayTheGroove aligns.

According to the National Association of Music Education (NAfME), there are three main improvements in the 2014 music standards which currently apply to PlayTheGroove:

1. Clearer focus on conceptual understanding to develop student independence and musical literacy instead of a primary emphasis on knowledge and skills.
2. Develop students’ ability to experience the three artistic processes: creating, performing, and responding. These are articulated in specific process components (i.e., steps) with related enduring understandings and essential questions.
3. Greater specificity for grade-by-grade objectives — or, as I see them, clear steps from novice to advance for classes commonly found in schools: Ensembles, Guitar/Harmonizing Instruments, Music Composition/Theory, and Music Technology.

It’s important to note that this report is not an all-inclusive curricular framework for every secondary jazz ensemble situation and grade level. While PlayTheGroove can work in many situations not defined or explored below, the purpose of this framework is to work within specific margins and limited ranges to clarify the fundamental approach, content, resources, and methodologies, and to then provide a clear example of these in action. Future iterations of this curriculum will expand upon this framework.

This approach addresses many aspects of our targeted audience and their content/skill focus, providing a “transformational hypothesis” for each within a continuum framework. This continuum represents the direction of the participant’s transformation as a result of implementing the curriculum at each step. This continuum can show movement from left to right or right to left, based on labeling. Please note: more often than not, we try to maintain traditional approaches to the left with modern/informal approaches to the right.
Our Audiences:
Who we seek to influence through curriculum and content.

This curricular framework must address two distinct groups of learners: teachers and their students. Each group has its own set of experiences, needs, expectations, and disposition towards music and learning.

Within this framework, and keeping the two groups in mind, we seek to apply a cohesive learning experience consisting of learner-oriented actions, a focus on expected outcomes, and a holistic approach.

Learner-Oriented Thinking. We promote learner-oriented thinking by focusing on the learner’s needs, problems, expectations, and performance through developed processes that solve performance issues and support critical thinking skills. The goal is to have learners become active situational problem solvers. This requires us to see issues through their eyes of the learner so that the approach is practical and applicable. There are four steps to this: (1) study the problem, (2) collaborate with others, (3) do an activity, and (4) solicit feedback on the process.

Focus on Expected Outcomes. The objective here is to help learners achieve performance objectives. This causes us to concentrate on the right amount of content as too much can be counterproductive. Through “action mapping,” we pursue a focus on performance, not information, and what students need to do, not what they need to know. To achieve this action focus, we seek to create a flexible, personalized learning experience that employs a variety of pedagogies and methods that encourages learners to voluntarily change their learning behavior -- the end goal of any curriculum.

Holistic Approach. Assessing both a learner’s needs and prior background knowledge is important to help that learner achieve performance objectives. Doing so means a holistic approach that includes scaffolding considerations, formative assessments, and summative assessments. These guide the learner through the process and provide ongoing feedback to identify areas needing further attention.

Our learner-oriented planning seeks to initiate problem-solving and understanding through
authentic tasks. Authentic tasks are those that have applicable settings, experiences, and assessments grounded in real-life situations. Accessibility is key.

**Specific Margins and Limitations, Curricular Intentions**

Teachers. Secondary (grades 7 through 12) music education teachers in classroom situations who teach jazz or have some sort of a horn/live/pep band basically consisting of horns (trumpet, sax, trombone, woodwinds) and a rhythm section (drums, bass, piano/keys, and guitar).

The teacher’s experience level can vary greatly — from being super-experienced in jazz and running a well-developed program to a beginning jazz educator with little to no experience teaching traditional jazz styles, let alone modern genres.

Students. Optimally, musicians who have been playing for at least 6 months and know scales such as B-flat, E-flat, F, and C, with an approximate range of concert B-flat (below middle C) to G. The rhythm section can hold a beat/groove and has played some compositions in a few different styles and situations.

The student player group can consist of as few as four players to 25 or 30 as long as there is some sense of balance between melody, harmony, and rhythm. The doubling of parts is welcome and encouraged.

Instruments. Broadly speaking these include:

- **Melody Instruments:** trumpet, trombone, sax and other woodwinds, strings and additional guitarists, keys, marimba, bell players.
- **Rhythm Instruments:** Drums*, bass*, guitar* and/or keyboards (piano)*, vibes, ukulele, and any and all percussion.
  *Required for this iteration of the curriculum.

Reading music is helpful, but not required, as long as there is decent instrument proficiency. Movement is also encouraged as shown by the two possibilities below.

1. Players currently residing toward the left of the continuum in Figure 2 can be encouraged to play by ear more (moving to the right).
2. A play-by-ear individual can be encouraged to learn to read music, moving from a right to left position.

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**Strictly Notation Based**

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**All Aural**

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[Text continued below the diagram]
Situational Considerations

High School jazz music groups are extremely diverse in terms of student experience and instrumentation. Likewise, teachers also come in all levels of experience and interest in each subject area they teach. Our framework seeks to address deficits and assets of both experienced and less experienced teachers and students.

Less-experienced jazz teachers will most likely be the majority of teachers using this curriculum since typical musical training has been, and continues to be, grounded in classical training and instruments. Experienced jazz teachers are rarer. They often aim to build and maintain jazz big bands to play a traditional repertoire with a traditional configuration four trumpets, four trombones, five saxes, and a rhythm section. When more than one student plays the same instrument, some teachers accommodate the redundancy, but others don’t, resulting in some players sitting out songs during rehearsals and performances.

PlayTheGroove helps resolve this conundrum by working with a wide variety of instrumentations, encouraging inclusivity, and offering a wide range of creative music-making skills usually absent from traditional approaches.

Accommodating either teacher level, PTG emphasizes informal music-making approaches, relying on recordings for demonstration, encouraging student-led ensembles, and bringing the teacher along in the learning process. This heightens the teacher’s role as a “guide on the side” instead of a “sage on the stage.”

PlayTheGroove’s flexibility allows teachers to address a variety of situations from a variety of directions. Teacher’s choose approaches that meet the needs of their overall curricular framework through a journey that begins with the following question.

“Where am I current on the following continuums, and where do I want to go?”

Experience Teaching Jazz

By applying this framework serves teachers who feel the need to innovate in order to consistently address the student needs and apply modern thought in educational learning.
Teacher reflective question: “Where am I current on innovation, and where do I want to go?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interest Level in Innovation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Little Interest</td>
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![Figure 4: Innovation interest continuum.](image)

This framework supports teachers who are content with sticking to their familiar teaching paths.

As a comparison, “playing” music is the expected ability of students to play the right notes in the right time and hopefully in the right feel. This is more of a mechanical approach. PlayTheGroove solicits a “feeling” approach to creating music, one that involves student-ownership at all levels of music making. Mastery can be stressed if that is a particular goal. However, the initial goal would be to emphasize feeling and ownership when possible.

The key aspect of PlayTheGroove is that students engage in creating meaningful music easier and faster. Period. “Creating” comprises a deeper understanding of the musicianship involved in making music, and facilitates the four Cs: critical thinking, communication, creativity, and collaboration.

**The Transformation:**
What we seek to change through our curriculum and content.

PlayTheGroove emphasizes cohesive learning experiences which spurs transformation in both students and teachers. Through simple pre-assessment, students and teachers will find specific areas they need to address and gain insight into their position on a number of musical issues.
Some of the transformations, or “shifts” we’d like to encourage in teachers and students include:

For Teachers

Teacher-led Environment to Student-led Environment
(Sage-on-the-Stage) (Guide-on-the-Side)
Traditional Jazz to Modern Jazz and World Music
Mostly Reading Music to More Listening
Limited Use of Small Groups to Smart Use of Small Groups
Teacher-Directed Rehearsals to Student-Directed Rehearsals
Teacher-Led Performances to Student-Organized Performances
Teacher-Selected Music Choices to More Student-Centric Choices
No Cross-Curricular Music Choices to More Inclusion of Other Subjects
Strict Ensemble to Increased Inclusivity in Programs.

For Students

Primarily Reading to More Aural Influenced
Little Critical-thinking to More Use of Critical Thinking
Little Collaboration to Highly Collaborative
Little “Creativity” to Very Creative
No Self-learning to Higher Use of Meta Cognition
Narrow Range of Genres Played to Wide Range of Genres Played
No Improvisation to More Comfortable
The Context:
The context of this curriculum as it encompasses the learning experience.

Where: This curriculum is designed to work in a secondary school classroom setting. Specifically we target a hypothetically middle-of-the-road high school (10th grade) with a traditional big band arrangement or random mixed instrumentations, with an average of 24 students per class. The following music group scenarios, although not all-inclusive, are plausible:

- **Trad. Big band**: 4 trumpets, 4 trombones, 5 saxes, rhythm section, and additional players = ~22 students

- **Mixed V1**: 2 trumpets, 1 trombone, 1 vocalist, 6 saxes, 4 guitars, 2 basses, 1 keyboardist, 4 drummers = ~21 players

- **Mixed V2**: 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, 8 saxes, 4 guitars, 2 basses, 2 keyboardists, 4 drummers = ~26 players

- **Mixed V3**: 1 trumpet, 1 trombone, 3 saxes, 6 guitars, 1 basses, 3 keyboardists, 1 drummer = ~16

- **Mixed V4**: 1 trumpet, 1 trombone, 2 vocalists, 2 saxes, 2 guitars, 1 bass, 1 keyboardist, 1 drummer = ~11

- **Mixed V5**: 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, 6 saxes, 3 flutes, 2 clarinets, 1 violin, 1 viola, 1 cello, 1 French horn, 3 guitars, 2 ukulele, 1 bass, 2 keyboardists, 2 drummers = ~29 players

Note: Currently, PTG is NOT suitable for concert or marching bands, string or orchestra ensembles, or elementary levels.

When: The structure of this current curriculum is designed as modules or pods — not necessarily a full-time, semester-long curriculum. Right now, PlayTheGroove is supplementary to a full semester/year-long strategy. The modules work best if implemented over 3-4 weeks of 2-3 sessions each week, or weeks for 6 - 12 sessions. 10-12 sessions is ideal to follow the curriculum. However, since this is designed to be flexible, the range of talent of the group, experience of teacher presenting, modes of pedagogy used, and desired outcome affect the approach.

More involved pods include student-led performances; shorter pods can include, for instance, a focus on sight-reading or audio-only, work on improvisation, applying theory, or just learning new songs. Accommodating a wide-range of components, we made the PTG flexible and malleable with immediately useful, practical applications.

How: We aim to create better musicians and heighten musicianship through playing songs. That means an applied classroom approach that utilizes ubiquitous solutions aimed at 90+% of the country’s high school music programs with a jazz band.
Who: We accommodate learners and makers, and work at the intersection of these two approaches: learners who want to make, and makers who want to learn. In this space we see transformation through PlayTheGroove’s approaches. Those who are learner-focused will hopefully become more focused on making, while makers strive to become better learners.

![LEARNERS AND MAKERS TRANSFORMATION](image)

Figure 7: Expected shift in the approaches of learners/makers after exposure to PlayTheGroove

From observations, studies, surveys, and past interactions with students and teachers, the following illustrates key maker/learner characteristics of teachers open to the PlayTheGroove approach. These approaches and conclusions are borne out of 60+ clinics led by the principal researcher and developer in which teachers and students illuminated some key areas absent from their normal approaches.

Core Skills
Music-making can be loosely divided into two areas: mechanical and aesthetic. For learners, mechanical core skills must be addressed as educational basics.

Mechanical:
- Create pleasing sounds and tones, articulation, intonation
- Scales
- Read music, combining notes to rhythm
- Song form
- Rhythmic interpretation
- Theory
To address makers, the aesthetics of interpretation (feeling) need to be addressed as educational basics in order to re-create a song’s style and allow for personal interpretations and future creation of the maker’s own compositions.

**Aesthetics:**
- Form
- Rhythm
- Articulation, phrasing
- Dynamics
- Arranging
- Alternative style/groove
- Improvisation
- Composition

**Customized Process**

If PlayTheGroove is to meet the needs and particular circumstances of thousands of teachers, it cannot feature a rigid curriculum. We must rely instead on a flexible and customizable curriculum that accommodates a myriad of teacher and student situations. Our goal for teachers and students participating in PTG pods is (1) that they will develop a solid base of core skills, and (2) will know how to implement those skills based on their circumstances.

The PlayTheGroove approach progresses through four steps or phases, starting with playing a song from beginning to end, usually over the course of one classroom period. As adopters go through the steps, ongoing learning is approached on an as-needed basis. For instance, if some students don’t understand a core music concept such as what a repeat sign triggers, opened-ended questions will readdress a basic music-making element. The four key steps or phases are

1. Learning
2. Problem-solving
3. Idea sharing and exchange
4. Doing something real

Learning starts with formative assessments to make note of areas to work on. If something is not known before the class begins, everyone will know plenty by the end of the session.

Solving problems requires critical thinking to develop a plan that tackles a challenging issue. Perhaps the solution will be as basic as an octave jump on a melody. A more involved plan might use three guitars and two basses and answer the question of how to keep them all playing.

Besides critical thinking, students must exercise creativity and collaboration as well as communication. Scaffolding can be put to use since we constantly build upon what we previously knew.
Sharing ideas also calls upon communication and collaboration. Teaching is about, and through sharing we cement in our own minds the information we communicate. When we share we have to be clear and precise; this can only happen after we've processed the information.

Doing something real means creating a tangible project after cycling through the learning, problem-solving, and idea exchange phases. A cycle is completed with a performance before starting all over again. The new cycle might see the chosen music made better still or might involve learning a new song and building on what was learned previously. Thus, a performance is "doing something real" and serves a tangible result that is measurable by objective and subjective standards.

**Iterative and Continuing Use of PlayTheGroove**

Teachers and students continue using the four-step process going forward, applying it to more songs of varying difficulty and styles. Reggae, for example, may look easy on paper, but it can be very difficult for players to correctly feel the groove on all instruments.

More specifically, students can, for example, add more performances by getting out of the band room and into the cafeteria or the school quad to play for peers. Raising the stakes raises the learning.

Another option is to take a harder and deeper look at genres, culture, and artists in addition to making the music. Added exercises might include finding YouTube videos featuring the culture and community from which the music emerged.

Cross-curricular activities could include: students writing and narrating introductions to the song; doing special projects for ELA subjects; introducing other elements such as dance into performances, producing events rather than plain band-on-the-stage concerts, creating a "show choir" for instrumental music that utilizes engaging multimedia elements.

Students can gain composition experience by creating new melodies written to augment or replace existing sections of a tune. The groove of the tune can change from, say, Afro-Cuban to swing or from swing to salsa. The harmonic structure can change by introducing new chordal patterns, ("alt chords") to the harmonic structure.
National Standards

Simply put, the standards supply a process that guides educators in providing a unified and quality arts education for students in Pre-K through high school. Read more.

Anchor Standards 1 - 11:

1) Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
2) Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
3) Refine and complete artistic work.
4) Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.
5) Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.
6) Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.
7) Perceive and analyze artistic work.
8) Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
9) Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.
10) Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.
11) Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.
SEQUENCE AND DETAILS:
The Clothesline Method

Think of this as a clothesline:

Steps:

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

TRANSFORMATION


The First Time Through the PTG Approach:

Step 1 - Where are they now?
  • Average HS group with proficient playing experience.
  • They’re starting with the 3-2-1 song-choosing activity.
  • They are at post-beginner level and have basic mechanical abilities.
  • They’ve probably never played this kind of unison chart before.
  • Teachers have probably not specifically and explicitly explored the four Cs.
  • Students might not have had a “voice” in picking music to play in class.

Step 5 - Where might they be now?
  • They play the song all the way through freely and comfortably.
  • The students identified things they need to work on as a group and individually.
  • Small groups are coming together to solve problems and introduce solutions.
  • A performance is on the horizon with a clearly stated short-term end goal and need.

Step 11 - Where do we want them to be?
  • They understand the purpose and need for a groove in any part.
  • As a group they put on and performed their own informal performance.
  • They can play the complete melody with the group and section, and also, perhaps, play it solo.
  • They perform the song for their friends in an informal band room concert.
  • Teachers observe students demonstrating the four Cs in action as well as other core skills (standards).
- They are able to reflect back on their experience and discuss their experiences, what went well, and what can be done better next time.

**Aligning the Core Arts Standards to PlayTheGroove's Approach**

Table 1 is a small snapshot of the expanded standard rollout, steps 1 and 2, columns 1 through 3. The columns include some of the following information:

- **Activity** sets what transpires during the session.
- **Goal** proposes what ought to be accomplished during the period.
- **Transformation** describes the experience we want for both teachers and students providing context for the activity by helping participants understand the WHY behind their actions.
- **WN** stands for "What's Next?" It reveals the focus of the next session for added guided direction.
- **Time** gives the expected duration of the activity.

This stepwise, predictable process laid out in the table allows everyone to consistently work toward presenting concepts as "guides on the side" instead of "sages on the stage." Spontaneity and creativity encourage students to keep on their toes, and teachers can experiment, too. PTG is supplemental; it thus allows teachers to exercise modern approaches to augment traditional ones.

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| 1    | Activity: Students actively participate in selecting music to perform in class.  
Artistic Process: Perform  
Goal: Students exercise individual thought and critical thinking in song selection.  
Transformation: Students begin to experience/realize the complex processes involved for choosing music to play (for a class).  
Time: 20-25 minutes work at home. Teachers also do this activity prior to class for ease of explanation and to weigh in on choice.  
Note: ONE song alone is fine for the first time through this approach. | WR (Web Reference): https://sites.google.com/site/ptgprogram/Student-Pre-Survey-Song-Choosing  
GL (Guidelines): The song-choosing activity is preferably an at-home assignment which encourages individual thought.  
Teacher gives directions but the web/print versions are mostly self-explanatory.  
Teacher collects forms from students, song is selected from individual suggestions using a grid. Open discussions on ties, style, complexity, and overall playability.  
WN?: "During the next session, you'll play the complete song in one period. Each student will receive the recording." |
| 2    | Activity: Play through song in one period to gain a Single Point of Reference.  
Artistic Process: Perform  
Goal: Students play a complete song from beginning to end without teacher help.  
Transformation: Students can achieve the goal in one period.  
Time: 45-55 minutes | WB: https://sites.google.com/site/ptgprogram/Rehearse-Song  
GL: 1st time through is not about mastery, it's to simply 'play the song' and get a group "Single Point of Reference". Good to record the final run through for their starting-point.  
Using the PTG Play-Along method, follow steps 1-10 loosely or tightly.  
Teacher assumes the role of "a guide on the side" versus "sage on the stage."  
Utilize open-ended questions to encourage reflective thinking.  
WN?: "Next session we will do the same process in half the time. For next
A more complete table of the 1st 3 columns of steps 1 through 11 is available at the end of this document. The full table is available at [Expanded Curricular Framework with National Core Arts Standards](#).

After progressing through the 11 steps of the curricular framework, summative assessments can be undertaken. These, in turn, combine, reiterate, and allow for formative assessments that provide a foundation for the next round of enhancements. Details of these assessments are not included at this stage of curriculum development as they entail a deeper exploration.

However, numerous formative assessments transpire during steps 1-9: As students repeatedly play the complete song and its parts, they reflect, self-evaluate, and create new ideas - which is formative. Breaking into small groups is also formative to developing solutions to challenges.

The final band room session is summative — that is, the performance session is a concrete summary of students' work to date for a specific audience in a specific time and place. Though intuitively perceived as group-summative, with careful observation and listening, the session can also be individually summative, as well.

Both forms of assessment can vary based on the context in which teachers and students are involved (Trumbull and Lash, 2013):

- Informal / formal
- Immediate / delayed feedback
- Embedded in lesson plan / stand-alone
- Spontaneous / planned
- Individual / group
- Verbal / nonverbal
- Oral / written
- Graded / ungraded
- Open-ended response / closed, constrained response
- Teacher initiated/controlled / student initiated and controlled
- Teacher and student(s) / peers
- Process-oriented / product-oriented
- Brief / extended
- Scaffolded (teacher supported) / independently performed
Conclusion

This initial deep-dive into establishing an educationally grounded curriculum for PlayTheGroove is just a beginning. The areas above can be expanded and applied to include the college and middle school levels and expand from 3-4 weeks to a full semester. Additional “passes” can expand exponentially as additional formative and summative assessments are revealed on a micro and macro level. Connecting PlayTheGroove, the NCAS music standards in conjunction with standards from ESL, ELA, and STEM subjects can also reveal numerous cross-curricular approaches. Each potential area has its own merit that argues for a PlayTheGroove expansion and each can bring more depth and breadth to the PlayTheGroove initiative.

We welcome you to jump on board.

Bibliography


State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education (SEADAE) on behalf of NCCAS


Model Cornerstone Assessment


## Appendix A

**Expanded Curricular Framework with National Core Arts Standards.**

(click above to see the full framework)

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Using the PTG Play-Along method, follow steps 1-10 loosely or tightly.  
Teacher assumes the role of “a guide on the side” versus “sage on the stage.”  
Utilize open-ended questions to encourage reflective thinking.  
WN?: “Next session we will do the same process in half the time. For next time, focus on your part. I emailed the recording of the tune to you.” |
| **3** | Activity: Play through song in half a period to reinforce a Single Point of Reference.  
Artistic Process: Perform  
Goal: Besides basic guidance, students direct the process; the teacher works the recording. Play tune in 1/2 the time.  
Transformation: Students achieve previous session’s level in 1/2 the time (shortening the learning curve).  
Time: 20-25 minutes | WB: https://sites.google.com/site/ptgprogram/Rehearse-Song  
GL: 2nd time through is to simply ‘play the song’ and get to the group “Single Point of Reference” quicker. Asking “what’s sounding good and what needs improvement?” can be asked over and over.  
Follow steps 1-10 loosely. Emphasize student leadership with a focus on executing precision the best the students can. Let them experiment and get the feel for making choices  
Responsibility falls on A28:F29 to listen, hear, remember, and concentrate.  
Discussion of upcoming performance date, time, and place (band room). Students should invite friends.  
WN?: “Next class we are super-focused on the groove. It’ll mainly focus on the rhythm section, notes, and phrasing.” |
| **3a** | 2nd Song Introduction (optional) | If the goal is learning two songs, class can commence now or in the new future.  
Working two songs at once allows students to work on different song-specific musical aspects, e.g., one tune trains phrasing and theory; the other trains texture and timbre. |
| **4** | Activity: Session centers on groove primarily in the rhythm section, and is reflected in melody and rhythm. | WB: https://sites.google.com/site/ptgprogram/Rehearse-Song  
GL: Focus is on groove of the rhythm section (melody needs to ‘play in the groove’). Looped sections of repeated phrases played. |
### Artistic Process: Perform

**Goal:** Rhythm section grasps importance of choosing and focusing on one groove, which can change each time.

**Transformation:** Rather than randomly playing parts, musicians (1) start to understand that how they play the groove impacts the overall performance, and (2) realize that focusing on just one thing produces immediate results.

**Time:** 15 minutes

**Play** recording; listen only point out "Listen to the groove!!"). Play tune as a group to solo section only (possibly once with recording, once without).

Rhythm section slowly layers into "A" groove. When all are locked, musicians keep that basic groove for 5 minutes with few and only minute changes/fills.

Harmony can play along. Melody can do cacophony (instructed to do one phrase and lock to rhythm section).

Stop: Play "B" and "C" grooves in like fashion (can be just 4 bars).

If there is time: Play tune.

**Discussion:** How are performance details progressing? How best to engage the audience — provide shakers, make a clapping section?

**WN?** "Next class we are super focused on the melody: rhythm, notes, and phrasing. What challenges are people having? What will you work on?"

### Activity: Session centers on the melody based on rhythm section’s locked groove.

**Artistic Process:** Perform

**Goal:** Melody players grasp importance of focusing on one melodic groove, which can change each time rhythmic groove changes.

**Transformation:** Rather than randomly playing parts, musicians (1) start to understand that how they play the melody impacts overall performance, and (2) realize that focusing on just one thing produces immediate results.

**Time:** 15 minutes

**WB:** https://sites.google.com/site/ptgprogram/Rehearse-Song

**GL:** Focus is on groove of the melody groove needs to be maintained by rhythm section). Looped sections of repeated phrases played. Play recording, play tune as a group.

With everyone on the melody part — notes and/or just rhythm with a click track or closed high hat on all 4s — play the melody as a group to see where students are.

Ask: "Next class, we need to address something else like improvisation, chord structure, form/arrangement. What do you think we need to work on?"

**WN?** "Next class we are super focused on the melody: rhythm, notes, and phrasing. What challenges are people having? What will you work on?"

**WN?** What challenges are we having on ANY part of these songs? Listen. Start thinking about what we can do to solve those issues.

### Activity: Session centers on individuals and groups identifying a wide range of problems/challenges/concepts (perhaps digital) to be solved, utilized, and/or addressed (shoot for solving the top 3).

**Artistic Process:** Responding

**Goal:** May result in having small groups play the tune for more independence (chamber jazz) and practice/develop confidence.

**In addition to melody, harmony, and rhythm, small groups can likewise attend to pitch, dynamics, timbre, texture, form, style/articulation, upcoming performance details, etc.

As a class - put on board and determine 3 to cover in the next 2 sessions.

**Goal:** Less playing this session - get students to critically think of their own playing (personally and as a group) - and communicate it. Freedom to explore analysis, personal connections, other musical elements of recording, and visions for tune. Could include aural-only interpretations.

**Transformation:** Students might have never thought about their own playing in such a way. Plus what the group needs. No right answer - this is meta-cognition in action.

**Time:** 15 minutes

**WB:** https://sites.google.com/site/ptgprogram/Resources#Creative

**GL:** Students, identify, discuss and break into small groups to solve a problem or problems.

Play recording to solo section, play tune as a group. Class discussion: "What are your own personal challenges? What are the group’s challenges? What do we need to do musically to get ready for the performance?"

Break into small groups of 4 - 5 people each. Each person writes 1 - 2 of their own challenges. Decide what the big group needs to work on (two items), and which to start with today.

**Explain challenges with little guidance. Ideas need to be scratched out on paper. Note: Goal can be approached as a game, e.g., groups are decided by numbers in a hat.

Ask: "The performance is coming up in x days — What do we need to do to get ready? How do you envision the performance going? How many have a friend coming?" Aim for everyone having at least one attendee. Write student ideas on board.

Leave session with homework and "Next class we’ll do..." Groups are ready to pitch and do.

**WN?** "Putting some of the ideas developed into practice, what groups are ready to introduce their ideas next class? Who needs more time?"
### PlayTheGroove Curricular Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Activity: Session centers on groups’ no. 1 priority. No. 2 is next time. Focused repetition to take song to a new level.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Artistic Process: Responding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Goal: Students small discussion of the problem hopefully created possible solutions. Class executes the drill.</td>
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<td>Transformation: Students see their ideas in play, find out if they work, or if they need improvement or replacement.</td>
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<td>Time: 15 minutes; be flexible in order to adequately experiment and share ideas.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>GL:</strong> Students present solutions to problem. Prioritize top 3.</td>
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<td>What did students experience last session? What valuable items from last session can be applied today?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td><strong>WN:</strong> You have the idea, what group is ready to present problem/solution #2 and/or 3.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Activity: Session centers on the groups’ No. 2 and/or No. 3 challenges.</th>
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<td>Artistic Process: Responding</td>
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<td>Goal: Students discuss problem and come up with approaches to solve it. Class executes the drill.</td>
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<td>Transformation: Students see their ideas in play, find out if they work, or if they need improvement or replacement.</td>
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<td>Students can be entirely self-directed. Teacher monitors and guides, or partakes.</td>
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<td><strong>WN:</strong> “We’re going to play x tune 3 times in a row with a 1-minute break in between for discussion. We need a new start for each one, so everyone bring in ideas.”</td>
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</tbody>
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<th>Step</th>
<th>Activity: Session centers on full performance run-throughs, checking form, arrangement, timbre, flow, etc.</th>
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<td><strong>GL:</strong> As smoothly as possible, THEY execute the run-throughs.</td>
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<td>Setup and warm-up happen simultaneously. Players get quiet, then tune 1 starts, transitioning right into tune 2, if there is a 2nd tune.</td>
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<td>If only playing one song, perform it twice, starting it differently the 2nd time. Engage the audience on the 2nd play-through.</td>
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<th>Step</th>
<th>Activity: Live performance. Students are mostly on their own.</th>
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<td>Artistic Process: Perform</td>
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<td>Goal: Everyone has to step up and execute the performance. Special dress isn’t needed.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transformation: Students may never never put on their own performance before; small and easy equals good with low risk.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time: 15-20 minutes</td>
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<td><strong>WN:</strong> “Students, have a conversation with your friends who came. What did they like? What needs improvement? What was the most enjoyable part? Have they ever been so close to seeing music being made?”</td>
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<td>Also, check your email for a final survey to capture your views on this new approach.</td>
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<th>Step</th>
<th>Activity: Debrief. What went well and what needs improvement?</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Artistic Process: Connecting &amp; Responding</td>
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<td>Goal: Students exercise critical and reflective thinking of their experiences.</td>
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<td>Transformation: Students might have never thought about this is specific terms. Everyone now has a new pedagogy to apply to additional PTG songs.</td>
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<td>Time: 10-15 minutes</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Options:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion: “Students, what did your friends think?”</td>
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<td>Open-ended question: What went well and what needs to be improved?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Set another performance date for 3 weeks out. Raise the stakes by inviting a few teachers, the principal, more friends, and putting 2 to 3 students in charge. If one song was played, add another and transition into the 2nd during the next performance. If two were played, add a third, likewise transitioning. No conducting.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Open-ended question: What went well and what needs to be improved?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>WN:</strong> Ready to do it again?</td>
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</tbody>
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**richard@playthegroove.com • 1.818.427.5500 • playthegroove.com & playthegroove.org**