Recorder Karate

**Unit Rationale:** This unit allows the students to apply their knowledge they have learned about notes, rhythms, dynamics, etc. It gives them an instrument to expand their skills beyond using their voice. By playing a recorder, each student will practice fine motor skills as well as ear training skills. The main purpose of Recorder Karate prepares students for future learning on wind instruments. It teaches them how to produce good sounds on their instrument as well as listening to how they fit in the ensemble around them.

Lesson 1

**Name:** Beginning Recorder/ Care and Maintenance

**Standards:**

* Demonstrate echo and call/ response. (1 1PR)
* Perform, on instruments, with accurate rhythm and pitch, appropriate expressive qualities, good posture and breath control. (5 2PR)

**Objectives:**

* After listening to instructions, students will demonstrate proper ready and playing positions with their recorders at all times during the lesson.
* Students will learn the fingerings for B, A, and G and play these notes with complete accuracy in a call and response fashion.
* Students will play Hot Cross Buns by rote with the correct notes and rhythms.

**Plan:**

1. Students will receive recorders. They will learn the difference between the ready and playing positions and learn how to demonstrate both properly.
2. Students will learn proper breathing techniques as well as the appropriate air support needed for playing the recorder.
3. Students will learn notes B, A, G and learn various note patterns in a call and response fashion.
4. Students will then learn Hot Cross Buns by rote without realizing it. Once they have played it, the teacher will reveal the music and they will play it again.
5. If there is time, students will continue to learn another simple melody.

**Assessment:** This lesson consists of an informal assessment. The teacher will observe all of the students to make sure they demonstrate both ready and playing positions. Each student will be observed playing in a classroom setting for 100% participation. Teacher will make comments/ critiques as needed. By the end of the lesson, each student will receive their first “belt” for playing Hot Cross Buns.

Lesson 2

**Name:** Improvisation

**Standards:**

* Improvise and compose simple rhythmic and melodic phrases. (3 6PR)
* Demonstrate appropriate audience etiquette at live performances. (3 9PR)

**Objectives:**

* Students will successfully improvise short melodic phrases on the recorder in front of the class.
* During the improvisation process, the other students will continue to play a drone/ ostinato at a piano dynamic to support the soloist.

**Plan:**

1. The students will sit in a full circle with the teacher in the center. The teacher will explain improvisation to the class.
2. The teacher will have the students play the same pitch on a drone or a simple ostinato rhythm. The teacher will then improvise over the class, demonstrating what to do. Emphasize the importance of being polite to the soloist and to not put anyone down. This sets up audience etiquette for lesson 3.
3. The teacher will take a place in the circle and then start an “improvisation loop” where each student will improvise a short phrase. Once one student is finished, the next student will continue. Each time a student is improvising, that student will stand so he/she will be easily heard over the ensemble.
4. Repeat circle as needed. Feel free to change up the seating in the circle so the students have a chance to get up and move around as well as sit by someone new. This activity can also be completed in pairs over the ensemble.
5. Allow time for students to fill out an “exit slip” before leaving class (5 minutes). Students can turn in the slip as they leave the classroom.

**Assessment:** This lesson will contain an informal assessment. Unlike lesson 1, this lesson will require each student to play the recorder individually in front of the class. Since the class will be set up in a circle and all of the other students will be playing a drone or simple ostinato, the soloist/ improviser will not feel singled out. By successfully playing a short, improvised phrase, each student will receive credit for their performance. The beauty of improvisation is that it is never wrong. This lesson assesses the creativity of the students as well as their courage to play in front of their peers. This lesson also contains a formal assessment where students fill out a survey or “exit slip”. The slip asks basic questions of how the students felt about the improvisation process and what they thought was most difficult about it. The purpose of the slip is to receive student feedback as well as show them that improvisation is not something to be feared. At the end of the lesson, each student that successfully improvised in front of the class will receive their second “belt”.

Lesson 3

**Name:** Group Composition

**Standards:**

* Read, write, and perform using sixteenth through whole note values including syncopated rhythms in 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4 meter. (4 6PR)
* Demonstrate appropriate audience etiquette at live performances. (4 8PR)
* Use constructive feedback to improve and refine musical performance and response. (4 6RE)

**Objectives:**

* Students will compose and perform compositions in small groups demonstrating the required musical elements according to the rubric with at least 85% accuracy.
* Students will write 2 positives and 1 suggestion after each group’s performance in class.

**Plan:**

1. The teacher will explain the composition project and its requirements. The teacher will also officially teach new notes to the class (they explored these notes during improvisation in lesson 2). Then the class will be divided into small groups of 4-5 people.
2. The students will be given time to complete their composition and write down their individual parts. The composition will consist of 2 soloists and 2 ostinati/ accompaniment. Each student is required to write his/her own part. The parts work together as a whole. Students will be provided with composition paper.
3. Students will focus back into the class and performances will begin. During this time, students will demonstrate appropriate audience behavior as learned in lesson 2. Students will write their reviews after each performance.
4. At the end of class, there will be a class discussion about the projects. Students will discuss the compositions and performances as well as their process of composing.

**Assessment:** This lesson has two formal assessments, one for the actual performance and one for their responses to each group’s composition. The composition itself will be graded according to a rubric. The composition will be completed during the class period. Since each group member will be working on the composition together, the members of the group will receive the same grade. (If there are any issues with group participation, accommodations will be made). The students will also receive credit for filling out a review for each group’s composition. Each review must include 2 positives and 1 suggestion/ critique of each performance. This promotes critical thinking of musical performances as well as problem solving on how to make performances better. At the end of class, all students that participated in the composition/performance will receive their third “belt”.

Lesson 4

**Name:** Belt Bash!

**Standards:**

* Perform, on instruments, a varied repertoire with accurate rhythm and pitch, appropriate expressive qualities, good posture and breath control. (5 2PR)

**Objectives:**

* Students will continuously practice pieces softly during class to prepare for their playing tests in front of the teacher.
* Students will play pieces for the teacher during class with 2 mistakes or less and no restarts in order to receive “belts” four through six.

**Plan:**

1. Teacher will have a quick warm-up/ note reminder with the students at the beginning of class. The teacher will then provide music for the students to practice.
2. Students will have the entire class to practice their pieces. When ready, the students will go play for the teacher privately in order to receive their next “belt”. This also allows time for students to catch up if they have fallen behind in receiving belts from previous lessons.

**Assessment:** The assessment for this lesson is playing privately for the teacher. In order to receive a “belt”, the student must play the piece with 2 mistakes or less (in dynamics, notes, or articulations) and there must be NO restarts. If the student does not play the piece correctly, that student has the chance to practice it and return for testing as many times as needed.

Lesson 5

**Name:** Final Performance

**Standards:**

* Use technology and the media arts to create and perform music. (5 4PR)
* Perform, on instruments, a varied repertoire with accurate rhythm and pitch, appropriate expressive qualities, good posture and breath control. (5 2PR)

**Objectives:**

* Students will practice and perform a piece with the recorder ensemble during class (or a performance) with little to no mistakes.
* Students will discuss their individual and group performance by fully completing a performance critique (If there is a formal performance).

**Plan:**

1. Students will practice and rehearse the piece during class with feedback and instruction from the teacher.
2. Students will prepare for an in class performance or a formal performance during or after school.

**Assessment:** This lesson contains an informal assessment. By actively participating in this final lesson, the students will receive their seventh and final “belt”. This lesson can also be extended to more days for practice. If resources are available, this can be performed for parents or even an assembly during the school day, and students can receive credit for attendance. If this is an option, teachers can also create a formal assessment and have students fill out a critique about their individual and group performance.