



The Tabla curriculum is a new addition for A Common Approach in 2023, providing objectives and activities to support the teaching of this traditional North Indian classical instrument in a progressive, inclusive manner.

Each Programme of Study has its contents grouped under the following Areas:

- A** Listening and internalising
- B** Making and controlling musical sounds
- C** Creating and developing musical ideas
- D** Playing music
- E** Playing music with others
- F** Performing and communicating

Programme of Study 1

A Listening and internalising

P1 - A1

Listen and respond to music in and out of lessons, enjoying their experiences and building on them

Introduce learners to a wide variety of music during lessons.



Listening should be an enjoyable, active experience. As well as enhancing musical learning, it supports the development of lifelong skills of enjoying and appreciating music as a listener/audience member.

Encourage and plan for a range of responses when listening to music: movement, actions, discussion, writing, drawing, etc.

Encourage learners to share and talk about music that they enjoy listening to.



This helps to develop an inclusive lesson culture where learners feel that their music is valued and respected.

Encourage learners to develop their verbal responses through structured activities that include questions to focus their listening, e.g. how would you describe the character of this melody/rhythm?

Ask learners to listen and respond to different pieces of music in their own time and then describe them in the lesson, including aspects of dynamics, instrumentation, character, etc.



Learners should be encouraged to listen to music from a wide variety of styles and cultures.

P1 - A2

Have some aural perception of the music to be played

Perform a piece to be learnt. Ask learners to describe its character using appropriate questions to unlock their creative response, e.g. Before listening to the music: 'How do you feel right now?' And afterwards: 'Did listening to the music change your mood at

all?’



It is important that listening is approached in a relaxed and enjoyable way.

P1 - A3

Recognise and discriminate between the musical elements of pulse, pitch, rhythm, tempo, dynamics and texture

Encourage learners to mark the pulse of music played by the teacher or other learners by clapping, tapping different parts of the body, walking around the room etc.



Listening games can be linked to all the pieces being learnt in the early stages.

Ask learners to respond physically to music being played, i.e. moving in time or beating time to music with a regular pulse. Repeat at different tempi.

Go through the piece again with learners, using gestures or actions to indicate rests.



Ensure that learners understand the difference between tempo, pulse and rhythm. There are many online tools for exploring these elements, such as Chrome Music Lab (Rhythm and Song Maker).

Help learners to sing/play short, simple rhythmic/melodic phrases by ear.

Ask learners simple questions about pulse, pitch, rhythm, dynamics, etc.



Further ideas in developing aural acuity can be found in the approaches of Kodaly and Dalcroze (Eurhythmics).

P1 - A4

Recognise and convey in their playing simple melodic patterns, e.g. repetition of main tune

Ask learners how many phrases there are in a short piece. Where do they start and finish?



Encourage learners to match physical movements to the structure when listening to the piece, e.g. tap the pulse on their knees for the first phrase, their heads for the second phrase, etc.

Listen to other short pieces and ask learners to indicate when the main tune or rhythmic theme is repeated: count the number of times it is repeated and describe what happens in between.



There are many opportunities to use a wide range of musical styles from around the world.

P1 - A5

Using appropriate notation, make links between sounds and symbols, e.g. shape of the melody, repetition

Encourage learners to create graphic scores of music they listen to.



Instead of using paper, this activity can also be done on an interactive whiteboard or tablet, either using a drawing app or a specific graphic score app.

Display two or more rhythms. Perform one and ask learners to identify which they heard.



In group or whole-class lessons, learners can lead this activity. Notation can also be dragged into position to create different rhythms on an interactive whiteboard or tablet, using a presentation program such as PowerPoint or Google Slides. Learners can then create their own rhythms to work with.

Using notation, ask learners to clap/play/sing/say short phrases of a piece and count silent beats in their heads, e.g. beats 1–4 clapped/ played/sung/said, beats 5–8 counted and beats 9–12 clapped/played/sung said.

Using notation, ask learners to describe the main features of a piece before playing/singing it – e.g. obvious repetitions.

Play a familiar piece incorrectly. Ask learners to spot the mistakes.



Notation must be appropriate and take into consideration the learner, the instrument and the genre. Notations may include specific tabla notation but also staff notation, rhythm grids, dot notation and graphic scores.



Music from all parts of the world is appropriate for these activities.

Programme of Study 1

B Making and controlling musical sounds

P1 - B1

Posture, placement of Tabla and hand position

- Develop an appropriate playing position:
 - demonstrating appropriate wrist, arm and shoulder posture
 - placing the Tabla in accordance with the dominant hand (left-handed or right-handed)
 - sitting (or standing) in a comfortable position to aid freedom of movement

Demonstrate an appropriate posture which can be adapted to the learners' needs and requirements.



This may be the traditional cross-legged position, kneeling, or standing with the Tabla on a table. Whatever position is used, the shoulders should be relaxed and at the same height, with forearms at approximately 45 degrees.



When using the cross-legged position, it is traditional to remove shoes as a sign of respect. It is at the teachers' discretion as to whether to adopt this practice in lessons depending on the context and needs of the learners.

Help learners to position their Tabla with the large drum (*baya*) pointing straight up and the small drum (*daya*) tilted slightly away from them. Ensure that the *syahi* (black spot) on the large drum (*baya*) is at 3 o'clock (for right-handed players) or 9 o'clock (for left-handed players).

Ensure elbows are not resting on legs, surfaces, or the Tabla itself.

Ask learners to observe and describe a good example of posture, demonstrated by the teacher or a more experienced learner. Reinforce the importance of always taking a moment to ensure that posture is correct before starting to play, whether in the lesson or in individual practice.



Reinforce the importance of always taking a moment to ensure that posture is correct before starting to play, whether in the lesson or in individual practice.



Be aware of learners' individual physical characteristics and make adaptations as appropriate.

Begin lessons with exercises designed to relax the body and release tension, e.g. shaking arms and fingers.

Explore creative exercises using basic phrase techniques, focusing on posture. In groups and whole-class teaching, encourage learners to support each other by observing and discussing posture.

If notation sheets are used, place them on a suitable music stand, adjusting the height to the sitting/standing position.

Encourage self-evaluation by use of a mirror when practising at home. This will help learners recognise any discrepancies in overall posture.



Video-recording could also be used for this purpose, but it is vital to check the policy of the school or other organisation you are working in with regards to any form of recording. Children must never be videoed without parental consent and all policies regarding use and storage of recordings must be adhered to.

P1 - B2

Hand placement, coordination and tonal quality (with exercises)

- Have an awareness of the range of sounds made on the Tabla, including the pitch of the two drums
- Develop some control of the position where the hands strike the Tabla, recognising the effect that it will have on the quality of sound
- Play a selection of phrase *bol*s (syllables) which include closed *bol*s using both hands: KHE and TITE
- Produce a clean tone (no resonance) at a regular pulse on both drums
- Develop a controlled sound at two or more dynamic levels on both drums
- Develop an understanding of accents, dynamics, pitch and timbre within the repertoire played
- Begin to play the open *bol*/NA
- Play at a consistent tempo whilst ensuring that hands are kept close to the Tabla

Introduce the parts of the Tabla. Demonstrate the pitch of each drum and how the position in which the hands strike the instrument changes the sound. Encourage them to experiment.

Demonstrate the correct arm and hand positioning for learners.

Encourage learners to play using an appropriate hand position. Ensure that wrists, arms, and shoulders remain relaxed at all times. Any signs of tension restricting hand movement should be addressed.



Learners must refrain from using excessive force when striking the Tabla.

Ask learners to observe the teachers' hand stroke, using two or three fingers to play TI and the index finger to play TE.



The *bol* TI is made by the middle and ring fingers, but the little finger should be positioned close to the ring finger to avoid the buildup of tension.

Ask learners to play short, simple phrases using closed *bol*s KHE on large drum (*baya*) and TITE on small drum (*daya*), with hands at 45 degrees, allowing the sound to be made by the weight of the arms.



If appropriate, the *bol* of TIRE KITA may be introduced in this Programme of Study as a single 4-syllable phrase.

Introduce the *bol* NA.



NA is a more difficult sound to produce; some teachers may prefer to stick to closed sounds depending on the individual learners.

Develop stroke exercises in *ekgun* (single speed) *dugun* (double speed) which enhance the use of both hands, developing hand coordination. For example, Exercise 1:

X

GHE

1

GHE

2

TI

3

TE

4

2

GHE

5

GHE

6

TI

7

TE

8

0

KHE

9

KHE

10

TI

11

TE

12

3

GHE

13

GHE

14

TI

15

TE

16



The notation system is explained in [P1-D3](#). All exercises, including some *paltas*, can be downloaded as a PDF [here](#).

Discuss the different pitch and timbre created by each *bol* with learners.

Encourage learners to incorporate accents and dynamics into their playing.



Introduce accents on TITE.

Programme of Study 1

C Creating and developing musical ideas

P1 - C1

Improvise by exploring different sounds and creating repeated musical patterns or phrases

Ask learners to explore different ways of making musical sounds on the Tabla. Discuss the variety of sounds.

Select two familiar *bols*, e.g. KHE and TITE. Ask learners to improvise their own phrases using these two sounds.



The teacher can promote learners' confidence by:

- demonstrating how to experiment with musical ideas
- providing step-by-step assistance with models, patterns and procedures
- emphasising the open-ended nature of the activity – all outcomes are valued and enjoyed

P1 - C2

Make use of instrumental skills when beginning to compose

Ask learners to compose short pieces from a given starting point, e.g. a story, poem, theme, picture, or one of the musical techniques suggested in C1. Discuss the outcomes. Initially, this could consist of asking learners to write down their improvisations as an aid to memory, perhaps using their own forms of shorthand as a precursor to more formal notation.

Using rhythmic patterns with familiar *bols*, ask learners to create variations (*palta*) by making decisions about structure and organisation and developing these patterns into their own compositions.

Provide opportunities for learners to perform their compositions to others.

Encourage learners to use their instruments in creative activities in the classroom, applying technical skills already acquired.



Productive links with general classroom work should be made wherever possible.

Programme of Study 1

D Playing music

P1 - D1

To recognise and play familiar bols by ear

Play individual *bols* that learners are familiar with and ask them to identify the *bol* by ear and repeat it both vocally and on the Tabla.

In groups or whole classes, repeat the above activity, choosing learners to lead.

P1 - D2

Repeat short, easy rhythmic patterns by playing back from memory

Perform a piece and ask learners to respond to the music by clapping, tapping or moving with a regular pulse and at a variety of tempi.

Teach learners to show the *tali-khali* pattern of a *taal* (rhythmic cycle) by keeping time with the hands.

The beats (*matras*) in a rhythmic cycle (*taal*) are organised into *vibhags*, which are indicated by a clap.

- *Tali vibhags* are indicated by a clap.
- *Khali vibhags* are indicated by a wave.

The term *khali* means 'without' or 'empty'; in other words, 'without clap' or 'empty of stress'. In this way, claps and waves indicate the stress or non-stress of a *vibhag*.

Engage learners in 'copycat' exercises, either with or without notation, maintaining a secure pulse and rhythm.

Encourage learners to say back what they are about to play to help them internalise the rhythms and intonation.

Play short, easy pieces from appropriate notation/ symbols



While Tabla playing is learnt exclusively by ear in traditional settings, notation systems have been developed which can be used to support learning if the teacher feels this is beneficial. There is no single standard method of notation, and this resource presents two options from which teachers can select the one that is most appropriate for their learners. Using notation can make teaching more inclusive, helping those who are not familiar with Indian classical music to learn the time cycles and understand how the music is structured.

Introduce and demonstrate notation using appropriate repertoire, e.g. Exercise 1:

X			
GHE 1	GHE 2	TI 3	TE 4
2			
GHE 5	GHE 6	TI 7	TE 8
0			
KHE 9	KHE 10	TI 11	TE 12
3			
GHE 13	GHE 14	TI 15	TE 16



In this notation system:

- The beats (*matras*) are numbered and grouped into divisions called *vibhags*, marked by bar lines. In the example above there are 4 *vibhags* of 4 *matras* each.
- The *tali* (accented beats) and *khali* (unaccented beats) indicate the beginning of a new *vibhag* and are marked by a clap (*tali*) or wave (*khali*). The X, 2 and 3 mark the beginnings of the *tali vibhags* (with X marking *sum*, the first beat of the time cycle) and the 0 marks the beginning of the *khali vibhag*. (For more information on *tali-khali*, see [P1-D2](#))
- Double lines mark the end of the cycle
- The curved lines underneath indicate how many *bols* are in each *matra* (beat). In this example, there is only one *bol* per beat; however, as rhythmic complexity increases there may be more, such as in Kaida 1 in [P2-B2](#).

Select pieces for learners from a range of different times and places, and in a variety of styles. Take into account:

- the musical and technical skills that will be needed
- opportunities to develop musical ideas
- learners' prior experience
- their personal response to the music
- their general musical interests

Show learners how to practise their pieces and make improvements.



Adopt the [holistic approach](#) to teaching and learning.

P1 - D4

Memorise with accuracy selected short, simple pieces from their repertoire

Help learners to memorise selected pieces from their repertoire by:

- building up short sections at a time
- identifying and remembering rhythmic patterns and the shape of the melody
- noting where repetitions and contrasts occur
- focusing on expressive details

Teach some pieces away from the music, only referring to the notation once it is learnt.

Encourage learners to play from memory to other learners.



Playing from memory is an important and realistic expectation in learning pieces from the earliest stages. Promote confidence by making memorisation of whole pieces a natural part of the learning process. Bear in mind that they are unlikely to be memorised properly until the performance is technically fluent. Some objectives are:

- to strengthen learners' confidence
- to focus on the expressive qualities of the music
- to enable learners to communicate more freely without having the constraints of notation

P1 - D5

Read and play at sight short, simple phrases at a regular pulse; begin to make links between sound and symbol



While Tabla playing is learnt exclusively by ear in traditional settings, notation systems have been developed which can be used to support learning if the teacher feels this is beneficial. Using notation can make teaching more inclusive, helping those who are not familiar with Indian classical music to learn the time cycles and understand how the music is structured.

Play short, simple rhythmic patterns and ask learners to copy them.

Using flash cards, help learners to:

- recognise different aspects of notation
- clap, say and play simple rhythmic patterns, maintaining a regular pulse, perhaps at different tempi



Presentation programs such as PowerPoint or Google Slides can be used to make flash cards to display on a tablet or interactive whiteboard. These have the advantage of being easily editable, so new rhythms and melodic patterns can be created as required by either the teacher or the learners.



The maxim 'sound before symbol' is as important now as ever. Reading notation is a means to making music, not an end in itself.



Help learners to gain enthusiasm for learning pieces, using notation when appropriate. Ensure that its use is encouraging rather than discouraging.

Begin to interpret music with some expression and with a sense of its intended effect; talk about its mood and how it is played and suggest improvements to convey the character of the music

Show learners how to experiment with different ways of playing pieces, perhaps in relation to dynamics and tempi. Ask them to listen and decide which way of playing is most appropriate to the character of the music.

Involving all learners in the group, discuss ways of improving the interpretation.



Interpretation is the creative dimension of performing. At the earliest stage, learners should be encouraged to make expressive musical decisions, either intuitively or by evaluating their work. The teacher can help by being an informed listener, giving feedback and encouragement.

Programme of Study 1

E Playing music with others

P1 - E1

Play with the teacher and/or other learners, demonstrating some basic ensemble skills by listening, watching and keeping in time with the group

Create opportunities for learners to:

- play with an accompaniment, provided either by the teacher or by recorded means
- play in a small ensemble



In addition to their lessons, all learners should be provided with opportunities for participation in ensembles. By playing with others, they are likely to:

- increase their motivation and interest
- quicken their rate of progress
- widen their performing skills
- improve their personal and social skills



With carefully differentiated parts, even those at the earliest stages of learning can enjoy the sense of achievement of playing as part of an ensemble.

P1 - E2

Explore and discuss the character of the music and the expressive possibilities

Discuss the mood of the music and how it can be conveyed.

With learners, assess their ensemble playing, identifying strengths and areas for further development. Make a recording for this purpose, if appropriate.

Programme of Study 1

F Performing and communicating

P1 - F1

Perform music to others, e.g. parents/carers, teachers, fellow learners and friends, demonstrating an awareness of the mood of the music

Organise opportunities for informal performances in lessons and for parents/carers, relatives and friends at home.



Performance is a key skill that should be a natural part of the learning process from the earliest lessons. Simulated performances in instrumental lessons are particularly beneficial, helping learners gain confidence. For young learners, performing to teddy bears can be an excellent first step to build confidence.

Ask learners to revise pieces already learnt and to perform them with expression.



Allow plenty of time so that the music is thoroughly prepared. Learners should be well prepared for every performance so that it is a positive experience for everyone.

Encourage learners to perform from memory where this will enhance confidence, musical awareness and communication.



Pieces need to be chosen with care so that they are well within learners' capabilities.

Demonstrate to learners where and how to stand or sit, and help them to practise walking on and off stage. If notation is used, ensure that stands are appropriately placed and at the correct height.



References to nerves can be counter-productive. If learners are thoroughly prepared, however, nerves can be viewed as an aid to concentration. Encourage learners to have a sense of anticipation and enjoyment about performing.

P1 - F2

Discuss the quality of their playing and, with guidance, learn from their performance

Help learners to evaluate each performance and suggest ways of making improvements and building up confidence. Promote self-evaluation as much as possible.



Ensure feedback is balanced, with an expectation that positives will be found. It can be very effective to sometimes focus only on what went well.

Where appropriate, use technology to make audio or video recordings during lessons so that learners can listen/watch back and evaluate their performance.



It is vital to check the policy of the school or other organisation you are working in with regards to any form of recording. Children must never be videoed without parental consent and all policies regarding use and storage of recordings must be adhered to.

Encourage learners to develop their own library of pieces that can be repeated in future.

Programme of Study 2

A Listening and internalising

P2 - A1

Listen to music with concentration and understanding in and out of lessons, enjoying their experiences and building on them

Engage learners in a wide variety of structured listening activities during lessons, continuing to encourage a range of responses as in Programme of Study 1 (e.g. physical, verbal, written or pictorial).

Ask learners to listen with concentration to different pieces of music in their own time and then describe them in the lesson, including aspects of dynamics, instrumentation, character, etc.



Support learners in their own listening by modelling questioning and other exploratory activities during lessons.

Continue to ask learners to share music that they enjoy with other learners.



Encourage learners to discuss their feelings about music they have chosen through questioning, e.g. 'Why are you drawn to this music?' 'Why is this music meaningful to you?'

Referring to the musical elements, ask learners to describe what they liked and disliked about the music they have listened to.

P2 - A2

Have some aural perception of the music to be played, including some feeling of the expressive characteristics

Perform pieces to be learnt and ask learners to discuss appropriate features, e.g. tempo, rhythm, range of melody, dynamics, in relation to the character of the music.



When teaching musical vocabulary it is important that the focus is on understanding the concept rather than simply recalling a word. Musical understanding must be developed for the terminology to be meaningful.

Perform pieces in different ways, e.g. with different tempi, dynamics and articulation. Ask learners to discuss the effect on the mood and character.



Playing to learners provides an immediate way of modelling, i.e. demonstrating musical ideas and techniques, as well as developing aural skills. Learners can also experiment with the effect that tempo has on the mood and character of music by using a tempo changing app, either using pre-recorded music or making their own recording for this purpose.

P2 - A3

Recognise and discriminate between the musical elements, including aspects of articulation, phrasing and quality of tone

Play short rhythmic phrases from pieces to be learnt and ask learners to clap back the pulse and/or rhythm.



Other body percussion sounds can be substituted for clapping for variety.

In groups or whole classes, ask some learners to tap the pulse of simple phrases while others tap the rhythm. Different body percussion sounds can be used, e.g. stamping, tapping knees, clapping etc.

Perform pieces to learners and ask simple questions about the musical elements, including phrasing and quality of tone.

P2 - A4

Recognise and convey simple structures in their playing, e.g. repetition of rhythmic and melodic phrases

Ask learners questions on the phrasing and structure of pieces.



Recording instruments live using a digital audio workstation such as Audacity provides a way of splitting up and re-ordering phrases to further explore structure.

Improvise some rhythmic patterns with learners, perhaps related to the pieces being learnt.



All musical activities, including improvisation, are interrelated and can therefore be taught simultaneously.

P2 - A5

Hear some elements of the music internally when using notation/symbol, e.g. tempo, pitch, rhythm, dynamics

Using notation, ask learners to work out the rhythm of phrases in their heads, then clap it.



Ask learners to clap/say simple phrases at sight.



Using notation, perform pieces with some deliberate mistakes or deviations inserted. Ask learners to identify the differences.



This activity can be adapted to an aural one only, by asking learners to memorise a pattern and then asking them to identify any deviations.



Music from all parts of the world is appropriate for these activities.

Programme of Study 2

B Making and controlling musical sounds

P2 - B1

Posture, placement of Tabla and hand position

- Maintain an appropriate playing position:
 - demonstrating appropriate wrist, arm and shoulder posture
 - placing the Tabla in accordance with the dominant hand (left-handed or right-handed)
 - sitting (or standing) in a comfortable position to aid freedom of movement

Model appropriate posture for learners.



This may be the traditional cross-legged position, kneeling, or standing with the Tabla on a table. Whatever position is used, the shoulders should be relaxed and at the same height, with forearms at approximately 45 degrees.

Help learners to position their Tabla with the large drum (*baya*) pointing straight up and the small drum (*daya*) tilted slightly away from them. Ensure that the *syahi* on the large drum (*baya*) is at 3 o'clock (for right-handed players – large drum) or 9 o'clock (for left-handed players – small drum).

Encourage learners to maintain correct posture at all times, making sure elbows are not resting on legs, surfaces, or the Tabla itself.



Encourage self-evaluation by use of a mirror. Video-recording could also be used for this purpose, but it is vital to check the policy of the school or other organisation you are working in with regards to any form of recording. Children must never be videoed without parental consent and all policies regarding use and storage of recordings must be adhered to.

Ask learners to demonstrate and describe a good example of posture whilst playing in the traditional seated position.

Begin lessons with exercises designed to relax the body and release tension, e.g. repetitive phrase exercises to be played at a steady tempo. For example:

- GHE x8 TITE x8
- GHE x4 TITE x4
- GHE x2 TITE x2

- GHE x1 TITE x1
-

Explore creative exercises using basic phrase techniques, focusing on posture. In groups and whole-class teaching, encourage learners to support each other by observing and discussing posture.

P2 - B2

Hand placement, coordination and tonal quality (with exercises)

- Play a greater range of bols, including:
 - closed sounds:
 - large drum – KHE
 - small drum – TITE
 - open sounds:
 - large drum – GHE
 - small drum – NA
- Maintain consistency when striking the Tabla, ensuring the same tone is produced when a sound is repeated
- Continue to develop an understanding of accents, dynamics, pitch and timbre within the repertoire played

Demonstrate how to play the closed *bols* KHE and TITE and the open *bols* GHE and NA.

Ask learners to observe the teachers' hand stroke, using two or three fingers to play TI and the index finger to play TE.



The *bol*/TI is made by the middle and ring fingers, but the little finger should be positioned close to the ring finger to avoid the buildup of tension.

On the small drum, demonstrate how to use two or three fingers to play TI and the index finger to play TE, and how to strike the outer edge (*kinar*) to play NA.



The sound TI is made by the middle and ring fingers, but the little finger should be positioned close to the ring finger to avoid the buildup of tension.

To play GHE, show learners how to use the palm of the hand to play over the *syahi* on the large drum (*baya*) without lifting the wrist.

When playing the *bol*/GHE, ensure that learners' wrists are placed behind the *syahi* on the large drum (*baya*) with their palms arching over black spot.



Learners must refrain from using excessive force when striking the Tabla.

Encourage learners to maintain a consistent tempo whilst playing, in both *ekgun* (single speed) and *dugun* (double speed), ensuring hands remain close to the Tabla.



Chaugun (quadruple speed) can also be introduced through teacher demonstration.

Ask learners to demonstrate correct arm and hand positioning when playing KHE.



All four fingers should be covering the *syahi* on the large drum (*baya*).



Learners should maintain an appropriate hand position. Ensure that wrists, arms and shoulders remain relaxed at all times.

Ask learners to demonstrate the correct hand strokes for TITE.

Teach learners to play appropriate patterns with clear and concise tones, e.g. Kaida 1:

X

GHE

1

GHE

2

TI

3

TE

4

2

GHE

5

GHE

6

TI

7

TE

KI

8

TA

0

KHE

9

KHE

10

TI

11

TE

12

3

GHE

13

GHE

14

TI

15

TE

KI

16

TA



The notation system is explained in [P1-D3](#). All exercises, including some *paltas*, can be downloaded as a PDF here.

Variations can also be taught (*paltas*).

Discuss the pitch and timbres of different *bols* within the patterns played.

Encourage learners to incorporate accents and dynamics into their playing.

Teach exercises that develop the coordination of right and left hands, e.g.

GHE GHE TI TE

GHE GHE NA NA

Show learners how to play both of these exercises in *ekgun* (single) and *dugun* (double). Good tempi to begin with are *ekgun* at 60bpm and *dugun* at 120bpm. Encourage learners to perform along with the metronome or *lehra* at these tempi.



A *lehra* is a repeating melody that can be used to keep the beat and support counting of the time cycle. Lots of suitable *lehras* can be found on YouTube.



If learners are finding certain strokes difficult, teachers can adapt exercises as necessary.

Programme of Study 2

C Creating and developing musical ideas

P2 - C1

Improvise rhythmic and melodic phrases freely or within given structures, individually or as part of a group

Using some of the exercises from [P2-B2](#) as a theme, demonstrate how to create variations (*palta*) by exploring the order of the *bols*. Invite learners to experiment.

Encourage learners to develop improvisations within simple structures, e.g. ABAB.

Ask learners to perform their improvisations to each other and discuss the results.

P2 - C2

Compose by developing musical ideas within simple given structures and applying instrumental skills

Show learners how to build on ideas from pieces and improvisations and develop individual or group compositions.



Whilst instrumental lessons are not a substitute for curriculum music, they do provide opportunities for learners to extend ideas that originate from classroom lessons. Instrumental teachers have particular expertise that helps learners to explore the technical and expressive potential of the instrument.

In whole-class lessons, put learners into groups and ask them to create a rhythmic pattern together. Explain that there will not be a group leader, but rather that they all need to work as a team.

Ask learners to explore musical ideas using their instruments, jotting down the main points.

Encourage learners to evaluate their work during their lessons. Give specific feedback about musical details and help them to overcome particular problems.

Help learners to refine and notate their pieces, possibly using technology if appropriate.



Notation programs and digital audio workstations are useful tools to support the recording and refining process.



What matters most is that musical creativity becomes a habit – and one that learners enjoy.

Promote opportunities for learners' compositions to be performed alongside other pieces they are learning.

Set activities over a number of weeks. These can be undertaken as part of learners' practice and reviewed in each lesson.

Programme of Study 2

D Playing music

P2 - D1

Work out by ear how to play short, easy patterns using familiar bols

Play a wider range of individual *bols* and ask them to identify the *bol* by ear and repeat it both vocally and on the Tabla.

In groups or whole classes, repeat the above activity, choosing learners to lead.

Play short patterns using two different *bols*. Ask learners to identify the *bols* by ear and repeat the pattern vocally and on the Tabla.

P2 - D2

Repeat short, easy rhythmic phrases by playing back from memory

Play a simple piece and ask learners to clap back the rhythm.

Continue to engage learners in clapping exercises relevant to the time cycles being learnt, showing *tali-khali* patterns with claps and waves.

Engage learners in more extended 'copycat' exercises, i.e. more notes, longer phrases, greater expressive detail.

P2 - D3

Play a variety of short, easy pieces from notation/ symbols



While Tabla playing is learnt exclusively by ear in traditional settings, notation systems have been developed which can be used to support learning if the teacher feels this is beneficial. Using notation can make teaching more inclusive, helping those who are not familiar with Indian classical music to learn the time cycles and understand how the music is structured.

Continue to use Tabla notation as in Programme of Study 1 to support learners' understanding of how the music is structured. Explain more advanced features of notation that arise with more complex rhythms, such as the use of rests and the presence of more than one *bol* in a beat.



In the notation system used here in A Common Approach, a rest is notated using the symbol –

Building on the musical skills, knowledge and understanding acquired in Programme of Study 1, extend the range of pieces to be taught, ensuring that the chosen repertoire relates to the full range of learning objectives.

Encourage learners to apply their own creative ideas, e.g. using ideas in the piece to generate their own improvisations or compositions.

Show learners how to practise their pieces and make improvements.



Continue to use the holistic approach to teaching and learning. Choose a wide range of repertoire that:

- consolidates and extends technical skills and knowledge
- includes a larger variety of rhythms and *bols*

P2 - D4

Play from memory, and to others, selected contrasting pieces from their repertoire

Help learners to learn selected pieces from memory, showing them ways to remember the music, e.g. by identifying patterns, identifying the form, noting how passages are similar, or how they change, devising mnemonics to remember sections such as endings.



Build up memorisation skills regularly and systematically so that learners gain confidence and are able to perform to others from memory.

P2 - D5

Read and play at sight short, easy pieces at a regular pulse, beginning to hear some of the elements internally



While Tabla playing is learnt exclusively by ear in traditional settings, notation systems have been developed which can be used to support learning if the teacher feels this is beneficial. Using notation can make teaching more inclusive, helping those who are not familiar with Indian classical music to learn the time cycles and understand how the music is structured.

Encourage learners to read short, simple exercises at sight, making sure that they are well within their technical range.

Before playing through exercises for the first time, help learners to hear in their heads the overall sound of the music by asking them to:

- identify important notational features of the music, e.g. number of beats, *bols* used
- say, clap or tap rhythmic patterns
- tap the pulse while other learners tap the rhythm, and vice versa

Emphasise the importance of steady, fluent reading, i.e. maintaining a regular pulse, and of allowing mistakes to pass uncorrected.



Point out to learners that when first playing a piece of music from notation, they are always 'sight-reading' it. Sight-reading, therefore, should not be regarded as a separate activity, but rather as an integral part of learning new music.

P2 - D6

Interpret music by making choices in relation to tempo, dynamics, phrasing, articulation, colour, etc. in order to achieve an intended effect and convey the expressive characteristics; describe and evaluate the music using appropriate musical vocabulary

When learning new pieces, encourage learners to make independent decisions about expressive features, such as dynamics, tempi, phrasing, articulation, and tone quality.

Show learners how to apply their listening skills and respond to the musical features of the music.

Tease out learners' understanding in questions about the music.

Encourage learners to perform the music intuitively and to explore different interpretations, even at a simple level.

Demonstrate alternatives for learners to discuss and evaluate.



Some learners interpret music intuitively, with little intervention from the teacher. Others need a more structured approach. All learners should be encouraged to analyse how they make their musical decisions.

Programme of Study 2

E Playing music with others

P2 - E1

Play with others, helping to maintain a separate part and showing awareness of their role within the ensemble

Ask learners to play a variety of ensemble pieces together, maintaining a regular pulse and listening to the other players.

Discuss the role of each instrument within the ensemble, including any genre-specific roles such as the drone in Indian classical music.

Remind learners to sit/stand so that they can clearly watch the leader or conductor.

Ask learners to play different parts of a piece (with differentiated levels of difficulty) in turn, discovering which part is the most significant in any particular passage and noting how the parts fit together.

Encourage different learners to take a lead, perhaps by counting in, selecting the tempi or suggesting expressive contrasts.

Encourage learners to participate in an appropriate ensemble, playing in unison with others initially, later maintaining a separate part.



Regular ensemble experiences provide a focus for making music. Taking part in a group promotes quicker progression and increased motivation and helps learners to develop social and personal skills.

P2 - E2

Explore, discuss and convey the character of the music

Ask learners to discuss the character of the music and how this influences the choice of tempi, dynamics, etc.

Discuss with learners how further improvements can be made to their playing.

Programme of Study 2

F Performing and communicating

P2 - F1

Perform to others with a sense of occasion, e.g. in a concert, school assembly, examination, projecting the character of the music and acknowledging audience applause

Organise opportunities for performances with others of a similar standard in lessons, and occasionally for parents/carers, relatives and friends.



Performance enables learners to convey their music to others, building on a range of acquired skills, knowledge and understanding. Simulated performances in lessons help to develop these skills before playing to larger audiences.

Using their growing library of pieces, prepare learners so that they are able to perform with fluency and expression.



Allow plenty of time so that the music is thoroughly prepared. Learners should be well prepared for every performance so that it is a positive, enjoyable experience for everyone – performer(s) and audience.

Encourage learners to perform from memory where this will enhance confidence, musical awareness and communication.



Fluency is key to developing confidence in performing. Pieces therefore need to be chosen with care to ensure that they are well within learners' capabilities.

Remind learners where and how to stand or sit to perform. If notation is used, ensure that stands are appropriately placed and at the correct height.

Show learners how to respond to applause and walk on and off stage.

Discuss different performing contexts and how Indian classical music audiences traditionally show their appreciation vocally during the performance rather than applauding at the end; for example, when performers land on the first beat of a time cycle after an elaborate solo.

Refine pieces through simulated performances during instrumental lessons.



Aim to give understanding and meaning to the music. Stimulate creative thinking in preparing for performance. Learners should consider different ways of communicating the character of the music.



It should be remembered that people respond differently to the idea of performing. It is important to look out for signs of performance anxiety and support learners in developing strategies to address this. Learners should be encouraged to have a sense of anticipation and enjoyment about performing.

P2 - F2

Evaluate the quality of their performance in relation to the character of the music, suggesting improvements and commenting on how the intentions were achieved

Lead learners in reflecting on and evaluating each performance. Help them to build confidence and make further improvements.

Discuss strategies for overcoming nerves and solving problems.



References to nerves can be counter-productive. If learners are thoroughly prepared, however, nerves can be viewed as an aid to concentration. Encourage a sense of anticipation and enjoyment about performing.

Encourage learners to revise pieces from their repertoire.

Continue to use technology where appropriate to make audio or video recordings so that learners can listen/watch back and evaluate their performance.



It is vital to check the policy of the school or other organisation you are working in with regards to any form of recording. Children must never be videoed without parental consent and all policies regarding use and storage of recordings must be adhered to.

Programme of Study 3

A Listening and internalising

P3 - A1

Listen with attention to detail, responding to the expressive character of music, using their experiences to inform their playing

Ask learners to listen to music in a variety of styles and then describe the expressive character of the music with reference to the musical elements.

Ask learners to listen to music that is similar in period, genre, etc. to pieces they are learning. Ask them to point out similarities and differences.

P3 - A2

Develop their aural perception of the music to be played, including some feeling and understanding of the expressive characteristics

Perform pieces to be learnt. Ask learners to describe the overall character using appropriate vocabulary.

Ask learners to compare and contrast new pieces with pieces already known.

Perform pieces in different ways. Ask learners to describe how changes to the dynamics, phrasing, tone quality, etc. affect the expressive character of the music.



As their knowledge increases, learners are able to use a larger musical vocabulary.

P3 - A3

Recognise and discriminate between the musical elements, including more refined aspects of articulation, phrasing, quality/variety of tone

Play appropriate rhythms from pieces. Ask learners to clap them back and identify the note values.

In groups or whole classes ask some learners to tap the pulse of phrases while others tap the rhythm. As an extension, ask learners to tap the pulse with one hand and the rhythm with the other, or the pulse with the feet and the rhythm with the hands.

Perform pieces to learners and ask questions about the musical elements, including more detailed focus on articulation, phrasing and quality of tone.

P3 - A4

Recognise and convey structural features and compositional devices in their playing, e.g. A A B A, sequence

Ask learners to identify the main sections of more extended pieces. Ask further questions on rhythmic features, aspects of structure etc.

Ask learners to prepare short pieces using various compositional techniques, e.g. appropriate time cycles and describe their effect.

Encourage learners to improvise short pieces using similar techniques.

P3 - A5

Hear simple music internally when using notation/symbols, including repetitions, contrasts, changes to melodic and rhythmic patterns

Using notation, ask learners to work out the rhythm of phrases in their heads and then compare with the actual sound when played.

Using notation, ask learners to describe the main characteristics of pieces to be learnt: refer to phrasing, and structure, etc.

Ask learners to clap/say appropriate phrases at sight.

Using notation, perform pieces with a range of deliberate mistakes. Ask learners to identify the differences.



Music from all parts of the world is appropriate for these activities.

Programme of Study 3

B Making and controlling musical sounds

P3 - B1

Posture, placement of Tabla and hand position

- Maintain an appropriate playing position with more ease:
 - demonstrating appropriate wrist, arm and shoulder posture
 - placing the Tabla in accordance with the dominant hand (left-handed or right-handed)
 - sitting (or standing) in a comfortable position to aid freedom of movement

Continue to demonstrate appropriate posture.



Continue to ensure that the shoulders are relaxed and at the same height, with forearms at approximately 45 degrees.

Encourage learners to choose the most appropriate posture for them (sitting, kneeling, standing).



Be aware of learners' individual physical characteristics and make adaptations as appropriate.

Encourage learners to position their Tabla without help from their teacher.

Pay particular attention to posture when asking learners to play exercises in both *ekgun* (single speed) and *dugun* (double speed).

P3 - B2

Hand placement, coordination and tonal quality (with exercises)

- Play a range of double strokes with single strokes, including the TITE KITA/TIRE KITA closed sound with both drums
- Play the bols DHA and TUN

Show learners how to play the TITE KITA, with four *bols* starting with two/three fingers on the small drum (*daya*), then the index finger on the small drum, then flat hand on the large drum (*baya*), then back to three fingers on the small drum.

Practise the phrase TITE KITA by teaching variations, for example:

- KITA TAKE – Variation 1
 - TIRE KITA TAKE – Variation 2
 - TAKE TIRE KITA TAKE – Variation 3
-

Discuss with learners how to achieve a closed sound that does not resonate. Draw attention to the hand position, ensuring that it is not above shoulder height, and ensure that once the hand strikes the Tabla it remains fixed on the drum.



Telling learners to imagine that they have glue on their hand can help to achieve this.

For TA KE, show learners how to use the index finger to strike the middle of the *syahi* on the small drum (*daya*), then the flat hand over the *syahi* on the large drum (*baya*).

Demonstrate how to play DHA, a combination of GHE and NA at the same time.



With all of these *bols*, demonstrate good tonal quality and invite learners to imitate.

Develop the *bols* TI RE KI TA by playing a suitable exercise in both *ekgun* (single speed) and *dugun* (double speed), such as the Rela in Teentaal (16-beat time cycle):

X

DHA — TI RA
1

KI TA TA KA
2

TI RA KI TA
3

DHA — TI RA
4

2

KI TA TA KA
5

TI RA KI TA
6

DHA — TI RA
7

KI TA TA KA
8

0

TA — TI RA
9

KI TA TA KA
10

TI RA KI TA
11

DHA — TI RA
12

3

KI TA TA KA
13

TI RA KI TA
14

DHA — TI RA
15

KI TA TA KA
16



A *rela* is a composition using fast strokes to create a drum roll effect.



The notation system is explained in [P1-D3](#). All exercises, including some *paltas*, can be downloaded as a PDF here.

Exercises can also be played in *chaugun* (quadruple speed) if appropriate.



If learners are finding certain strokes difficult, teachers can adapt exercises as necessary.

Demonstrate how to play TUN: with all fingers raised above the tabla, the tip of the index finger moves downwards to strike the outer edge (*kinar*). The finger is removed very quickly to allow the skin to resonate.



TUN is sometimes called TU. They are performed exactly the same, but the pronunciation changes according to the context.

Introduce compositions that incorporate TUN, for example, the Paran:

X

DHA DHA TUN TUN

1 2 3 4

2

NA NA TI TE TI TE

5 6 7 8

0

KHE TI TE KHE TI TE KHE TI

9 10 11 12

3

DHA KHE TI DHA KHE TI DHA

13 14 15 16 1

Ask learners to choose ways of playing simple phrases using different accents and dynamics.

Teach four or five variations (*palta*) on a theme (*kaida*) such as Kaida 2:

X

GHE

1

GHE

2

TI

3

TE

4

2

GHE

5

GHE

6

NA

7

NA

8

0

KHE

9

KHE

10

TI

11

TE

12

3

GHE

13

GHE

14

NA

15

NA

16



Paltas for this exercise are included in the PDF download here.

With the aid of a metronome or *lehra*, demonstrate how the theme is played in time. Good tempi to begin with are *ekgun* at 60bpm and *dugun* at 120bpm. Encourage learners to perform along with the metronome or *lehra* at these tempi.



A *lehra* is a repeating melody that can be used to keep the beat and support counting of the time cycle. Lots of suitable *lehras* can be found on YouTube.

Programme of Study 3

C Creating and developing musical ideas

P3 - C1

Improvise in a variety of genres and styles, sustaining and developing musical ideas and achieving different intended musical effects with the instrument

Using some of the exercises from [P3-B2](#) as a theme, ask learners to create variations (*palta*).

Regularly ask learners to make up improvisations:

- in particular styles
- by varying a theme, exploring contrasts of elements, e.g. rhythm, dynamics
- exploring specific time cycles



Improvisation provides opportunities for learners to extend their own musical ideas within the context of what they have learned. As instrumental skills and knowledge develop, so should fluency in improvisation. Improvisation enables musicians to gain a deeper insight into musical styles as well as encouraging them to express their own feelings. It should, above all, be an enjoyable activity, undertaken in a relaxed and supportive atmosphere, with the teacher joining in.

Discuss the results of the improvisations with learners, perhaps considering the appropriateness of style, development of ideas, use of musical elements, structure and overall outcome.

Suggest and demonstrate further ways of developing and refining ideas, whilst building up learners' confidence.

Make a recording, if possible.

P3 - C2

Apply knowledge and understanding of the instrument in order to compose with an understanding of musical idiom

Ask learners to compose short pieces of music for their instrument (and perhaps other instruments), developing the work in Programme of Study 2.



Notation is likely to be used as a memory aid, first in shorthand (or graphic form) and then for performance.

Ask learners to create a multi-layered piece by using technology to create a beat then adding an instrumental part over the top.



Song Maker on Chrome Music Lab would work well for this.

Encourage learners to compose pieces with common structures.

Encourage learners to use a range of musical devices appropriate to their technical and musical understanding, e.g. repetition, contrast.



Some learners may be composing for GCSE/Nationals/BTEC/RSL or other qualifications. There are many natural ways in which instrumental teachers can liaise with classroom colleagues for mutual support.

Help learners to refine their pieces within the chosen style, discussing their progress and suggesting ideas for improvement and development.



Some programs allow learners to share their compositions digitally with other learners, with the facility for learners to comment on each other's work. Ensure that you adhere to your organisation's safeguarding policy with regards to the use of online platforms.

Provide opportunities for learners to perform their compositions, perhaps involving other musicians.

Programme of Study 3

D Playing music

P3 - D1

Work out by ear how to play simple patterns using a wider range of bols

Play simple patterns using three or four different *bols*. Ask learners to identify the *bols* by ear and repeat the pattern vocally and on the Tabla. Encourage learners to play a new pattern for others to work out by ear.



Sustain opportunities for playing by ear – it brings together many skills.

P3 - D2

Repeat moderately short musical phrases from memory

Ask learners to repeat moderately short phrases, of appropriate difficulty, performed by the teacher or other learners. Include music with a variety of time cycles.

Continue to support the learning of new time cycles through the use of clapping exercises using *tali-khali* patterns.

P3 - D3

Play a variety of moderately easy pieces from different styles and traditions



While Tabla playing is learnt exclusively by ear in traditional settings, notation systems have been developed which can be used to support learning if the teacher feels this is beneficial. Using notation can make teaching more inclusive, helping those who are not familiar with Indian classical music to learn the time cycles and understand how the music is structured.

Approach new pieces from different angles – perhaps aurally, or through improvisation, listening, notation, etc.

Ask learners to identify challenging passages and to make suggestions for solving problems.

Building on their own suggestions (if appropriate), show learners how to practise challenging passages and make improvements.

Make the process as creative as possible, always aiming to prompt learners' imagination and curiosity.



Continue to use the holistic approach, aiming for simultaneous learning through interrelated activities and processes.



Choose a wide range of repertoire that builds on learners' technique, musical understanding and creativity. Ensure that it is relevant to their stage of development and interests.

P3 - D4

Memorise a variety of pieces from their repertoire of increasing length and complexity

Building on strategies suggested in Programme of Study 2, help learners to commit selected pieces to memory.

Once pieces are memorised, encourage learners to try them out in front of others.

Discuss problems and possible solutions in respect of playing from memory.

Provide opportunities for learners to play from memory in a group. Note any new perspectives that this brings, e.g. the opportunity to listen more acutely and to pick up visual cues more easily.



Aim to develop musical memory in a number of ways, e.g. automatic, aural, visual, cognitive, kinaesthetic.



Remind learners that a performance is secure when it is learnt thoroughly from memory, but they should guard against it becoming mechanical.



Beware of the tendency to increase the speed of the beat as pieces become more familiar.

P3 - D5

Read and play at sight a variety of short, straightforward pieces at a regular pulse, using an increasing rhythmic range



While Tabla playing is learnt exclusively by ear in traditional settings, notation systems have been developed which can be used to support learning if the teacher feels this is beneficial. Using notation can make teaching more inclusive, helping those who are not familiar with Indian classical music to learn the time cycles and understand how the music is structured.

Develop sight-reading skills by regularly asking learners to play at sight music that is well within their technical range.

Continue to use flash cards to help learners recognise different aspects of notation, turning the activity round so that the flash cards are used by learners to transcribe a rhythm performed by the teacher.

Extend the structured approach outlined in Programme of Study 2. Thus, before playing through pieces for the first time, help learners to hear in their heads the overall sound of the music by asking them to:

- identify important notational features of the music, e.g. time cycle
- say, clap or tap rhythmic patterns
- tap the pulse while other learners tap the rhythm, and vice versa (and extend by challenging learners to tap the pulse with one hand and the rhythm with the other)



There are many online tools for practising interval recognition, such as Teoria.

Ask learners to sight-read in small groups, each learner maintaining a separate part individually (the parts possibly having differentiated levels of difficulty). Emphasise the importance of keeping going and maintaining a regular pulse.



Sight-reading can always be connected to learning repertoire because the skills are applied when reading pieces for the first time.



Promote enjoyment and confidence by using metaphors to describe phrases and discussing the character of the music and the intended effect.

P3 - D6

Interpret music with an understanding of the musical style, structure and idiom; communicate the character of the music and the intentions of the composer, making improvements to their work in the light of their knowledge about the music

Discuss interpretative ideas with learners as pieces are being learned. Build on an intuitive response to the music.

Encourage learners to think about the nature of performance and how they can communicate musical ideas to others. Particular strategies may include:

- listening to different interpretations of music being learnt and discussing the effects, e.g. by the teacher demonstrating and/or the use of recordings
- analysing the structure of music being learnt and the implications for communicating this in performance
- discussing mood, meaning and emotions
- making links between technique and interpretation
- emphasising expressive features



Interpretation is not a separate activity. Learners should be encouraged to make interpretative decisions in all their playing, even when learning the notes. Considerations of interpretation often inform the way passages are learnt, e.g. in relation to phrasing and tempo.

Programme of Study 3

E Playing music with others

P3 - E1

Play with others, independently maintaining an individual part, demonstrating awareness of their role within the ensemble and leading the ensemble where appropriate

Increase the frequency and range of ensemble experiences. These could include both instruments and voices.

Ask learners to consider the best layout for particular ensembles, ensuring that all participants can clearly watch the leader or conductor.

Ask learners to maintain a separate part individually.



Help learners to learn their parts for new ensemble pieces by providing time in lessons.

Encourage learners to develop their listening skills, e.g. awareness of ensemble and balance when playing with others.



Aim to extend and develop the necessary listening skills for playing with others.

Encourage learners to lead the ensemble, e.g. by counting in.

P3 - E2

Contribute to collective decisions, e.g. tempo, ensemble, tuning, balance, conveying the character of the music

Promote more musical independence by encouraging learners to take the lead and make decisions relating to the character of the music.

Ask learners to reflect on and evaluate their progress and discuss ways of making further improvements.



Adopt a creative, problem-solving approach which gives learners the responsibility for overcoming the challenges of playing with others.

Programme of Study 3

F Performing and communicating

P3 - F1

Perform to others with increasing awareness and assurance, communicating the character of the music and their musical intentions to the audience

Organise opportunities for performance with others of a similar standard at various occasions and venues.



To promote self-confidence, help learners to develop their own library of repertoire pieces, i.e. pieces which once learned and performed can be repeated.

Ask learners to perform, over time, pieces from a variety of styles.



Ensure that learners perform music from different styles and genres so that confidence and experience can be developed across a range of repertoire.

Prepare learners so that they are able to perform with fluency, expression and understanding.

Encourage learners to perform some or all of their pieces from memory where this will enhance confidence, musical awareness and communication.



Encourage learners to retain pieces that they can perform at short notice, i.e. to build up an internalised music library.

Make sure that learners know where and how to stand or sit to perform. If notation is used, check the position and height of stands.

Ensure that learners know how to respond to applause and walk on and off stage.

Continue to promote awareness of different performing contexts and how Indian classical music audiences traditionally show their appreciation vocally during the performance rather than applauding at the end.

Refine pieces through simulated performances in lessons, during performances at school and as part of concerts to the wider community.



Aim to stimulate creative thinking when preparing for performance. Encourage learners to consider different ways of communicating the character of the music.



It should be remembered that people respond differently to the idea of performing. It is important to look out for signs of performance anxiety and support learners in developing strategies to address this. Learners should be encouraged to have a sense of anticipation and enjoyment about performing.

P3 - F2

Evaluate with perception and some independence the quality of their performance and respond to ideas from others

Ask learners to reflect on and evaluate each performance in order to make further improvements and build up confidence.

Organise opportunities for learners to join and perform with directed groups, e.g. bands, orchestras, choirs, large ensembles, ensuring that their musical needs and stage of development are sensitively taken into account.

Continue to use technology where appropriate to make audio or video recordings so that learners can listen/watch back and evaluate their performance.



It is vital to check the policy of the school or other organisation you are working in with regards to any form of recording. Children must never be videoed without parental consent and all policies regarding use and storage of recordings must be adhered to.

Programme of Study 4

A Listening and internalising

P4 - A1

Use their listening skills and experiences of a variety of musical styles and traditions to inform their interpretations, e.g. use of rubato, shaping of phrases, variety of tone

Ask learners to listen to a variety of music from different styles and traditions, using more extended and complex structures. Ask them to describe the expressive character of the music, referring to the musical elements, phrasing, etc. and noting how composers and performers use repetition and contrast.



Apps such as GarageBand, Soundtrap and BandLab provide lots of opportunity to learn about structure by exploring sections, repetition and looping.

Ask learners to listen to music that is similar in period, genre, etc. to pieces they are learning. Ask them to compare pieces using appropriate vocabulary.



Use a framework of open and closed questions that lead learners step by step.



These activities may link with GCSE/Nationals/BTEC Level 2/RSL Level 2 or other qualifications.

P4 - A2

Further develop their aural perception of the music to be played, including some feeling and understanding of the expressive and stylistic characteristics

Perform pieces to be learnt. Ask learners to describe the overall character and style of the music, referring to the musical elements, phrasing, articulation, tonality, etc.

With learners, compare performances of the same piece, looking at shaping of phrases, articulation, quality/variety of tone, etc.

P4 - A3

Identify and incorporate subtle changes to the musical elements in their playing, e.g. tempo, articulation, phrasing

Help learners to sing/play by ear appropriate phrases from pieces to be learnt, e.g. irregular phrases.

Encourage learners to think about and experiment with alternatives in tempi, articulation, phrasing, dynamics, etc., listening to the effect and deciding which approach meets the musical intentions most successfully.



The emphasis is on intuition, imagination and curiosity.

P4 - A4

Recognise and convey more extended structures and techniques in pieces being studied, e.g. rondo, raga, dance forms, simple modulations

Discuss new repertoire with learners, listening to structure and compositional devices in order to promote better aural perception.

Discuss the roles of solo and accompaniment in pieces being learnt.

Use an element of a piece as the starting point for a short improvisation.

P4 - A5

Hear simple music internally with increasing accuracy and fluency when using notation/symbols

Using notation, ask learners to work out in their heads the sound of phrases, then compare with the actual sound when played.

Using notation, ask learners to describe the overall character of pieces, referring to style, structure, phrasing, dynamic range, texture, etc. Suggest how they affect the mood of the music.

Ask learners to clap/say at sight appropriate phrases from pieces to be learnt.

Using notation, perform extracts with deliberate deviations inserted. Ask learners to point out the mistakes.



Music from all parts of the world is appropriate for these activities.

Programme of Study 4

B Making and controlling musical sounds

P4 - B1

Posture, placement of Tabla and hand position

- Maintain an appropriate playing position with more ease and control:
 - demonstrating appropriate wrist, arm and shoulder posture
 - placing the Tabla in accordance with the dominant hand (left-handed or right-handed)
 - sitting (or standing) in a comfortable position to aid freedom of movement
 - developing stamina to play for longer periods of time
 - developing an awareness of the role of posture and facial expression in creating a positive performing image

Continue to demonstrate appropriate posture and pay attention to posture as the length of repertoire increases.



Pay particular attention to avoiding tension in the shoulders.

When teaching learners to play exercises in *ekgun* (single speed), *dugun* (double speed) and *chaugun* (quadruple speed), gradually increase the length of time that learners play at faster speeds in order to develop stamina.

Continue to encourage self-evaluation by use of a mirror.



Video-recording could also be used for this purpose, but it is vital to check the policy of the school or other organisation you are working in with regards to any form of recording. Children must never be videoed without parental consent and all policies regarding use and storage of recordings must be adhered to.

Encourage learners to be aware of their breathing and to avoid unnecessary tension.

Use role-play to discuss the effects of good posture in communicating an effective performance.



An occasional lesson in a large space can help to encourage projection.

Ask learners to observe others performing, noting the effects of posture on communication.



Encourage learners to attend live performances where possible, and/or watch live performances online.

P4 - B2

Hand placement, coordination and tonal quality (with exercises)

- Play a range of double strokes with single strokes within composition, including TI NA and DHI NA

Show learners how to play TI NA – an open sound using the index finger on the black spot on the smaller drum (*daya*). The sound must resonate by using a swift action to produce the tone, and KHE must also be played at the same time as the TI stroke.

Demonstrate how to play DHI NA – using the same action as TI NA but replacing the KHE with GHE on the larger drum. GHE must be played at the same time as TI.

Introduce more challenging *kaidas* to incorporate the *bols* TI NA and DHI NA, for example, Kaida 3:

X

DHA 1	DHA 2	TI 3	TE 4	
2				
DHA 5	DHA 6	TI 7	NA 8	
0				
TA 9	TA 10	TI 11	TE 12	
3				
DHA 13	DHA 14	DHI 15	NA 16	



The notation system is explained in [P1-D3](#). All exercises, including some *paltas*, can be downloaded as a PDF here.



As always, if learners are finding certain strokes difficult, teachers can adapt exercises as necessary.

With the aid of a metronome or *lehra*, demonstrate how the theme is played in time. Suitable tempi are *ekgun* at 60bpm and *dugun* at 120bpm. Encourage learners to perform along with the metronome or *lehra* at these tempi.



A *lehra* is a repeating melody that can be used to keep the beat and support counting of the time cycle. Lots of suitable *lehras* can be found on YouTube.

Programme of Study 4

C Creating and developing musical ideas

P4 - C1

Improvise with freedom in a wide range of musical structures genres, styles and traditions, drawing on internalised sounds

Using some of the exercises from [P4-B2](#) as a theme, ask learners to create variations (*palta*) using a wider range of *bols*.

Help learners to develop confidence by improvising frequently, doing a little at a time.

Make recordings of improvisations and discuss the outcomes with learners.

P4 - C2

Compose in different styles, creating and selecting musical ideas by exploring the characteristics of their chosen resources

Ask learners to compose some pieces over an extended period of time in a variety of traditional and contemporary styles. This could include:

- exploration of a particular aspect of technique
- two contrasting pieces, aiming for consistency of style within each piece
- a short piece for an ensemble, exploring aspects of textures, solos and accompaniments



Ensure that time is allowed for reviewing progress of compositions. Group compositions can be useful for developing ensemble skills.

Help learners to refine their pieces within the chosen style and idiom.



Rehearsing, interpreting and performing the compositions are essential parts of this process.

Encourage learners to experiment with creating new music through a fusion of two different styles.

Programme of Study 4

D Playing music

P4 - D1

Work out by ear how to play moderately easy patterns using a wider range of bols

Encourage learners to build up by ear a repertoire of rhythms that are more challenging, e.g. longer, greater range of *bols*.



Regular playing by ear helps to build confidence.

P4 - D2

Repeat phrases of a moderate length and complexity in a variety of styles

Continue to support the learning of new time cycles through the use of clapping exercises using *tali-khali* patterns.

Ask learners to play back phrases of a moderate length, including more complex rhythms.

P4 - D3

Play a variety of pieces of moderate difficulty



While Tabla playing is learnt exclusively by ear in traditional settings, notation systems have been developed which can be used to support learning if the teacher feels this is beneficial. Using notation can make teaching more inclusive, helping those who are not familiar with Indian classical music to learn the time cycles and understand how the music is structured.

When learning new pieces, ask learners to identify and discuss structural relationships, e.g. repetitions, contrasts, deviations, developments. Ask them to describe the musical effects of these features.

Encourage learners to learn pieces more independently, identifying and solving problems, and making musical decisions.

Continue to advise learners on practising strategies.

Encourage learners to learn pieces away from the instrument in order to consider the overall character, the shape of phrases, subtleties of tempo, etc.



As learners develop their own responses to pieces, so the teacher's input can be reduced.



Encourage learners to use the holistic approach by prompting them to apply listening skills, solve technical and musical problems and use their imaginations.

P4 - D4

Memorise a variety of pieces from their repertoire in different styles and traditions, featuring a range of musical devices and structures

Encourage learners to read the score away from the instrument, as another way to help with memorising pieces.

Ask learners to memorise short pieces or sections of music this way, then play them without using the music.



This is a challenging activity that depends on internalising the music, making links to notation and memorising patterns and structures.



As an aid to memorisation, ask learners to imagine playing the piece with their eyes closed, including all performance details.



Try to include some aspect of memorising in each lesson.

P4 - D5

Read and play at sight moderately easy pieces in different styles at a regular pulse; internalise and incorporate less-familiar musical features, e.g. different time cycles, variety of tempi



While Tabla playing is learnt exclusively by ear in traditional settings, notation systems have been developed which can be used to support learning if the teacher feels this is beneficial. Using notation can make teaching more inclusive, helping those who are not familiar with Indian classical music to learn the time cycles and understand how the music is structured.

Continue to develop sight-reading skills by regularly asking learners to play appropriate music at sight, using the structured approach outlined in Programme of Study 3, i.e. before playing through pieces for the first time, help learners to gain a clear internal picture of the overall shape and character of the music.

Ask learners to sight-read appropriate music in small groups, each learner maintaining a separate part individually (the parts possibly having differentiated levels of difficulty). Emphasise the importance of learners listening to each other in respect of ensemble, balance, etc.



Use a wide range of styles from different times and places.



As in previous programmes, sight-reading should have fluent, musical outcomes. Attention to rhythmic accuracy and expression will help to project the music.

P4 - D6

Interpret music with understanding and insight, developing a personal response through sustained study of and reflection on the music, applying their knowledge of style, characteristics and historical/social background; evaluate how their interpretation reflects the context in which the music was created and is performed and heard

Building on programme 3, discuss the interpretation of pieces being studied, especially how learners can convey their own personal responses within the stylistic conventions.

Encourage learners to be aware of stylistic, structural and idiomatic features of pieces, e.g. musical forms, repetition, contrast, development techniques, and to communicate their feelings and understanding in their playing.



Developing an interpretation is the crux of a personal performance and should be the focus of discussion. Listening to various recordings of the same piece can stimulate discussion and provide a way to develop learners' interpretations.

Programme of Study 4

E Playing music with others

P4 - E1

Play with others, independently maintaining an individual part with sensitivity, responding to others and leading where appropriate, demonstrating awareness of their role within the ensemble

Encourage more independence by promoting unsupervised rehearsals and by asking learners to take the lead.

Encourage learners to use eye contact when playing in small ensembles.

Discuss ways of using rehearsal time effectively, e.g. marking scores and parts, tuning procedures, dealing with challenging passages.

Encourage learners, through careful listening, to develop greater sensitivity in respect of balance, ensemble, tuning, shaping of phrases, etc.

Encourage learners to be responsive in situations where an ensemble performance is not together, taking action to get the performance back on track.

Ensure there are a variety of opportunities for ensembles/groups to perform to audiences and to each other.



Bear in mind that it can take considerable time and effort to organise ensemble opportunities. It is helpful, therefore, to work in close collaboration with school music departments, Music Services/Hubs, local performing groups and/or other appropriate organisations.

P4 - E2

Contribute to collective decisions, e.g. balance, ensemble, interpretation, conveying the character and style of the music

Encourage all learners to contribute to discussions on interpretative issues, e.g. communicating and projecting the style and character of the music.

Invite learners to discuss, using appropriate vocabulary, how further refinements can be made.

Programme of Study 4

F Performing and communicating

P4 - F1

Perform to others with growing confidence, responding to the audience, venue and occasion, communicating the character and style of the music through their own/shared interpretation

Organise performing opportunities at a variety of occasions and venues, e.g. school events, concerts in the wider community.



Aim to give learners a range of performing experiences, e.g. solo, with others, directed, non-directed.

Ask learners to perform, over time, pieces from a range of musical styles and traditions.



Ensure that learners perform music from a range of musical styles and genres so that confidence and experience is developed across a range of repertoire.

Prepare learners to perform with fluency and understanding, encouraging them to communicate their personal feelings within the style of the music and the composer's markings.



Through performance, learners demonstrate their ability to absorb a range of musical and technical skills, knowledge and understanding.

Ask learners to research some background information on pieces, e.g. details of style, the historical/social context.

Encourage learners to perform some or all of their pieces from memory where this will enhance confidence, musical awareness and communication.

Refine pieces through simulated performances in lessons, during performances at school and as part of concerts to the wider community.



Aim to stimulate creative thinking in preparing for performance. Learners should explore a range of possibilities in their quest to communicate the expressive intentions of the composer.

Encourage learners to perform music with others independently of the teacher, e.g. duets or small ensembles.



It should be remembered that people respond differently to the idea of performing. It is important to look out for signs of performance anxiety and support learners in developing strategies to address this. Learners should be encouraged to have a sense of anticipation and enjoyment about performing.

P4 - F2

Evaluate with perception the quality of their performance, using their knowledge of performing conventions, including the performances of distinguished musicians

Ask learners to reflect on and evaluate each performance in order to make further improvements and build up confidence.

Encourage learners to devise their own criteria for self-assessment.

Continue to use technology where appropriate to make audio or video recordings so that learners can listen/watch back and evaluate their performance.



It is vital to check the policy of the school or other organisation you are working in with regards to any form of recording. Children must never be videoed without parental consent and all policies regarding use and storage of recordings must be adhered to.

Organise opportunities for learners to perform with directed groups by encouraging them to join bands, orchestras, choirs, large ensembles, etc. that are appropriate to their needs.

Programme of Study 5

A Listening and internalising

P5 - A1

Listen systematically and critically to a wide variety of music from different styles and traditions to develop their own independent interpretations

Ask learners to listen to and identify music from a variety of styles and traditions, including extended pieces with complex structures. Ask them to compare and contrast various pieces, referring to form, texture, harmonic language, instrumentation, tonality, etc.

Ask learners to listen to music that is related in style and tradition to the pieces they are learning. Ask them to compare and contrast the range of musical ideas/devices and observe how they are used in the music.



It is important for learners to be challenged by a range of relevant questions. Use a framework of open and closed questions that lead learners step by step.



These activities may link with A Level/Highers/BTEC Level 3/RSL Level 3 or other qualifications.

P5 - A2

Have a clear aural perception of the music to be played, conveying their feeling and understanding of the expressive and stylistic features in practice and performance

Perform pieces to be learnt and/or listen to recorded/live performances. Ask learners to describe the overall character and style of the music.

Ask learners to compare the performances, noting subtleties of tempo, phrasing, articulation, dynamics, quality/variety of tone, etc.

P5 - A3

Identify and incorporate subtle changes to the musical elements in their playing, interpreting music both personally and idiomatically

Help learners to sing/play by ear more extended and/or complex phrases, e.g. those featuring challenging rhythms, from pieces to be learnt. Look at how these phrases fit into the whole piece.

Ask learners to explore the effects of varying the tempi, phrasing, dynamics, etc. in pieces from different styles and traditions. Encourage them to develop personal interpretations and to use their understanding of the characteristics of the instrument.

Discuss the importance of adapting dynamics when performing in different contexts (solo, instrumental, accompanying dance etc.), and ask learners to experiment with this in pieces being studied.

Encourage learners to ensure consistency of tempo in extended pieces.

P5 - A4

Recognise and convey in their interpretative decisions a wide variety of musical structures and compositional techniques

Discuss new repertoire with learners, noting structure, tonality, technically demanding passages, etc.

Encourage learners to improvise in various styles.

P5 - A5

Hear a wider range of music internally when using notation/symbols, anticipating the sound in their heads

Using notation, ask learners to work out in their heads the sound of phrases/pieces then compare these with the actual sound when played.

Using notation, ask learners to describe the overall character of pieces, referring to structure and phrasing. Suggest how they affect the mood of the music.

Ask learners to clap/say at sight appropriate phrases from pieces to be learnt.

Play extracts with subtle deviations from the text. Ask learners to point out the differences.



Music from all parts of the world is appropriate for these activities.

Programme of Study 5

B Making and controlling musical sounds

P5 - B1

Posture, placement of Tabla and hand position

- Maintain an appropriate playing position with ease, control and fluency:
 - demonstrating appropriate wrist, arm and shoulder posture
 - placing the Tabla in accordance with the dominant hand (left-handed or right-handed)
 - sitting (or standing) in a comfortable position to aid freedom of movement
 - developing stamina to play for longer periods of time with increased repertoire demands
 - creating a positive and confident performing image

Continue to demonstrate appropriate posture and pay attention to posture as the demands of the repertoire increase.



Pay particular attention to avoiding tension in the shoulders.

Encourage learners to be aware of their breathing and to relax, avoiding unnecessary tension.

Continue to encourage positive body language when performing.

Discuss how posture may contribute towards communication.

Provide opportunities for learners to observe how others communicate in performance, e.g. masterclasses, concerts.



Encourage learners to attend a wide range of live performances where possible, and/or watch live performances online.

Discuss ways in which learners can develop the physical and mental stamina required to play longer, more demanding pieces.

Hand placement, coordination and tonal quality (with exercises)

- Play a greater range of double strokes with single strokes within a *rela*, including DHERE DHERE, DHI NA and TI NA

Ask learners to practise TI NA, as introduced at Programme of Study 4. The sound must resonate by using a swift action to produce the tone, and KHE must also be played at the same time as the TI stroke.

Ask learners to practise DHI NA, as introduced in Programme of Study 4 – using the same action as TI NA but replacing the KHE with GHE on the larger drum. GHE must be played at the same time as TI.

Demonstrate how to play DHERE DHERE – an extension of TI TE TI TE where the palm of the hand is covering the entire black spot on the small drum.

Introduce suitable compositions to practise these strokes, for example, Chaar Bhaag:

X

<u>DHA</u> — TI RA	KI TA <u>TA</u> KHE	TA KHE TI RA	KI TA <u>TA</u> KHE	
1	2	3	4	

2

DHE RE <u>DHE RE</u>	KI TA <u>TA</u> KHE	TI — NA —	KI TA <u>TA</u> KHE	
5	6	7	8	

0

TA — TI RA	KI TA <u>TA</u> KHE	TA KHE TI RA	KI TA <u>TA</u> KHE	
9	10	11	12	

3

DHE RE <u>DHE RE</u>	KI TA <u>TA</u> KHE	DHI — NA —	KI TA <u>TA</u> KHE	
13	14	15	16	



Chaar Bhaag is a *rela*, which is a composition using fast strokes to create a drum roll effect. It is made up of four different parts, each of which is played four times. In Chaar Bhaag, TA is played as NA – it is a different pronunciation of the same *bol*.

When learners become familiar with this *rela*, it can be played in *dugun* and *chaugun*, including the *paltas* and *tihai*. Between 50 and 60bpm is ideal for this *kaida*.



The notation system is explained in [P1-D3](#). All exercises, including some *paltas*, can be downloaded as a PDF here.

Introduce more challenging *kaidas* to incorporate the *bols* TI NA KI NA and DHI NA GI NA, for example, the Delhi Kaida:

X

DHA	TI	TE	DHA	TI	TE	DHA	<u>DHA</u>	
_____		_____		_____		_____		
1		2		3		4		

2

TI	TE	DHA	GHE	TI	NA	KHE	NA	
_____		_____		_____		_____		
5		6		7		8		

0

TA	TI	TE	TA	TI	TE	DHA	<u>DHA</u>	
_____		_____		_____		_____		
9		10		11		12		

3

TI	TE	DHA	GHE	DHI	NA	GHE	NA	
_____		_____		_____		_____		
13		14		15		16		

Continue to encourage learners to use a metronome or *lehra* to support their playing in *ekgun* (single speed), *dugun* (double speed) and *chaugun* (quadruple speed).

Programme of Study 5

C Creating and developing musical ideas

P5 - C1

Improvise extended musical ideas with a sense of direction and shape as they develop their own personal style

Ask learners to improvise a solo within a piece.

Ask learners, or possibly teacher and learner, to extend one of the exercises from [P5-B2](#) by improvising in turn, each player basing the improvisation on the previous section. Aim for coherence and expression within an agreed style.

P5 - C2

Compose with consistency of style, coherence of musical ideas and a degree of individuality, and by making the most of the instrumental resources

Ask learners to compose pieces for more than one instrument, e.g. tabla and harmonium.



Compositions for more than one instrument provide opportunities for learners to explore different textures. learners can use techniques associated with pieces being learnt. These may include contrapuntal textures and more complex structures, and can involve a higher level of technical difficulty for the performer. Alternatively, limitations may be imposed, e.g. thematic, structural, technical. Encourage learners to exploit the idiomatic potential of instruments.

Support learners in refining, notating and evaluating their ideas.

Provide guidance on writing for other instruments/voices.

Provide opportunities for learners' compositions to be performed, if possible in public, and make recordings to help evaluation.

Ask learners to write programme notes for their pieces, including details of background, style, intention and outcomes.

Programme of Study 5

D Playing music

P5 - D1

Work out by ear how to play pieces of increasing complexity

Continue to encourage learners to build up by ear a repertoire of rhythms in a wider range of time cycles.

P5 - D2

Repeat longer and more complex phrases, involving different tempi and time cycles where appropriate

Encourage learners to play back longer and more complex musical extracts from memory.

Ask learners to practise repeating patterns that may include irregular rhythms and asymmetrical phrases.

Ask learners to play back phrases of an extended length, including more complex rhythms within a range of styles.

P5 - D3

Play a range of pieces from different styles and periods that are technically and musically advanced



While Tabla playing is learnt exclusively by ear in traditional settings, notation systems have been developed which can be used to support learning if the teacher feels this is beneficial. Using notation can make teaching more inclusive, helping those who are not familiar with Indian classical music to learn the time cycles and understand how the music is structured.

Continue the holistic approach to learning new pieces by:

- enabling learners to research background knowledge of style, period, etc.
- discussing the structure, rhythmic language, etc.
- ensuring that technical skills are applied to the musical context

- devising related listening exercises that support the learning and memorisation of key features of the music
- encouraging learners to explore alternative ways of interpreting pieces, taking into account their knowledge of genre and period, e.g. approaches to style, phrasing and tone quality, etc.
- enriching learners' understanding by structuring improvisations based on ideas from the pieces being learnt
- providing opportunities for self- and peer-evaluation, using criteria that have been devised by learners themselves

Continue to encourage learners to learn pieces away from the instrument in order to consider the overall character, the shape of phrases, subtleties of tempo, etc.

Continue to suggest appropriate practising strategies.

P5 - D4

Memorise systematically and independently pieces from their repertoire with refinement and expressive subtlety, demonstrating a personal response to the music

Help learners to memorise selected pieces from the repertoire being learnt. Offer particular strategies for dealing with longer and more complex pieces, so that learners remember music in different ways. These could include:

- devising ways of visualising the music, ranging from imagining a simple picture outline to a more photographic image
- relating memory to touch and movement
- supporting learners in knowing the sound in their heads
- analysing the structure of the music, e.g. counting the number of times a phrase occurs, noting rhythm/groove changes, key changes and sequences, consciously remembering deviations and exit points

Provide opportunities for repeated playing and testing in order for learners to develop complete security.



By memorising the music, many performers are able to:

- focus more intimately on the music
- have greater freedom in their playing
- communicate more directly

However, if a musician is not comfortable performing in public without notation then this is by no means essential.

P5 - D5

Read and play at sight a range of pieces in a variety of styles containing elements of surprise and deviation: internalise and incorporate a wide range of time cycles and tempi, rhythmic patterns and expression



While Tabla playing is learnt exclusively by ear in traditional settings, notation systems have been developed which can be used to support learning if the teacher feels this is beneficial. Using notation can make teaching more inclusive, helping those who are not familiar with Indian classical music to learn the time cycles and understand how the music is structured.

Provide sight-reading practice in music that features a wide range of rhythmic devices.

Ensure learners look through the music first, adopting the structured approach described in earlier Programmes of Study, in order to internalise the overall sound and character, and spot potential problems.

Discuss the overall character and style of sight-reading pieces with learners, emphasising the importance of communicating this to others.

Encourage learners to sight-read straightforward, standard repertoire rather than sight-reading exercises.



It is often useful to return to simple music to develop sight-reading skills and, in particular, the ability to read at sight quickly and fluently. This also helps to build up confidence.



Promote the value of sight-reading as a way of accessing and gaining greater familiarity with a wide range of music.

P5 - D6

Interpret music personally with consistency of style, and an understanding of idiomatic performing conventions; make independent, critical judgements about their interpretation

Ask learners to evaluate their approach to the interpretation of pieces being studied, justifying musical decisions by referring to musical styles, conventions and personal feelings.

With learners, discuss the interpretations of others, possibly including professional performances and those of their peers, and compare them with their own.

Encourage learners to respond imaginatively to their own playing, and that of others, as performances unfold.

Encourage learners to communicate their feelings, within their knowledge and understanding of the style, with more freedom, conviction and independence.

Programme of Study 5

E Playing music with others

P5 - E1

Play with others with assurance and sensitivity, demonstrating an empathy with other performers and musical leadership

Provide ensemble opportunities that make increasing musical and technical demands on learners.

Help learners to develop more sensitivity and subtlety in their playing, e.g. shaping of phrases, rhythmic flexibility, through increasing musical awareness and communication within the group.

Invite individual learners to take the lead and direct others.

Acknowledge unexpected musical outcomes.

Provide a variety of performing opportunities.



Bear in mind that it can take considerable time and effort to organise ensemble opportunities. It is helpful, therefore, to work in close collaboration with school music departments, Music Services/Hubs, local performing groups and/or other appropriate organisations.

P5 - E2

Contribute their own interpretative ideas and respond to those of others, conveying the character and style of the music

Encourage learners to use their knowledge, understanding and relevant musical experience to inform their discussions as they seek to develop a shared interpretation.

Encourage all learners to contribute to a shared interpretation that is developed and refined as the piece is practised and performed.

Programme of Study 5

F Performing and communicating

P5 - F1

Perform music to others with confidence and conviction, communicating the character and style of the music; demonstrate empathy with other performers and with the audience

Organise performing opportunities at a variety of occasions and venues, e.g. school events, concerts in the wider community.



It should be remembered that people respond differently to the idea of performing. For some it will be rewarding and motivating, but for others it can be stressful to the extent that they may be ill or wish to give up playing. In preparing for a performance, the following should be taken into account:

- the physical and psychological well-being of the learner
- the learner's motivation
- the perceived importance of the performance
- social relationships with other members of the group

Bear in mind that some learners may not wish to perform in public.

Where appropriate, ask learners to research information on each piece, e.g. details on the style of music, the composer's life, the historical/social context, and prepare a short talk/introduction to each piece.

Give learners opportunities to practise their presentational skills.



In addition to other skills of presentation already acquired, learners should practise projecting their voices and slowing down delivery when talking to an audience.

During lessons, encourage learners to develop their own personal interpretations through discussion and debate. Ask them to justify their decisions using appropriate musical vocabulary.

Encourage learners to perform some or all of their pieces from memory where this will enhance confidence, musical awareness and communication.

Refine pieces through simulated performances in lessons and by performances to others in preparation for concerts within the wider community.

Continue to encourage learners to make music and perform with others, both in directed and non-directed groups.

P5 - F2

Make informed evaluations about their performance in the light of their knowledge about the music and the interpretations of distinguished musicians

Ask learners to evaluate their performances critically, identifying strengths and areas for development.

Continue to use technology where appropriate to make audio or video recordings so that learners can listen/watch back and evaluate their performance.



It is vital to check the policy of the school or other organisation you are working in with regards to any form of recording. Children must never be videoed without parental consent and all policies regarding use and storage of recordings must be adhered to.

Provide opportunities for learners to perform to distinguished musicians/teachers in a masterclass situation.



It can be valuable for learners to hear positive, constructive guidance from someone other than their own teacher.



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