An Integrated Approach?

Considerations:

- Class setup to enable smaller group/ensemble work

- 'Pods' containing 5 or 6 students per Pod depending on year group

- iDoceo programme (or similar) installed on iPad to show each Pod's seating plan and help with assessment, live video recordings of work, behaviour.

- The Pod setup allows opportunities to target individuals and smaller groups of students by focusing on a different Pod each week.

- Students also love the competitive nature of Pods and we have developed a termly competition whereby Pod winners receive a music badge prize (For them it's a competition but for us it's an assessment system!)

- Appropriate material supported with backing tracks and looped sections to allow for extended copy-back, improvisation, composition work are a real benefit

Techniques introduced in the workshop

- Non-verbal copy back approach using body language and hand signals.

- Backing track provides a musical context that helps to identify and implement the right kind of musical language.

- Fully Inclusive

- Avoids too much talking from the front – teacher lead

- Hand signals to give students the musical information that matches the sounds:

Punch = short note
Line = long note
Hand movements up and down = Pitch
Hand movements to mirror volume = Dynamics
Touching your head or pointing to your middle = Structure of head and bridge sections

Rhythmic Copy Back (with 'Shackles' track)

- Helps to establish correct rhythmic language within a specific genre.
- Allow students to develop their own language and improvise their own rhythms
- Individuals can then lead their own Pods in copy back sessions allowing mini performance opportunities, peer and teacher assessment opportunities
- A simple 'way into' rhythmic improvisation that's fully inclusive
- Relate to language and the idea of developing a conversation.
- Easy to develop this into vocal copy back introducing 1 note to develop a sense of pitch

Melodic Copy Back (with 'Shackles' track)

- Vocal copy back on 1 note (I used the top note of 'Shackles' in the workshop) to establish pitch and combine rhythms established in the rhythmic copy back

- Introduce hand signals to give a visual representation of the pitch, articulation, rhythm and dynamics

- Students eventually lead their own Pods by improvising similar rhythms to those modelled by you and the Pod then copy back.

- Assessment opportunity when the students lead and Pods copy back you may wish to assess them on a range of musical skills including:

  1) Rhythmic awareness / internalising the pulse
  2) Maintaining pitch
  3) Rhythmic Improvisation
  4) Articulation
  5) Dynamics
  6) Creativity

- Introduce 2 and then 3 note copy backs creating simple 2 and 3 note melodies (I use the same 3 notes as those in 'Shackles')

- Use non-verbal approach for copy back with students following your hand signals and body language.

- Students eventually lead their own Pods by improvising similar rhythms, 1 and 2 note melodies to those modelled by you. Pod or class can then copy back

Teach 'Shackles' Melody vocally (with track)

- Use non-verbal approach to establish all 3 pitches

- Use hand signals with the voice to demonstrate:

  Pitch
  Structure
  Articulation
  Dynamics
  Rhythm

- Students can create a graphic score of the rehearsal/ performance

- Students can transfer all the above from vocals on to instruments

Possible Extension Tasks

- Students can learn the bass/chord sequence to 'Shackles'
- Develop a whole band / class arrangement and performance
- Use similar techniques as outlines above to teach instrumentalists in your school bands
- Explore different genres / styles of music by creating your own series of backing tracks in different styles.
- Link to music composition whereby students create similar 3 note melodies as 'Shackles'
- Develop improvisation/ composition skills where students move from 1 to 2 to 3 note melodic ideas and notate them in a similar way to their 'Shackles' scores

I hope you find these notes useful with the accompanying backing track and please feel free to contact me should you require any further information or guidance.

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