

Critical Listening in Instrumental Music

WebQuest Description: Listening and responding is a major component of the music learning process. Listening to musicians and evaluating how they excel on their instruments is an easy way to improve your own musical performance. This WebQuest is an opportunity for you to explore different performances on your primary instrument, then critically listen and respond.

Grade Level: 9-12

Curriculum: Art / Music

Keywords: Music, Instrumental, Listening, Responding

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Introduction

One of the easiest ways to learn more about how to perform on your instrument is by listening to others perform on theirs. It is rare for expert musicians to come into class to perform directly for you, so this WebQuest is an opportunity for you to learn and explore what you can achieve on your instrument and how to improve quickly. It also will introduce you to new pieces of music you may have not heard before.

Tasks

Through listening and responding to several different video examples, by the end of this WebQuest students will have a better understanding of what a quality sound on their instrument is, and should have ideas on how to create this sound. They also should be able to evaluate a performance based on tone, articulations, dynamics, phrasing, musicianship and other musical components. Equally as important as learning to actively listen and evaluate music is communicating effectively what you are hearing and how it applies to yourself. This skill will be addressed with the response activities in this WebQuest. Tasks will include: Watch a video and make a list of ways you can apply this knowledge to your playing. Watch 2 videos and compare and contrast using a Venn Diagram. Watch 2 videos and respond in essay form.

Process

TASK 1 Using the file labeled "WebQuest Task 1," find the video link for your instrument. Actively listen to the video focusing on the technique and approach of the performer. Ask yourself the following: "Is what I am hearing sound good?" "How is the performer achieving what I am hearing?" "How does this relate to how I play my instrument?" At the conclusion of the video, type a list of 10 things you heard that can apply to your playing using full sentences. **TASK 2** Using the file labeled "WebQuest Task 2," find the video links for your instrument. Listen to both videos, focusing on comparing and contrasting different aspects of the performance. At the conclusion of the video, fill out the Venn diagram comparing and contrasting the performances. You may use bullet points. **TASK 3** Listen to the piece of music in this link titled "WebQuest Task 3." Critically respond in essay form to what you're hearing, focusing on tone, blend, articulations, dynamics, technique and style. Use knowledge you gained from the previous two tasks to influence your response.

Evaluation

The list associated with Task 1 will be graded based on completion. The Venn diagram associated with Task 2 will be graded based on completion. The essay associated with Task 3 will be graded using the rubric.

Category and Score	Rarely (0%-24%)	Sometimes (25%-49%)	Often (50%-74%)	Always (75%-100%)	Score
Focus/Communication	The student's response lacks clarity to the reader.	The student's response is communicated clearly to the reader sometimes.	The student's response is communicated clearly to the reader most of the time.	The student's response is clearly communicated to the reader all of the time.	/30
Critical Thought	The response rarely shows critical analysis of the listening assignment or proof of an individual thought process.	The response sometimes shows critical analysis of the listening assignment or proof of an individual thought process.	The response usually shows critical analysis of the listening assignment and has proof of an individual thought process.	The response always shows critical analysis of the listening assignment and has proof of an individual thought process.	/30

Category and Score	Rarely (0%-24%)	Sometimes (25%-49%)	Often (50%-74%)	Always (75%-100%)	Score
Grammar, Vocabulary Usage and Mechanics	Appropriate vocabulary usage is rarely displayed and/or the response contains many grammar, spelling, or other mechanical errors. Additional proofreading is required.	Appropriate vocabulary usage is displayed sometimes or the response contains some grammar, spelling, or other mechanical errors. Additional proofreading is required.	Appropriate vocabulary usage is displayed and/or the response contains a few grammar, spelling, or other mechanical errors. Additional proofreading is recommended.	The student displays appropriate vocabulary usage and the response contains little grammar, spelling or other mechanical errors. No further proofreading is needed.	/20
Organization and Format	The response does not meet all the needs of the assignment and is unorganized.	The response does not meet all the needs of the assignment or lacks many organizational details.	The response meets all the needs of the assignments, but lacks a few organizational components.	The response is organized and meets all the needs of the assignment.	/20
				Total Score	

Conclusion

Congratulations! Hopefully you have enjoyed listening to new music and evaluating it on a deeper level. As you practice your instrument or perform in class, apply the knowledge you gained from this activity to your performance. What can you do to have a better sound or a more musical approach? What can you do to improve the listening environment for the whole ensemble? Addressing these questions will help our ensemble reach the next level, which is the goal!

Teacher Page

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Standards

This activity is designed for high school band, but could be altered for orchestra and chorus in all grade levels. It could also be modified to include pieces relevant to a concert or a specific genre you wish to teach your students about.

Credits

Other