



Guidance

Curriculum and
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for school improvement

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Unit 2: Structuring learning for musical
engagement

**Subject leaders and
teachers of music**

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Using this guide

This guide offers some practical strategies teachers use to structure learning in order to develop pupils' musical engagement. The techniques are tried and tested; they draw upon both academic research and the experience of practising teachers.

By working through this guide you can build your teaching repertoire step by step, starting with strategies that are easy to implement and moving on to those that will help pupils develop their understanding and skills even further. The guide contains practical guidance and tasks to help you develop existing practice in your classroom. A summary of recent research and a summary case study exemplify particular points. The 'Next steps' section asks you to reflect generally on the impact of this unit. There are practical suggestions for developing practice and you are invited to set targets for the future. The final section provides references to recent research and further reading.

As you work through this unit you will:

- read about the factors that contribute to effective engagement through well-structured learning;
- review and try out different strategies for introducing lessons which take place at different points within a unit of work (Tasks 1 and 2);
- consider and plan how best to identify lesson objectives and share these with pupils (Tasks 3-6);
- learn about principles for structuring episodes within music lessons and implement these in different lessons (Tasks 7-9);
- learn about strategies and techniques that will promote effective learning for music, and develop the use of some of them in lessons (Task 10);
- begin to consider how different teaching models can be used to support different forms of musical learning;
- reflect on the complete process before considering your next steps.

To assist with this process, make sure that you:

- are clear about where you are in this line of development, and why you are undertaking specific tasks - this will help to focus your time and energies on effective work;
- keep a log of the materials you create, the responses of the pupils and your own reflections on the impact of the work. There is space in this guide for you to write notes and responses to some questions, but you may find it helpful to keep a notebook handy, or to use the CPD log on the DVD.

When working through this unit, you will need access to:

Resource 2a

Video 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d

Structuring learning for musical engagement

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Recognising impact

This unit aims to help music teachers review and refine their practice in structuring learning so that there is an explicit focus within lessons on musical engagement through sequences of episodes that enable pupils to 'engage - learn - review'.

The unit leads teachers to plan and teach lessons that:

- engage pupils from the outset with musical experiences and thinking;
- build on prior learning, and then set challenging tasks with high expectations;
- structure the learning to maintain motivation;
- require pupils to think for themselves to explore creative solutions to musical problems;
- conclude with positive musical outcomes and learning.

This will enable teachers to:

- engage, challenge and immerse all pupils in musical thinking and learning from the start of the lesson;
- explicitly draw out the main messages of the lesson and relate these main messages to learning within the whole unit;
- clarify why an individual lesson might focus on a different aspect of musical learning from that identified in the rest of the unit;
- provide short, sharp challenges for practical activities;
- address learning issues and highlight progress made for the whole class when sharing work in progress;
- create time for reflection and refinement after feedback has been given on first attempts and intervene when necessary;
- provide enough time for performances of compositions to be prepared so that the final performance properly reflects the quality and process of the work's creation;
- focus conclusions about learning on musical experiences.

As a result, pupils:

- are immediately engaged in musical experiences and develop curiosity about further musical learning;
- can confidently describe and reflect on the purpose of any musical activities, and understand how these musical activities will support learning within the overall unit of work;
- are clear about expectations and timescales for activities or episodes within lessons;
- are actively involved in their learning, work constructively and are able to judge the success of their work;
- understand how to improve their work and are given time to do this;
- know how to use thinking skills to develop work in progress;
- internalise their musical learning as a consequence of musically rewarding conclusions to lessons.

Background

A range of inspection and research evidence identifies common issues in structuring learning for musical engagement. It also describes how successful teaching finds solutions that enable positive musical learning. The main characteristics are outlined below.

Common issues

- Planning for lessons does not make pupils' musical learning the key issue, but focuses on activities or tasks.
- Lessons do not immediately engage pupils with active musical experiences. The learning focus for the lesson is not made explicit, and expectations are not clear because processes and outcomes have not been modelled effectively.
- The challenge of practical activity is not defined with enough clarity. Pupils are left for too long working in pairs or groups without being brought back together to refocus on learning.
- When work is being shared, too much emphasis is given to how individuals or pairs can improve, rather than drawing out key points of learning for the whole class.

Pupils:

- do not know how to relate the learning for an individual lesson to wider learning about styles, genres or traditions;
- are not taught how to improve their skills and understanding and insufficient time is given to preparation of performances;
- are not given enough time or clear strategies to improve their work.

Resolving the issues

- Effective planning is explicit about musical learning - what it is that the pupils will learn, and how they will learn it.
- The learning objectives for the lessons are made explicit to pupils. They are constantly referred to, and pupils know how these objectives will support their wider learning.
- Expectations of learning are differentiated and made challenging for all pupils.
- The structure of lessons follows a broad pattern of 'engage - learn - review'. The 'learn' section contains a series of clearly defined episodes, each with its own learning objective and outcome.

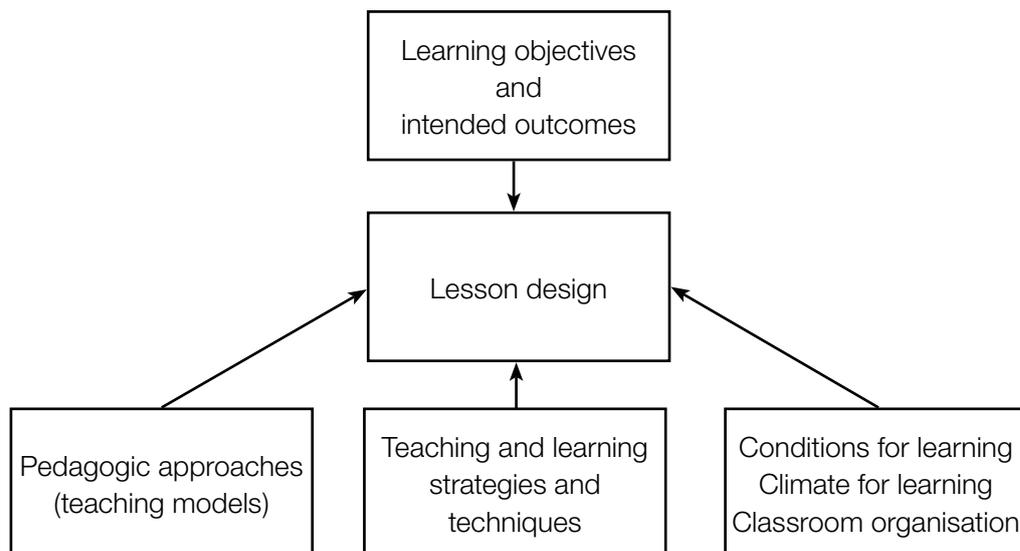
- Pupils learn through carefully structured engagement in practical music making and are immersed in relevant musical activity. Lessons are immediately focused on active involvement with sounds and music. The engagement activities at the start of a lesson are carefully planned. Thereafter, teaching uses a range of activities, short timescales, increasing levels of challenge and well-organised resources to develop learning.
- Pupils are encouraged to use different modes of learning, and are especially made to use thinking skills - how and why will learning be improved?
- Teachers and pupils use appropriate musical vocabulary to describe their learning.
- Lessons conclude with a high-quality musical experience to summarise and encapsulate the learning.

Teacher planning and pupil experience

This unit takes you through the complete planning process that results in effective lessons. This is described in the sections 'Factors affecting lesson design' (page 5), and 'Locating the lesson in context' and 'Identifying and sharing learning objectives' (pages 8-15). The sections 'Principles for structuring lessons' and 'Selecting teaching strategies' (pages 16-24) explore what pupils will experience within the lesson once the planning has taken place, along with the strategies needed to make the lesson effective. It is important to remember this distinction when working through the sections on lesson design, context and learning objectives (pages 5-15): the planning is only of value if it results in the kind of pupil experience described in the sections on structuring lessons and selecting teaching strategies (pages 16-24).

Factors affecting lesson design

Effective teachers consider the full range of factors when designing lessons:



Learning objectives and intended outcomes

Effective lesson design in music starts with identification of what it is that pupils will learn. This ensures that pupils are primarily involved in musical learning, with any practical activity designed to support and promote that learning.

The learning objectives for an individual lesson will derive from the teaching objectives for the relevant unit in the complete scheme of work. The link between the objectives for an individual lesson and the scheme of work is very important: if pupils are learning the conventions of music for film in the unit of work, what will they need to learn in a particular lesson about using chord clusters that will help them to understand that convention? Making this connection explicit to pupils is also important (see also the section 'Locating the lesson in context' (page 8)).

Having clearly defined the learning objective, it is important to go one step further and consider the intended outcome. What will pupils produce at the end of the lesson that will demonstrate learning has taken place: for example, an analysis of how to improve their ensemble performing, the start of a composition with critical features and techniques established, a fluent set of improvised choruses in a jazz piece? You will need to be clear from the outset what a good-quality outcome will sound or look like. This will help you to clarify your expectations with pupils, and to articulate the type of outcome that demonstrates musical learning: practical performance, oral description or written evidence (in notation, words or in an ICT format).

Establishing how pupils will learn is equally important as determining what they will learn. Learning objectives fall into five categories (see pages 11-12), and the nature of that learning objective will determine the teaching approaches and strategies you use.

Pedagogic approaches

Researchers have identified a number of different approaches to teaching that can promote different types of learning. Each of these has a defined sequence of

episodes or steps that give a particular structure to the lesson. The choice of pedagogic approach or teaching model will depend on the nature of the learning objective. Direct interactive teaching, inductive teaching and enquiry are examples of different approaches. The section 'Teaching models' (page 25) and Unit 2 of *Pedagogy and practice: teaching and learning in secondary schools* (DfES 04252004 G) explore these ideas further.

Using a range of teaching strategies

Within each pedagogic approach teachers may draw on a range of teaching strategies to maximise learning from their input. For example, modelling can be used to help pupils learn a new skill or procedure. Other strategies include questioning and explaining. Each has a set of procedures or methods that makes them effective. To embed and assess learning teachers can select from a wide range of techniques. Employing each strategy effectively and deciding which techniques are suitable are keys to successful music teaching. The section 'Selecting teaching strategies' (page 22) and Units 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 of *Pedagogy and practice: teaching and learning in secondary schools* (DfES 0423-2004 G) develop these ideas further. Owing to the practical nature of music, the range of strategies used by music teachers to embed musical learning may focus most strongly on how to:

- devise purposeful and varied episodes within lessons, and know how to move effectively between them;
- plan short timescales for practical activities, with new challenges for pupils at each re-start;
- use consistently a musical vocabulary to reinforce learning;
- plan the beginning and ending of lessons so that they enable effective musical engagement.

In addition, music teachers will need to ensure that they are using a range of:

- group work strategies;
- active listening and writing strategies;
- thinking challenges with pupils, to help them use problem-solving techniques when working creatively.

Conditions for learning

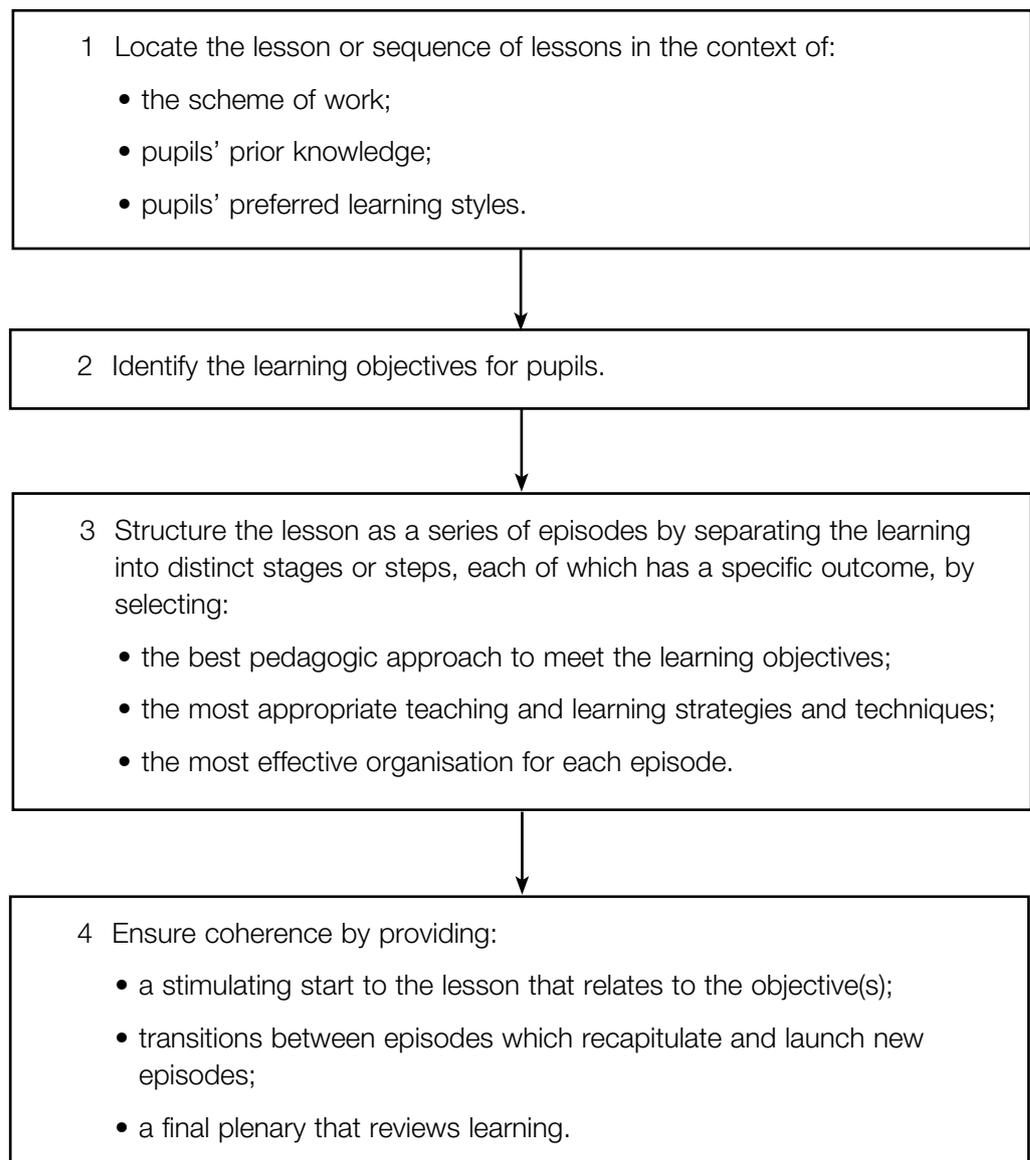
This area has two components: the climate for learning and the classroom organisation. Research shows that pupils learn most effectively when they feel motivated, confident and successful. The main factors contributing to a climate of success are:

- getting the pitch of the lesson right so that pupils can recognise and demonstrate their learning;
- establishing relationships that allow pupils to feel safe and able to respond;
- providing variety so that different learning styles can be accommodated over time.

Classroom organisation and the use and appearance of the physical environment can have an enormous impact on the attitudes and behaviour of pupils. Significant improvements in learning can result from simple alterations to aspects of the environment which are within the teacher's control. As far as possible, the organisation of the room should be appropriate to the teaching and learning strategies to be employed.

The process of lesson design

The process of lesson design is summarised below. The flow chart emphasises that lesson design can be viewed as a series of decisions, each leading to and providing a foundation for the next, building a planned series of episodes.



Locating the lesson in context

Lessons do not exist in isolation, and it is important to place the lesson in context. Most schemes of work have a unit structure, with themes running through all the lessons in the unit. It is important that the learning objectives for an individual lesson are located within the broader context of the whole unit so that the purpose of the learning is clear.

The first lesson of a unit

The first lesson of any unit provides you with the following opportunities.

- a) To engage pupils in the key features of the style, genre or tradition to be explored. This might:
 - introduce all the pupils to and directly involve them in a practical experience of the style, genre or tradition. This might be achieved by teaching a whole-class performance of a song, setting small groups the challenge of experimenting with and selecting musical ideas from a bank of starting points in response to a visual stimulus, or adding a body-percussion street dance to the accompaniment of an ICT-based backing track;
 - describe the music to be explored through active modelling and listening. This might involve you modelling key features of pop song ballads by playing and singing live different examples, using a visiting music specialist to lead a workshop, or by playing a video, CD-ROM, using ICT and then using questioning and explaining techniques to draw out the key features of the music.
- b) To find out what your pupils already know about the subject, and to help them recall work that they have done in previous years on similar topics.

Even if pupils do not have significant experience of the music to be studied, they will almost certainly know about contextual information that can be brought to bear on their learning. For instance, pupils might not know much about the music of Japan, but they may know about or recognise many features of Japanese society and culture that can inform their understanding. Unit 3: Creative teaching and learning in music describes example strategies (such as ‘Odd one out’) that can be powerful ways of eliciting this prior knowledge.

The process of exploring prior knowledge makes a link between pupils’ own lives and the learning about a particular musical style, genre or tradition. This helps to establish the relevance of this music to a pupil in C21st England, and to the individual pupils’ personal experiences. It also helps pupils to empathise with the aesthetic function of the music being studied, and to develop their own, personal understanding of the context.

A likely outcome of this introductory work is that the richness of the music's context will become apparent. Some pupils, for instance, may know a piece of music from its use in a television advert, while other pupils will know it as an example of Romantic music from the Western classical tradition. While it is important to articulate this range of contexts, it will be important to establish with pupils the specific context you wish to explore as the unit progresses. This will enable the pupils to focus on the particular type of musical thinking that will be developed through the unit.

Typically the first lesson in a sequence will also:

- describe the overall teaching objective of the unit (i.e. the 'big picture'): 'Over the next six weeks we will be learning about ...' or 'Your task over the next four lessons is to produce ...';
- tell pupils how they will know what they have achieved: 'By the end of this unit you will be able to ... (e.g. give a fluent performance of an arrangement of ...)'.

Task 1

The first lesson in a new topic

30 minutes

Watch [Video 2a](#). Notice how it:

- enables pupils to hear, see and discuss something of the original context, but also elicits from pupils their understanding of the context and conventions of samba music. This enables pupils to share and develop their personal perspective of the music and its context;
- articulates the learning for the unit against the context. This means that pupils will be able to locate all the learning that follows within a clear framework;
- engages pupils in a context-relevant, practical experience of the style.

Now consider the next unit you will be teaching from your Key Stage 3 scheme of work.

How does it suggest that you start the first lesson in a new sequence or topic? For example, by identifying the characteristics of a style by modelling it with a live demonstration, performing a simple instrumental arrangement, using video examples to lead pupils to an understanding of the music's purpose?

How well does the activity work?

Does it enable pupils to engage with the original context of the music, and recognise how this is relevant to their own personal experiences?

Does it enable pupils to get a musical sense of the style, genre or tradition?

If it is not already clear in the planning, devise a new way of engaging pupils in:

- the cultural context of the style, genre or tradition they will be exploring (e.g. by teaching the class a simple folk dance before exploring the conventions of folk music);
- the essential features of the music (e.g. by having the pupils learn a song and perform it with three styles of backing track before exploring the conventions of pop ballads in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s).

Development: Try the new ideas out when you next teach the unit and evaluate their effectiveness.

Lessons at the midpoint of a unit

There are different issues associated with designing lessons halfway through a unit of work. The tasks may require specific skills or understanding which do not immediately appear to relate directly to the wider context of the unit. However, pupils need to understand:

- how to develop the specific skills required;
- how the work will relate back to the main learning in the unit once completed.

For instance, in a unit on understanding the conventions of blues music, pupils may have been learning individual parts of a blues arrangement. Now they will need to play with others in an ensemble, which requires different and very specific skills (following a lead, being able to watch and hear cues, etc.). Only when pupils can do this effectively will their performance properly reflect the conventions of the blues style they are studying. The start of this lesson will therefore need to identify that the lesson is about how to play in an ensemble, so that pupils can perform their blues arrangement effectively. This will help pupils to understand:

- what it is they are going to learn, and how they will learn it;
- how the new learning relates to the wider learning about the style, genre or tradition they are studying.

In the blues example above, you might:

- remind pupils about how blues was often performed by groups, by playing examples of different blues groups on CD;
- identify how the different parts (bass, harmony, lead line and improvisation) fit within the overall ensemble context;
- after reviewing prior learning about ensemble performing, set a challenge for the pupils to identify what the potential ensemble problems might be for each of the example groups, and how these might stop the groups achieving the overall aim of an effective blues-style performance.

Once these points of learning have been established, pupils can return to their group performances, knowing how to develop their own ensemble skills, and how these will relate to the context of the blues convention they are studying.

Choose a lesson you are about to teach.

Identify where the pupils have reached in their learning and what the next steps of learning will be.

Devise a way of introducing the lesson so that the pupils are clear about:

- what they need to learn (the learning objective and intended learning outcomes);
- how this relates to the overall learning in the unit of work.

Ask a colleague to attend the lesson. Once the pupils are engaged in the main learning of the lesson, the colleague should ask them the following questions:

- What are you learning to do through this activity?
- How will this help you to learn about the conventions of ... (the style, genre or tradition being explored)?

The pupils should be able to answer either by talking about their work, or by demonstrating the answer musically.

Discuss the results with your colleague afterwards. If the pupils could not see how the learning related to the wider context, try to devise an alternative start to the lesson to use with another class, and see if it is more successful.

Identifying and sharing learning objectives

Having located and defined the purpose of the lesson, it is possible to plan the detailed learning that pupils will need to acquire during the lesson.

A two-step approach - in which pupils are told not only the purpose of the lesson but also what the teacher expects in terms of outcomes from tasks leads to improved learning, particularly for pupils who tend to make slower progress or who can be challenging.

Identifying learning objectives

The learning objective for your lesson will fit into one of the following five categories:

- 1 **Acquiring and applying knowledge** (*learning factual information, especially about features of musical elements but also about theory or notation, performers or performance practice and historical facts*)

If pupils are learning about the conventions of styles, genres and traditions, they need to know the technical aspects that contribute to them. Learning about features of musical elements (i.e. how polyrhythms work within duration) will be a critical aspect of this knowledge, along with relevant information about theory and performance or composition practice. Pupils must not just learn information, however: they need to be able to apply it within a practical context, enabling their musical understanding to flourish.

2 **Acquiring concepts** (*understanding the conventions, processes and procedures of different musical styles, genres and traditions*)

At the heart of pupils' musical learning is their understanding about how musical styles, genres and traditions work and convey meaning. The concepts involved require them to develop an understanding of musical conventions, processes and procedures, and how these reflect the artistic or cultural context within which they operate.

3 **Acquiring new behaviours, learning new skills** (*especially learning the practical skills of music: singing, performing, improvising, composing, analysing, evaluating and listening*)

Musical understanding can only be firmly embedded in pupils' learning when it is explored, applied and demonstrated through practical music making. This often requires the development of specific skills. Teaching methods will be carefully structured and involve direct interaction between teacher and pupil. They include direction and explanation on how to improve as well as what to do.

4 **Exploring attitudes and values, perspectives on a problem and solutions to complex issues** (*developing understanding through empathy, caring, sensitivity towards contexts, social issues and moral issues*)

The arts are about aesthetic development, and developing an understanding of the social and cultural contexts within which music making happens is an important part of the learning process. Enabling pupils to learn respect for other views, cultures and attitudes is a fundamental aspect of music education.

5 **Experiencing personal growth, developing creativity** (*creating, designing, hypothesising and exploring alternatives*)

Music is a creative as well as a performing art. Pupils learn how to solve problems by exploring artistic solutions to a wide range of musical challenges. In doing so, they gain confidence and self-esteem.

Any one lesson should have a maximum of three learning objectives and very often a lesson will only have one or two. This enables a proper focus on the learning, rather than an attempt to deliver too much activity.

Review two lessons you will be teaching in the next few days. Have you identified a maximum of three objectives you plan to share with pupils? Are they precise enough? Refine them by categorising them into one of the five sets of learning objectives.

You may find it helpful to use stems such as 'During this lesson you (pupils) will develop your (their) ...' plus:

- **Knowledge** by learning how ... (for factual information – how chromatic scale patterns are constructed, or how the bass clef works, etc);
- **Understanding** by learning how ... (for understanding - how the conventions, processes and procedures of musical styles, genres and traditions work);
- **Skills** by learning how ... (for skills - how to control instrument-specific techniques, develop and extend ideas, compare pieces of music, analyse information and learn to use it in music making, etc.);
- **Awareness and values** by learning how ... (for attitudes and perspectives - how to develop understanding of cultural contexts, the roles and functions of music and musicians in society, the purpose of music, etc.);
- **Creativity and thinking** by learning how ... (for personal growth – how to identify issues, explore creative processes and suggest alternative solutions to artistic problems when undertaking practical musical activities).

Notice that you are not just defining what pupils are to learn: using 'how' as a key word in the objective also indicates the process of learning that will be addressed.

Pedagogy and practice: teaching and learning in secondary schools, Unit 1: Structuring Learning (DfES 0445-2004 GDVD) (Task 3, page 7) suggests some alternative stems that you might find useful.

You might also want to see [Resource 2a](#) as an example of the way that the stems have been used by a teacher within a unit of work on the conventions of samba. The first page is a grid showing the full sequence of learning for the unit, and shows learning objectives for each stage of the sequence which have been defined by the stems above. The ensuing pages show how the stems have been copied into the individual lesson plans that follow.

Learning outcomes

Deciding in advance what you want as a learning outcome will help you to design the lesson. This should include the notional 'product' as well as considerations of both quality and quantity. If you expect a composition as an outcome, it is helpful to explain what message or style it should communicate, how many sections are needed, how many parts might be playing, what technical devices must be included and whether it needs to be performed live or via ICT.

For the same two lessons you looked at in Task 3, decide what outcomes you want from pupils.

You will want to explain and model to pupils what you expect from them as a high-quality outcome of each lesson.

Have you defined the outcomes clearly, with a range of qualities described? How do you plan to explain them to pupils?

You may find it helpful to use stems such as those in bold here.

What I am looking for is a confident, fluent performance of this gospel song by your group. You will convey a sense of joy and excitement, with a gradual build-up towards an excited conclusion. You will each be able to sing your own line together with one other person, and hold the part against the others. The style and tone of your singing will reflect the gospel style we rehearsed.

What I expect from everyone is a final piece of music that would work for an advert. A satisfactory example will reflect the product's selling point, by using an appropriate scale pattern to create an evocative melodic line, effective use of sound effects and chord sequences or chord clusters and some development of a melodic or rhythmic motif to try and bind the piece together.

To be successful your group will have identified five key features of classical Indian music - one each from the categories instruments, rhythms, structures, mood and one other issue of your choice. Each group member should choose a different example and be prepared to explain it. Groups will have 10 minutes to give their explanations.

The best work will show how you have created your own version of the reggae style by developing a distinctive rhythmic interplay between the bass and chords, and creating a chord sequence that imaginatively explores the tension between major and minor chords.

These relate to different musical examples so it is important to note the different expectations. Are yours similarly defined with increasing demand and quality?

Sharing learning objectives with pupils

The learning for the lesson is now clearly defined in terms of how it relates to pupils' long-term learning, what it is that pupils will learn and how they will learn it, and what the expected outcomes are. Now you need to decide how best to share this with pupils.

Task 5

Analysing video sequences of lesson introductions

10 minutes

Watch Video sequences 2b and 2c, taken from *Pedagogy and practice: teaching and learning in secondary schools*, Unit 1: Structuring learning (DfES 0445-2004 GDVD) which show the introductions to two lessons. Note how the teachers share the purpose with pupils and indicate what outcomes they expect.

Now reflect on your own introductions to lessons: How do you communicate your learning objectives and expectations to pupils? Are they communicated exclusively through language, or do you demonstrate musically? How can definitions of expectation be made more musical in your lessons without losing clarity of focus on the learning objectives and outcomes?

Task 6

Sharing learning objectives and outcomes

10 minutes

Now share the learning objectives and outcomes you developed in Tasks 3 and 4 in the lessons for which they were written.

Rather than asking 'Does everyone understand?' choose individual pupils to explain again or demonstrate musically to the class the objectives and the intended outcomes so that you can see at once where any misunderstandings lie.

Another way to find out whether your instructions are clear is to ask questions of pupils while they are working: 'Can you remind me of what we are trying to do?' or 'Why are we doing this?' or 'What do you have to do to demonstrate very good learning?'

Mid-unit review

At this point in the unit, it is worth reflecting on how you have developed your understanding of the unit's principles, and the impact of this on your classroom practice.

Look back at the 'Recognising impact' statements on page 2. Identify and consider how you can develop further:

- principles described in the first section which you now understand more securely and which are a more consistent focus for your teaching
- detailed strategies from the second section which are used more frequently in your teaching and which deliver intended learning more effectively
- positive changes you have noticed in pupils' learning or engagement, and how you can best build on them as you work through the remainder of the unit.

You may also wish to re-visit some of the unit to embed the new practice more securely before moving on to new ideas. Alternatively, if certain strategies have been particularly effective with one class, you may wish to use them with other classes, and to share the impact more widely across the department with colleagues.

Principles for structuring lessons

An effective lesson will be organised into a sequence of distinct learning episodes with a beginning (engaging the pupils in musical learning through teacher input), a middle (activities for pupils to explore and learn) and then a quick check for understanding before moving to the next episode. At the end of the lesson there might be a longer review time.

This plan for the lesson might be summarised as 'engage - learn - review' and it provides a useful framework for all lessons. The amount of time each episode requires will vary considerably, but the format can remain constant. When you decide how many episodes to cover in a lesson, and how long each should be, try not to exceed the concentration span of your pupils. For example, keep most episodes under 15 minutes for Year 7 pupils.

Equally, the activities and roles of the teacher and pupils within each section can vary considerably. Some lessons will involve large amounts of direct teacher input while others will see pupils spending most of the lesson resolving practical composition challenges.

Task 7

The 'good lesson guide'

30 minutes

Watch [Video sequence 2d](#) taken from *Pedagogy and practice: teaching and learning in secondary schools* (DfES 0445-2004 GDVD). Listen to what some Year 10 pupils consider constitutes a good lesson and then the teacher describing how his school has developed a whole-school approach. The result is that pupils have consistent expectations about their learning in all lessons.

When you have watched the sequence, reflect on how the approach compares with your lessons.

Ask your pupils what they feel constitutes a good music lesson. Ask yourself how you ensure consistency of teaching in music across your department.

Engage

The engagement episode of the lesson needs to do two things: to involve pupils in music and to articulate the learning for the lesson. It may therefore include any or all of the three following strategies.

Musical engagement

Pupils can be engaged with music from the moment they come into the room. Singing, rhythmic work, chanting, movement activities and improvisation can all be used to ensure that pupils immediately engage their 'musical thinking'. Music is unique. It is about sound, and is at once abstract, ephemeral and simultaneously complex. This thinking needs to be engaged from the very start of the lesson.

Starter activity

Starters are lively, engaging starts to lessons. They are the place to establish early teaching points or to position the 'little and often' objectives by revisiting and practising skills or consolidating knowledge. They also allow you to establish quickly any gaps in knowledge. They are often short (e.g. 5 minutes) and may involve activities that are not directly musical.

Introduction

All lessons need introductions where learning objectives and outcomes are shared. Here the scene is set and the lesson located in the context of previous and future learning. Pupils should be helped to see the 'big picture' - refer back to the section 'Locating the lesson in context' (page 8). Introductions are short, but be sure to allow enough time.

Sometimes, the musical engagement and starter activity can be delivered through one activity, so that pupils see how the opening activity helps them to establish what they will be learning in that lesson. This link between one-off, 'warm-up' activities and the learning that follows is important: without it, pupils will not see the relevance of the activity and may actually become disengaged.

At other times, engagement will be separate. This is most likely where a performance activity is being built up over the whole of a unit via short, quick-fire 'rehearsals'. For instance, in a unit on gospel music, pupils might work on a simple vocal call and response in week 1, add a bass line in week 2, a set of backing vocals in week 3, movement in week 4, and so on until the whole class is able to perform a complete song at the start of the unit's final week.

In lessons where this is happening, it is likely that following the musical engagement episode there will be an introduction and then a starter, simply to break up the activities for the pupils so that they are clear how a given activity is contributing to learning.

Learn

New learning or introduction of task

New learning is introduced by teacher input. This will draw on a range of strategies or techniques to engage pupils. It may involve listening to some music followed by a discussion or use modelling to teach a new skill. The length of input should relate to the age and maturity of the pupils. In a lesson concerned with developing a concept, the initial input may be very brief and confined to a description of the task. When introducing tasks, make clear the expected learning outcomes and suggest timings. There may be a series of carefully sequenced inputs during the lesson, each followed by a period of development.

Development

Pupils need opportunities to explore and use new knowledge, understanding or skills. They will learn by applying new ideas or trying to generate their own understanding from practical experience of music making. Once again, the tasks undertaken by pupils will be determined by the range of techniques known to the teacher and related to the nature of the learning objective. For example, removing and adding new loops to an existing audio file will enable

pupils to learn about textures within a given style. Again, the length of the activity should be related to pupils' age and maturity. More challenging pupils often benefit from shorter and more varied episodes.

Review

Plenaries

In plenaries pupils and teachers review and take stock of learning and there is an opportunity to reflect on the learning process itself. These periods may be short (e.g. 5 to 10 minutes) and it is important that learning points for the whole class are drawn out, rather than issues for individuals, pairs or groups. There may be a series of shorter plenaries throughout the lesson. It is important to recognise that plenaries in music can sometimes be purely musical - they do not have to include talking. This will not be the norm, but when pupils have demonstrably heard and 'caught' the music, trying to articulate the learning at that precise moment can actually destroy the very aesthetic learning that music is trying to develop.

In this scenario, the teacher will need to recognise what has happened, and identify strategies that enable pupils to understand later what that 'special moment' revealed about learning.

Summary case study

This describes the sequence shown above within a lesson that is part of a unit in Year 7 exploring the conventions of African songs for dance. The learning objective for this lesson is for pupils to learn how to create a new rhythmic ostinato in triple metre. Prior to the lesson, pupils have learned an African song with simple dance actions, revised their understanding of pulse and metre and learned how to perform a rhythm pattern in 4 metre.

Lesson sequence	Commentary
<p>Engage</p> <p><i>Musical engagement</i></p> <p>The pupils are immediately invited to join in with the actions of the song as the teacher sings it, and then with the song itself. Once the pupils are secure with the song, the teacher demonstrates a new dance action in 3 metre to be used in a particular part of the song</p>	<p>The pupils are immediately involved in musical activity, and are building on prior learning</p>

<p><i>Starter activity and introduction</i></p> <p>The teacher asks a group of pupils to accompany the singing with the 4 metre pattern learned previously. This helps to remind the pupils that the whole unit explores how rhythmic phrases are needed to highlight the structure of the music for dancers to respond to. The challenge for this lesson is then set: to create a similar 3 metre pattern of their own to go with the new dance movements</p>	<p>The learning for the individual lesson is located in the wider context of the whole unit, so that pupils understand why they need to undertake specific activities</p>
<p>Learn</p> <p>After revising how the 4 metre pattern works, the teacher models various ways by which pupils can adapt the pattern to turn it into a 3 metre pattern. A sophisticated challenge is set for more-able pupils (how to keep the same 4 metre pattern but turn it into a 3 metre pattern by repeating it three times to produce 12 beats, and then changing the accents)</p> <p>As pupils work on the composing challenge, the teacher visits groups and asks them to demonstrate how they are tackling the challenge</p> <p>After a short while, some groups are asked to share their work in progress. Other pupils in the class are challenged to identify how the new 3 metre patterns have been created</p> <p>For those who are ready, a new challenge is set: how can the performers change from the 4 metre pattern to the 3 metre pattern?</p> <p>The teacher reminds pupils about previous learning on the use of ensemble skills, using demonstration and careful questioning</p>	<p>Pupils are clear not only about what they have to do, but also how they can achieve it</p> <p>More-able pupils are challenged to think, not just play more technically challenging parts</p> <p>They also understand how the practical activity relates to the context of dance music in different metres</p> <p>Pupils understand that the process is as important as the outcome</p> <p>Pupils are engaged in active musical listening and use a musical vocabulary to describe their learning</p> <p>The teacher has identified points of learning for the whole class, not just individuals</p> <p>The new learning has been modelled so that pupils know how to progress</p>

Review

Groups of pupils perform their patterns while the rest of the class sings the songs with relevant dance actions

The teacher makes a judgement that while some groups have been fairly successful, the final musical impact has not been spectacular. He therefore uses careful questioning to establish whether the pupils agree, what they have found difficult in the learning challenges, and what they can do to address them in the next lesson

The pupils internalise their learning by being part of a worthwhile musical activity

Although there has been a musical conclusion to the lesson, pupils are made to think about how they might more effectively meet the challenges next week in order that they can better reflect the key conventions of the music

Plan in detail a lesson you will be teaching in the next few days. Make sure that you have identified the following episodes within the lesson, and signal them clearly to pupils as you teach the lesson.

How to **engage** the pupils:

- Have you established what musical activity the pupils will be engaged in at the very start of the lesson?
- Have you identified whether this builds on previous work?
- Will it simply act as a starter activity that will help pupils understand the main learning for the lesson?
- How will you introduce the learning for the lesson, and relate it to the wider learning of the unit? Will this introduction just be spoken, or will it involve more music?

How to help the pupils **learn**:

- Have you considered the best way of introducing the learning: by modelling the processes involved in the activities, by using examples that pupils listen to, or by demonstrating key issues with ICT resources?
- Will the pupils know how to learn? Have you set the challenge in such a way that the pupils will know how to address the problem?
- Will the pupils know how long they will have to work on the activity?
- Have you identified where the likely issues are to be? As a consequence, do you know what you are likely to be doing and saying to pupils at the end of this episode? Pupils will need to know how to improve or complete the first part of learning, what the next challenge is and how to meet it.
- How many episodes will be needed to deliver the intended learning? If there are several short episodes, what strategies will you use to introduce the new learning for each one (e.g. verbal explanation, demonstrations from pupils, listening activities)?

How to **review** the learning:

- What kind of musical ending will the lesson have, and how will this support the learning?
- Will you be able to draw out key points of learning, and help pupils to understand where their strengths and weaknesses lie at this stage in the unit?

The specific strategies you have used will have been partly determined by the type of musical activities being undertaken by the pupils. Different strategies will be needed when the musical challenges are very different. These can be explored in the next task.

Plan another lesson which has a very different focus and activity from lesson A in Task 8 (i.e. if that lesson was about a genre and involved composing, now look at a lesson focusing on a style that involves ensemble performing).

Go through the same processes as you did for Task 8.

Compare the impact on learning of the two lessons: did particular episodes need more or less time? Was it easier to establish challenge in some episodes than others? Did one lend itself more easily to a particular kind of engagement or plenary?

What does this now suggest about the ways that you structure different sorts of music lessons?

Selecting teaching strategies

Teachers need a repertoire of teaching strategies to promote learning and develop understanding. They also require a wide variety of techniques to engage pupils actively. The nature of the learning objective will determine when it would be appropriate to use each strategy within an episode of the lesson.

Some strategies are most suitable for activities that rely heavily on language and discursive thinking. There are good explanations of these techniques in *Pedagogy and practice: teaching and learning in secondary schools*, Unit 1: Structuring learning (DfES 0424-2004 G), and for those times when such thinking is required they will be essential techniques to use in music lessons. They will be particularly useful when developing pupils' learning in appraising, when the use of musical vocabulary and the ability to analyse, evaluate and justify decisions will require careful use of language.

However, music is its own language and has a distinct mode of learning. As a result, teachers need to use a wider range of strategies to enable pupils to learn effectively within the context of a practical, abstract, ephemeral and simultaneously complex subject.

Teaching strategies

Essential strategies for practical lessons include the following:

Involving pupils in challenging, complex activities

Remember that music operates on several levels: horizontally (passage of time) and vertically (changing textures), listening while performing, simultaneous kinaesthetic and auditory learning, and so on. Make sure that pupils are challenged in this way as much as possible, particularly in engagement or starter activities. For instance, do not just sing but add complex body movements at the same time - without losing the quality of the singing!

Modelling

It is essential that pupils understand not only what they are to do, but how they are to do it. Musical modelling is essential if they are to make effective progress in practical activities. This technique is explored in depth in Unit 4: Modelling in music.

Chunking

Pupils need to be taught how to break long and potentially complex tasks into smaller, more manageable activities. This applies equally to performing and composing. For instance, pupils learning to play a new piece on keyboards from notation will need to know how to read the notes, how to split the learning into phrases, how to recognise which phrases are similar, identical or different, where sequences occur that will aid memory, how to practise difficult passages in isolation and then place them within the context of the whole piece. When composing, pupils need to be guided to consider the resources to be used, the initial ideas, the techniques that will enable those first ideas to be developed into longer structures, how to collaborate with others and combine musical ideas.

Chunking initially enables the teacher to guide pupils towards successful progress. In the long term, it enables pupils to learn how to tackle such problems for themselves in a methodical way. This is because it focuses pupils on 'how to' strategies for small problems rather than on simple completion of an activity. Such emphasis leads to pupils thinking for themselves rather than relying on teacher direction at all times.

Strategic use of plenary

It is unusual for Key Stage 3 pupils to be able to concentrate and work purposefully alone or in a group much beyond 20 minutes - and in many cases for a much shorter time than this. They therefore need points within the lesson when they are guided collectively to review what progress has been made, identify where they need to go next, and how to move on to next steps. These moments of pause in music lessons should not be used to give individual feedback. They should be used to:

- identify key points of learning that are (or are not) being successfully addressed by the class as a whole;
- demonstrate effective learning as models for others to follow;
- set new challenges for all (e.g. 'Make sure that you can play the A section within the next 2 minutes; if you can do that already, choose which of the Latin American rhythm functions will fit best - and be able to give two reasons why you made that decision').

Sometimes the plenary will be very short. It will be clear that almost everyone is at the same point, and all that is needed is a refocus. Others will take more time, as the differences within the class become apparent. It is also true that composing lessons need fewer plenaries, as pupils need time to explore and experiment with their ideas.

Identifying appropriate time slots

Pupils need time to prepare for effective performances of compositions. This means signalling to pupils that the time for exploration or development is over, and that they need to start working on how to perform their piece.

They also need time to put into effect any analysis of their work that has identified weaknesses and determined how it can be improved. This means that traditional appraising activities need to happen not only at the end of composition projects, but also in the middle. The key here is to teach pupils how to analyse their work effectively, and then give them time to work on their improvements. This will not lead to a general sharing of work in progress, with a few comments on each one: it will lead to a focused modelling of how to analyse work, time for pupils to practise the analysis, a sharing of the analysis (rather than of the work in progress), and then more time to put the analysis into practice.

Group work and group talk

Group work and group talk are essential features of music lessons, but the teaching strategies that can make them effective are rarely used in music lessons. They are described very effectively in *Pedagogy and practice: teaching and learning in secondary schools*, Unit 10: Group work (DfES 0433-2004 G) and in the *Literacy in music* materials (DfES 0261-2004). There is also further advice in Unit 3: Creative teaching and learning in music.

These sorts of approaches are particularly useful for producing more effective listening and appraising episodes in music lessons, but the principles can be used more widely in practical work.

Task 10

Focusing on one groupwork strategy

30 minutes

Identify one strategy from the list of strategies above that does not feature strongly in your current practice.

Use the strategy in a practical lesson, and review what impact the strategy had on pupils' progress and/or motivation.

Consider how more focused use of the strategy might improve the progress still further (e.g. if using chunking, do the pupils need the chunks to be even smaller - and if so, will that episode best be taught to pupils as a whole class or in groups or pairs?)

Teach a similar lesson with this revised focus, and consider the pupils' progress now.

Teaching models

While music has distinctive modes of learning to address, and models of teaching to match, there are generic learning issues which can be addressed in music lessons by using standard pedagogical approaches.

The three most common approaches - direct, inductive and enquiry - are investigated in *Pedagogy and practice: teaching and learning in secondary schools*, Unit 1: Structuring learning, Section 6 (DfES 0424-2004 G). The following table shows how they can be seen to relate to musical learning.

	Direct	Inductive	Exploratory
Purpose	To acquire new knowledge or skills	To develop a concept or process	To use, consolidate or refine skills and understanding
Key features	A structured sequence often beginning with whole-class work modelling, demonstration or illustration	A structured set of directed steps. Pupils construct categories, and generate and test hypotheses	Testing a prediction or hypothesis based on the understanding of a concept
Key questions	How could you ...? Why am I doing this?	Can you group these? Can you see any pattern?	What might affect ...? What possible reasons are there for ...?
Musical application	How to use fingered chords on keyboard How to create a bass riff for a reggae piece	Understanding of features of elements: how scale patterns are formed Understanding of conventions: how adverts use motif, sound effects, etc.	Compositional challenges: how to create a counting song for infants Performing challenges: how best to communicate the feel of a song

The effective use of these teaching models can be a powerful tool for improving learning in the classroom, but to integrate them into your practice successfully is beyond the scope of this unit. The 'Developing practice' section (page 27) indicates how you might begin to incorporate their use into your teaching.

Summary of research

Interacting with the whole class

Whole-class interactive teaching has been identified by researchers as being effective in raising attainment. Early teacher effectiveness researchers in the USA, using classroom observation, gradually started to find patterns indicating that more effective teachers (i.e. teachers whose students made stronger gains on standardised achievement tests) tended to teach the whole class actively, spending significantly more time than ineffective teachers explicitly lecturing, demonstrating or interacting with the class (Rosenshine, 1979).

Much British research has studied the overall organisation of the classroom. A British study was carried out by Mortimore et al. (1988), who collected an immensely rich database with information on children, their classrooms, their primary schools and their individual characteristics, utilising a cohort of children followed through the four years of British junior school education. Generally, Mortimore et al. found, as did Galton, that teachers were spending much more time on communicating with individual children than on whole-class teaching or facilitating collaborative group work.

At classroom level the characteristics of effective teachers were:

- taking responsibility for ordering activities during the day for pupils, i.e. structuring teaching;
- giving pupils some responsibility for their work and independence within these sessions;
- maintaining high levels of interaction with the whole class;
- providing ample, challenging work;
- maintaining high levels of pupil involvement in tasks;
- creating a positive atmosphere in the classroom;
- giving high levels of praise and encouragement;
- using a variety of approaches, strategies and techniques.

Pedagogic approach and structuring learning

It has been recognised by contributors such as Olson and Torrance (1998) and others that, to be effective, teachers need to deploy a range of different pedagogic approaches and teaching strategies to meet the needs of the subject, to address the type of objective and to match the maturity of the pupils. Researchers such as Joyce et al. (2002) argue that there is a range of pedagogic approaches that not only are 'tools for teaching' but also provide 'models for learning'. They separate the pedagogic approaches into different families, depending on the type of objective for a lesson or part of a lesson. The information-processing family, designed to meet objectives about acquiring knowledge and understanding, includes approaches such as inductive thinking, concept attainment, scientific

enquiry and cognitive growth. The social family, designed to meet objectives about exploring perspectives on a problem and exploring solutions to complex issues, contains role-play, group investigation and social enquiry as approaches. A third family is focused on changing behaviours and includes direct teaching, mastery learning, social learning and simulation. These can help to meet objectives about acquiring new skills, learning procedures, applying ideas and developing knowledge.

These families of pedagogic approaches all have one thing in common: they are all highly structured with distinct stages, or episodes. Research suggests that, when a teacher designs a lesson, each episode in the sequence needs to be planned in advance, even down to the questions the teacher will ask at each point.

Next steps

This unit has explored an aspect of teaching and learning. You may wish to develop your ideas further, to consolidate, apply ideas in different contexts or explore an aspect in more depth and innovate.

Reflection

Refer back to the 'Recognising impact' statements on page 2 and your planning sheet for this unit. Use these to evaluate:

- the impact of this unit on your teaching;
- the impact on pupils' learning.

Developing practice

Here are some suggestions for developing your practice further:

- Try varying the length of your teaching episodes and note what effect this has on pupils. What is their time-limit capacity? Is there a difference in the optimum episode length for different groups? Challenging pupils and those who tend to make slower progress benefit from shorter episodes.
- Over time build a wider teaching repertoire. Read the examples of teaching models in *Pedagogy and practice: teaching and learning in secondary schools*, Unit 1: Structuring learning, Section 6 (DfES 0424-2004 G). Consider how they might apply to your music lessons.
- Adapt a lesson plan in order to focus more explicitly on one of these pedagogical approaches.
- Talk to other teachers working in other arts subjects to discuss the impact of using the models on learning.

Setting targets

Having considered your next steps, you may wish to set yourself some personal targets to support your CPD. You could use these targets to inform your performance management discussion.

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References and further reading

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