

Course:	High School Advanced Music Studio
Unit Overview:	Setting Poetry to Music: Learners will select an English-language poem from their experiences in English class. In the music lab classroom, learners will learn and apply techniques for recording vocals, and utilize prior knowledge of music composition and digital recording to produce an original musical setting of the spoken poem.
Unit Goals:	Given prior instruction in English-language poetry and use of digital audio workstation (DAW) software, the learner will be able to set a poem to music using a combination of pre-recorded loops and original musical composition. The learner will acquire knowledge and skills of recording live audio to record the poem as a spoken-word vocal track, and incorporate higher-level audio editing skills to create a finished product.
Type of learning required:	Types of learning required will include: (a) domain-specific problem solving for music composition and arranging tasks; (b) procedural learning steps needed to manipulate the DAW software; (c) psychomotor learning in handling technology, playing piano keyboard, setting up and effectively using a microphone to record, and (d) attitude learning relative to the emotional content of the poem and ways in which cultural conventions use musical elements to express emotions.
Information Processing Analysis:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Select a poem previously read in English class. 2. Practice reading the poem and reciting it with expression. 3. Analyze text for natural rhythm of speech and expressive elements. 4. Select the meter and tempo that best fits the rhythmic flow of the text (e.g. $\frac{3}{4}$ time at quarter note = 92). Note areas of the text where the tempo should shift or change. 5. Select a musical scale and key (tonality, e.g. G minor) to fit the emotional content of the text. Note areas of the text where the tonality should shift or change. 6. Select and arrange appropriate musical loops from within the DAW software to fit the choice of meter and mood. 7. Compose at least one original 8-bar segment to fit the desired aesthetic for one section of the poem. 8. Use piano keyboard or guitar and DAW editing skills to record the 8-bar segment cleanly. 9. Set up and test microphone, including correct handling of USB interface, cables and microphone stand. 10. Record vocals. (spoken poem, not singing) 11. Edit vocals, including adding reverb. 12. Break down and put away microphone, stand, interface, and cables. 13. Evaluate balance of tracks, and adjust volume levels accordingly. 14. Review audio project for appropriate musical dynamics (volume changes), reverb, and pan changes to create desired emotional effect.

Instructional Standards:New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards

1. Visual and Performing Arts

- 1.1.12.B.1 Examine how aspects of meter, rhythm, tonality, intervals, chords, and harmonic progressions are organized and manipulated to establish unity and variety in genres of musical compositions.
- 1.3.12.B.3 Improvise works through the conscious manipulation of the elements of music, using a variety of traditional and nontraditional sound sources, including electronic sound-generating equipment and music generation programs.
- 1.3.12.B.4 Arrange simple pieces for voice or instrument using a variety of traditional and nontraditional sound sources or electronic media, and/or analyze prepared scores using music composition software.
- 1.4.12.B.2 Evaluate how an artist's technical proficiency may affect the creation or presentation of a work of art, as well as how the context in which a work is performed or shown may impact perceptions of its significance/meaning.

8. Technological Literacy

- 8.1.8.A.5 Select and use appropriate tools and digital resources to accomplish a variety of tasks and to solve problems.

9. 21st-Century Life & Career Skills

- 9.1.12.A.1 Apply critical thinking and problem-solving strategies during structured learning experiences.
- 9.1.12.F.2 Demonstrate a positive work ethic in various settings, including the classroom and during structured learning experiences.
- 9.4.12.A.16 Employ critical thinking skills (e.g., analyze, synthesize, and evaluate) independently and in teams to solve problems and make decisions.

Common Core English Language Arts Standards

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple

meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)

Learning Objectives:

1. Given prior instruction in English language poetry, the learner will select, recite, and communicate the meaning of a poem, as measured by a performance rubric.
2. Given prior instruction using Digital Audio Workstation software (e.g. GarageBand or Mixcraft), the learner will be able to construct backing tracks using pre-made musical loops to fit the rhythm, mood and overall length of the poem selected as measured by a project evaluation rubric.
3. Given prior instruction in music composition including melodic development and chord progressions, the learner will be able to compose and record a musically coherent, eight-measure segment of music to fit the rhythm and mood of a section of the poem selected, as measured by a project evaluation rubric.
4. Given instruction in microphone techniques for recording vocals and a fully equipped music-recording lab, the learner will be able to capture and edit vocals cleanly as measured by a recording checklist.
5. Given instruction in audio mixing, the learner will be able to create a finalized audio recording in which all tracks are balanced and contain pleasing aesthetic elements including dynamics (volume changes), reverb and use of pan, as measured by a project evaluation rubric.

Learner Analysis:

The 16-20 learners in the Advanced Music Technology class range in age from 16-18 years old, and are 11th and 12th graders. Typical gender makeup of the course is 60% male, 40% female. The learners come from diverse ethnic backgrounds, though all can be classified as middle class. All have a high comfort level with technology. Students represent a variety of academic tracks, ranging from AP/Honors to In-Class-Support (ICS) for one or more courses. Each learner successfully completed the Music Technology and Composition course, a prerequisite for Advanced Music Studio. All learners are currently enrolled in at least one English class, and have extensive experience reading aloud and giving presentations.

Each learner, through the prerequisite course, has demonstrated intermediate or advanced skill in using DAW software to create music

using pre-recorded loops. All have at least rudimentary knowledge of audio editing and mixing. The learners vary in music composition skill from early-intermediate (able to compose simple melodies and harmonies in a structured setting) to advanced (independent composers of traditional and non-traditional musical styles).

All learners are musically proficient on at least one instrument, and demonstrate a minimum of advanced-beginner level skill when playing piano (able to play proficiently with one hand, and play simple songs with both hands). Learners who play guitar have had prior experience with procedures for connecting a guitar to the computer.

As this is an elective course, it is anticipated that learners will be highly motivated. In the prerequisite course, learners universally completed projects with diligence and creativity. There was mutual respect among learners, which led to a collegial environment in which learners frequently asked one another for feedback and advice. It is anticipated that a similar working environment will exist among learners in this unit of instruction.

Unit Schedule:

Target date for implementation is May 1, following April “Poetry Month” activities in English classes.

Day 1: Introduction of project and learning objectives

Exploration and discussion of suitable poems

Teacher modeling of sample projects

Instruction: guidelines for poem selection and expectations for expressive reading/recitation (including teacher modeling)

Homework: poem selection and rehearsal

Day 2: Teacher modeling of poem rehearsal and discussion of performance rubric

Teacher modeling of thought process for selection of musical elements and materials, including soliciting student input through questioning techniques.

Independent rehearsal of poems

Independent work selecting musical elements and materials to construct backing tracks in DAW software

Teacher: Individual assessment of poem reading/recitation while learners proceed independently

Day 3: Review of process for constructing backing tracks in DAW software

Teacher modeling of peer conferencing strategies, including soliciting student input for questions to ask of peers and model responses for feedback

- Teacher: continue/complete individual assessment of poem reading/recitation while learners proceed independently and with peer guidance
- Peer conferencing to verify progress and offer suggestions for backing tracks
- Day 4: Instruction, review and modeling of composition techniques for 8-bar original composition segment
- Teacher 1:1 progress checks and coaching
- Day 5: Direct instruction: microphone handling, set-up, DAW configuration for microphone, level testing, recording protocol, microphone break-down (clean up), including correct methods for cable wrapping and storage
- Display and discussion of Recording Checklist
- Independent work with microphones
- Small group and individual reinforcement of microphone skills
- Day 6: Review of microphone techniques and procedures
- Direct instruction: mixing techniques including
- Adjusting levels to balance tracks
 - Fades to create dynamics
 - Use of pan for interest and sense of three dimensions
 - Use of reverb for natural sound as in an auditorium
- Independent work
- Individual assessment of vocal recording using Recording Checklist
- Day 7: Peer review: Check project against project evaluation rubric. Give informal critique and feedback including strategies for completion and suggestions for improvement.
- Independent work
- Teacher progress checks and coaching
- Day 8: Target date for completion.
- Independent work
- Teacher 1:1 progress checks and coaching
- Day 9: In-class ‘performances.’ Playing of all projects aloud for class, with discussion and celebration of accomplishment

**Instructional
Materials:**

Poetry books & resources (on loan from English department)

Exemplar projects

Reference copies of: poetry performance rubric
project evaluation rubric
audio recording rating scale

Methods:

Direct, whole group instruction

Individual review and coaching

Peer critique and coaching

Technology:	Computers with DAW software (e.g. GarageBand or Mixcraft) MIDI piano keyboards connected to each computer Guitars, with cables and interfaces (available for optional learner use) Headphones for each learner USB interfaces and cables to connect microphones to each computer Microphones with acceptable frequency response (Shure SM 58, equivalent or better) Microphone stands XLR cables for microphones
Differentiation of Instruction:	Due to the individualized nature of the end-product of this unit of instruction, differentiation will be achieved through: Learner self-selection of poem Accommodation for English Language Learners (ELL) through selection of appropriate poem for current level of English proficiency Individualized instruction and reinforcement to achieve sub-objectives at each stage of instructional process Additional checklists and reference guides as specified by IEP for any learner enrolled in the course.
Learner Activities:	Poetry reading/reciting Computer software manipulation Music arranging (loop-based content) Music composition (original content) Microphone set-up/break-down
Critical Thinking:	Learners will engage in critical thinking in this unit of instruction through: Selection of an appropriate piece of poetry (<i>analysis, evaluation</i>) Choosing musical material to fit poem (<i>analysis</i>) Creating (composing) new musical material and arranging musical material to fit the length and pace of the poem (<i>synthesis</i>) Editing and mixing the music to create a cohesive whole (<i>analysis, evaluation</i>) Engaging in peer critique and coaching (<i>evaluation</i>).
Assessment:	Formative assessments will occur on an informal basis during each teacher progress check and coaching session. Peer-assessment will occur on an informal basis on at least two occasions during this unit of instruction (Day 3, Day 7, and perhaps on Day 9). Summative assessments will occur: Days 2-3 to evaluate student competency in poetry reading/reciting using the Performance Rubric. (Learning Objective 1)

Day 6 to evaluate vocal recording quality using the Recording Checklist. (Learning Objective 4)

Day 9 and beyond to evaluate the final product using the Project Rubric. (Learning Objectives 2, 3, and 5)

Assessment tools: Poetry Reading/Reciting Performance Rubric

Vocal Recording Checklist

Project Rubric

Advanced Music Studio: **Poetry Reading/Reciting Performance Rubric**

	1	2	3	4
Volume (loudness)	Inappropriate volume for space and audience. More practice is highly recommended.	Audible, but too quiet; Volume not used effectively. More practice is recommended.	Appropriate volume used with a little room for improvement.	Highly appropriate volume for space and audience.
Voice and Articulation	Lack of clarity and notable mispronunciations	Mumbling, monotone or affected tone	Clear, adequate articulation	Very clear, crisp, effective articulation
Pacing	Slow or hurried; distracting rhythm	Paced unevenly, few instances of appropriate rhythm	Even pacing and effective rhythm	Highly effective use of rhythm, and pacing
Vocal intonation and expression	Not effective; more practice with intonation is strongly recommended.	Moderately effective and expressive intonation used with room for improvement and practice.	Effective and expressive intonation used to reinforce change in mood, voice, setting, and/or characterization.	Highly effective and expressive intonation used to reinforce change in mood, voice, setting, and/or characterization.
Evidence of understanding	Doesn't sufficiently communicate meaning of poem.	Satisfactorily communicates meaning of poem	Interprets poem very well; Nuances add to meaning and interpretation.	Masterfully interprets poem, revealing poem's meaning.

Grading

A: 20-17 A-: 16

B: 15-14 B-: 13

C: 10-12 F: 9 or less. More practice and re-evaluation required.

Adapted from poetryoutloud.org and readwritethink.org

Advanced Music Studio: **Vocal Recording Checklist**

CRITERIA TO BE MET	not at all (0)	partially (1)	fully (2)	POINTS
<i>Teacher observations</i>				
Microphone, stand, cables, and interface set up correctly with no assistance				
Class protocol followed for taking turns recording to avoid background noise and interference with classmates' work				
Microphone, stands, cables and interface stored correctly, including proper wrapping of cables				
<i>Recorded product</i>				
Volume levels are appropriate - no clipping or distortion due to excessive loudness or proximity effect; wave form on screen viewed as filling the track frame (loud enough)				
Audio quality indicates correct microphone placement relative to sound source (mic was pointed correctly and an appropriate distance from mouth)				
Clean recording free of background noise and interference				
Clean rendering of spoken word (poem); No mispronunciations, missing words or syllables				
Logical use of dynamics or volume fades relative to content of spoken word				
Use of reverb to simulate a live performance venue or auditorium				
TOTAL (18 possible)				

Grades:

A: 16-18

B: 14-15

C: 12-13

>12: Re-recording required

Advanced Music Studio: **Project Rubric - Setting Poetry to Music**

	4	3	2	1
Tempo and meter fit rhythm and pacing of spoken text	Excellent fit of tempo and meter, including changes as dictated by content of text	Good fit with few or no changes in tempo	Some sections of music fit text, with some clear areas for modification or improvement	Poor fit. Extensive changes and modifications needed.
Scale & key (tonality) fit overall emotive elements of poem	Clear fit, including shifts of tonality (i.e. minor to major) with shifts in emotional inflection of poem	Clear fit with few or no shifts in tonality	Some sections aligned tonally with emotive elements in text; One or two noticeable areas needing modification for better fit	Few or no instances where choice of tonality are aligned with text. (i.e. consistent use of minor key for celebratory text)
Use of pre-made loops to provide musical content	Excellent choices of loops based on tonality & mood of text; Loops modified and varied to provide a constant feeling of forward motion.	Good choices of loops based on tonality & mood of text; One or two areas in which loops need to be modified and varied to maintain forward motion	Some good loop choices. Noticeable areas with poor fit, and need for different loop choices or loop modification to create forward motion	Many choices overly repetitive or inconsistent with meaning of poetry
Original 8-bar melody and harmonization	Excellent melodic motive and development with interesting harmonization	Good melodic motive with appropriate harmonization	Melodic motive lacks distinction which will make it memorable OR harmonization is incorrect/illogical	Lack of clear melodic motive; Harmonic changes may be present but lack meaning without melody
Vocal track	Excellent expression in vocals; clear effective recording including use of reverb or pan	Good expression in vocals; technically correct recording but somewhat lacking in technical finish such as reverb or pan	Some expression in vocals; one or two technical recording issues noticeable	Vocals are present but reflect lack of expression and/or several technical recording issues
Overall Mix	Tracks are balanced so that text and musical elements are clearly audible. Interest is added with fades and pan changes and accentuate the meaning of the poetry.	Tracks are mostly balanced though elements are obscured in one or two instances; Some use of fades and pan, but more editing is needed to maintain alignment with meaning of poetry.	Several instances where elements are out of balance and poetry or music is lost. Some attempt made at technical editing, but fades and pan changes are not aligned to poetry.	Poor balance, with one or more tracks obscuring the poetry. Few or no instances of fades or pan changes.

Grades:

A: 21-24

A-: 20

B: 17-19

B-: 16

C: 12-15

F: 11 or less (revise project and resubmit)

References

- English language arts standards; Reading: Literature; Grade 11-12. (n.d.). Retrieved from
Common core state standards initiative website: <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/11-12/>
- Lesser, J., & LoPresti, M. (2010, July 25). *Curriculum: Advanced music studio AAAV 1039*. Unpublished typescript, East Brunswick Public Schools, East Brunswick, NJ.
- NJ core curriculum content standards: Visual and performing arts. (n.d.). Retrieved from New Jersey Educator Resource Exchange website: <http://njcore.org/standards/statestand/12831>
- Poetry out loud scoring rubric*. (n.d.). Retrieved from
<http://www.poetryoutloud.org/uploads/fl/af34c39739/scoring%20rubric.pdf>
- Poetry speaking and performance rubric*. (n.d.). Retrieved from
http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson1001/poetry.pdf
- Russell, M. K., & Airasian, P. W. (2012). *Classroom assessment: concepts and applications* (7th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw Hill.
- Smith, P. L., & Ragan, T. J. (2005). *Instructional Design* (Third ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.