OLTD 511 - Assignment #3
Blenderized Elementary Music Program G3~5
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Proposal:
To begin the year, during the first month students would spend one of their two weekly periods in the computer lab, learning about and practicing musical theory concepts such as beat, rhythm, melody, and harmony, as well as note reading. Following this, students would be creating a music portfolio throughout the rest of the year. They would do this by learning instruments both in class and independently. Their goal with the instrument(s) would be to learn them to the point where they could play one or more songs individually or in groups. Other than instruments, students might choose to create soundscapes using natural sounds from the environment. They would then use school iPads on a sign-out basis (during class or at lunch with supervision) when they were ready and record themselves (audio). We would then transfer the created file to the class dropbox or local storage (depending on school/district approval). Students shall create a minimum of one recording per month but are free to do as many as they like. Near the end of the school year, students will be given the option to compile and "produce" their learning and burn it to CD (or put it on a USB if they bring one in). They will design their album cover, title, and any notes. With permission from the school and parents, students may choose to publish their album to an online site (perhaps YouTube, SoundCloud, iTunes, etc.) This proposal could also be combined with the Entrepreneur fair that happens frequently in schools at the intermediate level. This could be done as a one-year project, or as a project that spans their years at the school, culminating as the graduate to their next level of studies (middle / high school). In addition to the album component, students would also be required to either perform live or showcase one of their recordings 3 times a year.

What is your original/starting learning environment?
I currently teach elementary music (G1~5) in an elementary school in the Comox Valley. I have about 250 students in 10 classes. Each class visits me twice a week for 30 minutes. We have a class set of xylophones/metallophones, a class set of guitars, some djembes, congas, and various rhythm instruments. The music room is designed as a band room with built-in risers. The school is in a middle/upper class neighborhood. Traditionally the school's program has been a lot of singing and some basic use of instruments. The only technology currently used is a projector connected to a computer for the purpose of playing videos or showing lyrics on the screen. Students have one winter concert during the year.

What problems you are trying to address by making this change?
I would like to see more involvement from the students musically. They are good singers for the most part, but cannot read music. Many students in my school come to music and consider it game time. They are not concerned about where music could lead them and what the significance of learning beat, rhythm, melody, and harmony is. If the students could relate what they were doing to something tangible and practical for their lives, they may be more intrinsically motivated to learn about music and its possibilities. In addition, the classes are only 30 minutes long which means effectively just 20~25 minutes of usable time when we take away arrival and departure. Students often ask to play the instruments, but it is hard to get them playing together in an organized fashion because some want to play one instrument, and others something else. I would like to restructure the class through the addition of some blended learning in order to have the students be able to play more of the instruments, as they choose, and be more involved in their musical journey.

What would you like students to control (Time, place, path, pace)?
I would like the students to control the following:

Time: Students would have designated time during the class to practice and record. They would have some deadlines for completion, but could use as much of their own time to work on the project. Time would also be available during lunch break with prior arrangement and approval from the teacher.

Place: Students could learn in the class, outside during breaks, their own private lessons, in their homes, or wherever they can find time to do it appropriately.

Path: Students can choose the ultimate goal of their project, whether to simply complete the class requirements or to work toward mastery of an instrument and publishing of their work.

Pace: There is opportunity for the students to advance at their own pace and create as many recordings as they like. They can also spend more time on design and publication if they finish their recordings early. Students would be responsible for signing up for performance times for each term. This could be as early or late in the term depending on their progress and self-pacing. There is not too much leeway for slowing down more than the minimum of one track per month.

What is the role of the teacher?

The role of the teacher will be to provide skills training as necessary and as possible during class time. As part of this training,

- During the first month of the year, we would use the independent time in the computer lab working with a website (musictechteacher.com) to give the students the opportunity to learn the basics of music theory through gamified practice. This is largely self-directed and can also be continued at home.
- I would provide links to tutorial videos (either already available or created by myself if necessary) to assist students with their learning outside of class.
- I would be guiding them and encouraging them to try different instruments/songs/styles to add to their portfolios.
- If students needed to borrow a school instrument, I would need to facilitate this by providing the required permission forms.
- I would also be responsible for ensuring that the technology is working properly and helping the students transfer their files.
- I would also need to help them with publishing their albums.
- Depending on the agreed upon (school approval) platform(s) privacy and informed consent forms might need to be developed by the teacher to be sent home and have signed. I would need to provide the sign-up sheets and ensure that students are completing their performances.

What changes to the physical environment will you make?

Little change to the physical environment would be necessary. There are 3 small rooms in the corners of the music room where students could work individually or in groups. The technology needed is portable and would not necessitate any change to the physical environment. In addition, this program would be blended with the traditional music program and thus necessitates the original room configuration. Finally, I am only responsible for half of the music programs in the school and the other teacher needs to keep the room the same for band.

What software or hardware might you use?

- I would be taking advantage of the available iPads in the school to use as recording devices.
- Depending on the approval from administration, we would either store the recordings on a portable hard drive, or an online cloud solution.
- Depending on the age and proficiency of the students, they may elect to use software like Garageband, or a mixer app to remaster or edit their recordings.

- I am open to the idea of BYOD providing there is permission and consent from the parents and administration.
- The ultimate product would still need to be transferred to the school storage solution. Students who wish to produce their album and store it on a USB flash drive would be required to bring their own. Otherwise, one CD per student would be provided for production purposes.
- Time in the computer lab would be used toward the end of the year for album cover design.
- In the event that I need to create videos to facilitate the students' learning, I have the required software and hardware to do this at home. I would likely publish any videos on YouTube in a specific channel for students to easily find.

How will you mix/balance online and F2F modalities?

This initiative gives the students an opportunity to showcase their musical talents to the rest of the class and more by doing some independent learning outside of the class and bringing it in to share with everyone. It does not require students to take private lessons, but can give them a place to show what they have learned.

In class, students would participate in traditional music learning such as whole group instruction for choir, ukulele, recorder, etc., for one class, and their independent project for the other class each week.

The out of class and online components would be largely student directed and self-paced with monthly deadlines.

How will the different modalities provide an integrated learning experience?

- The mix of self-directed and teacher-directed instruction in the class will give the students an opportunity to explore areas of music that are interesting to them.
- It will give them a chance to try out real world applications for musical skills.
- By completing this project, they can gain understanding of most of the facets of a business model from design, production, marketing to publication.
- As mentioned in the proposal it can be integrated into a school-wide entrepreneur fair idea as one of their sellable products.
- By having some control over time, place, path, and pace, students can engage at their own level of ability and be creative with their creations.

Analyzing the proposal through SMART: (Horn & Staker, 2015, p. 102)

- **Specific -** This targets students' improvement in musical literacy, proficiency, and intrinsic motivations in music education.
- **Measurable** - Through the portfolio, progress will be evident by examining how the student's proficiency or understandings has changed over the year.
- **Assignable** - I will be responsible for the facilitation of the program. The Principal will be responsible for giving the ok for use of any related technology or software.
- **Realistic** - This program should be able to achieve the intended results easily with the given available resources.
- **Time Related** - The results will be achieved by the end of the school year.

Conclusion

Music education is a difficult to move into the blended learning realm. While it is possible to have students learn instruments entirely through the use of YouTube videos, or engage in enrichment learning online, these are rife with pitfalls such as teaching incorrect posture, playing styles, or the availability of inappropriate content in the form of music videos or lyrics. I believe that this program may be able to sidestep these pitfalls by providing teacher-certified content or links for the online content. This, in combination with one-to-one face-to-face instruction in the class can greatly help with the acquisition of musical skills. Ultimately, I believe that this program will help students become intrinsically motivated to learn about and experiment with music in a way that makes sense to them. I believe that in this case we are avoiding the "technology for technology's sake" (Horn & Staker, 2015, p.98) argument, as the technology is a low-cost to free implementation that supplements expensive equipment or lessons.

References:

Horn, W. and Staker, H. (2015) *Blended: Using disruptive innovation to improve schools*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.