

Applying Expressive Techniques in Performance

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Grade/Level: 9 - 12 High School Band

Length: 60 minutes

Central Focus: *Applying expressive musical elements (dynamics, tone color, phrasing, articulation) in ensemble performance to communicate artistic intent.*

Standards:

- Creating: MU.Cr.2.HS - *Select and develop musical ideas to express intent.*
- Responding: MU.R.3.HS - *Support interpretations of musical works that reflect understanding of context and expressive intent.*
- Performing: MU.P.3.HS - *Convey intent and meaning through expressive performance.*

Learning Objectives:

- Students will apply expressive elements in ensemble rehearsal to enhance musicality.
- Students will evaluate and adjust their expressive performance based on peer and teacher feedback.

Assessments:

Formative: *Teacher observation during sectionals.*

Summative: *Short recorded excerpt with student written self-reflection describing one expressive decision and its effect.*

Criteria for Success: *Student performances demonstrate deliberate expressive intent.*

Students use musical vocabulary accurately when describing and evaluating expressive performance choices.

Materials/Resources

- Ensemble sheet music
- Recording device (phone, tablet, or computer mic)
- SmartBoard/audio system

Academic Language

- Language Function: *Describe expressive elements in musical performance.*
- Key Vocabulary: *dynamics, articulation, phrasing, expression.*

Language Supports:

- Model an example critique aloud.
- Use visual symbols for dynamics and articulation during practice.

Instructional Strategies and Learning Tasks:

Introduction (10 min)

- Brief review of Lesson 1: “What makes a performance expressive?”
- Introduce today’s goal: applying expressive decisions in our own playing.
- Play 30 seconds of the same professional recording; ask, “How could we mirror or reinterpret this idea?”

Sectional Rehearsal (20 min)

- Divide by sections.
- Each section rehearses a chosen 8 - 16 measure excerpt focusing on one expressive element.
- Teacher circulates, providing coaching on tone color, dynamic contrast, and phrasing shape.
- Students record one short run-through for later self-evaluation.

Peer Feedback Exchange (15 min)

- One section performs for another.
- Guided prompts on board:
 - “Where did you hear the expressive intent most clearly?”
 - “How might a phrasing change increase clarity?”

Reflection & Discussion (10 min)

- Whole-group conversation:
 - “What expressive choices made the biggest difference today?”
 - “How did feedback help you refine intent?”

Closure (5 min)

- Ensemble replays excerpt incorporating peer suggestions.
- Teacher affirms growth and previews next lesson (connecting expressive interpretation to composer’s intent and context).

Planned Supports for Varied Learners:

- Students with IEPs/504: Provide a simplified feedback rubric (checklist format). Allow recording replay with teacher support.
- English Learners: Use bilingual rubric labels and allow oral rather than written peer comments.
- Gifted/Advanced: Encourage designing alternate phrasing interpretations or leading peer feedback discussion.
- Students with Attention Challenges: Assign active roles (recorder, timer, or rubric leader) and break tasks into short, focused intervals.

Connections to Prior Learning and Theoretical Rationale:

- Builds on Lesson 1 (identifying expression) by transferring analysis into performance practice.
- Incorporates constructivist learning—students construct meaning through doing and reflecting.
- Aligns with Bloom’s Taxonomy: moving from analysis (recognizing expressive features) to evaluation and creation (applying expressive techniques intentionally).