Supplemental Improvisation Curriculum for Wind Band Programs Grades 6-8

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The research in this document will provide the groundwork to create an improvisation curriculum that will work side by side with any secondary music teacher’s daily and weekly routines. The lack of research concerning secondary (grades 6-12) improvisation compared to the abundance of elementary and post-secondary research indicates an area of need. Rather than attempting to address the entire range of secondary music education, the curriculum’s focus is on the formative years of the secondary music student, with emphasis on improvisation instruction for the 6th-8th grade music student. This review of literature related to teaching improvisation will justify why music educators should teach improvisation. Additionally, it will examine methods for teaching improvisation and serve as a basis to outline a curriculum for seamlessly incorporating improvisation into the secondary music classroom for grades 6-8. The following are some of the questions that music educators ask themselves when the subject of improvisation is mentioned. Should all music students learn improvisation? Why do state and national standards of music education include improvisation? Is there anything we can learn about improvisation from elementary music educators? How can secondary music educators implement improvisation in their rehearsals?

**Literature Review**

According to best practice in teaching Fine Arts, students should be engaged in the learning process (Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde, 2005). The following criteria were stated for best practice in Fine Arts: students should participate in the arts, not just view them; the students should choose, control, and be responsible for their art activity; students should have their talents recognized and nurtured; students should use arts as a tool to demonstrate learning; students need to experience a variety of arts; students need to share their work; students should attend diverse professional art events; artists should be available for schools and individual classrooms; and all teachers, not just specialists, should be artists in the classroom (Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde, 2005). The principles outlined above are intended for all Fine Arts; however, it is appropriate to apply those concepts to a discipline of Fine Arts – music – and further to apply those concepts to an aspect of music – improvisation.

**The Case for Improvisation**

The act of improvisation has been a part of music making for centuries. Some forms relied more heavily on the use of improvisation, but as musical notation developed and became more formalized, composition largely replaced the art of improvisation (Watson, 2010). Campbell (1991) called improvisation a balance of performance and composition. Guderian (2011) stated that improvisation and composition work together to satisfy the same levels of Bloom’s taxonomy; however, improvisation has proven to provide greater self-efficacy for developing musicians when routinely performed (Watson, 2010). In Watson’s (2010) research two sample groups received jazz improvisation instruction using two different methods. One group received aural instruction for improvisation and the other received notated instruction. At the conclusion of the study, both groups completed the same surveys. The students who received aural instruction indicated greater self-efficacy concerning jazz improvisation than the students who received only notated instruction.

Many secondary music educators and pre-service music educators feel they do not have the skills necessary to teach improvisation with confidence (Bernhard, 2012). The surveyed music educators indicated the need for more training, more time, and more resources in order to include the teaching of improvisation in their classrooms. Bernhard and Stringham (2015) conducted another survey of pre-service music teachers and the results indicated these teachers had slight to moderate confidence in teaching improvisation to secondary students. The same survey group indicated moderate to great interest in learning more about teaching improvisation. In contrast to the survey above, with the inclusion of improvisation in the methodology of Kodaly, Orff, and Dalcroze, elementary and pre-service elementary teachers felt more confident about including improvisation in their curriculum (Whitcomb, 2013). Whitcomb (2013) reported that 94 percent of surveyed elementary music teachers included some form of improvisation instruction in their classroom.

Several studies in elementary music education reveal the benefits of studying improvisation and techniques that are adaptable to secondary improvisation instruction. Guderian (2011) stated that fifth-grade wind and percussion students who received improvisation instruction outperformed their counterparts who did not receive that same instruction, in musical achievement. A further study by Guderian (2011) took place in a fifth-grade recorder class. The instructor used a control group that followed a lesson plan with no exposure or emphasis on improvisation, and the experimental group followed the same lesson plan, but additionally spent a small part of the class time working on creative, improvisational activities. The results showed that time spent on creative/improvisational activities did not detract from the musical abilities of the experimental group, as they were able to play as fluently and sight read as well as the control group. Additionally, the experimental group displayed a creative element to their playing that was not present in the control group (Guderian, 2011).

Improvisation is present in many genres and styles of music, including folk music, Baroque music, Renaissance music, rock, ska, jazz, etc., and is appropriate for study for all music students (Yoo, 2015). Campbell (1991) stated that musical interpretation is a form of improvisation and even teachers who feel uncomfortable with traditional forms of improvisation have practiced improvisation in the way they interpreted a fermata or shaped a musical phrase. Using their musical knowledge and decision-making skills should give secondary music teachers confidence in teaching improvisation.

A study by Pietra and Campbell (1995) explained that few secondary or post-secondary music students receive training in the use of improvisation; however, all can learn improvisation skills, and a group setting is a valid format for teaching and learning those skills. The experiment utilized post-secondary music education students grouped into small ensembles. The students listened to examples of ethnically diverse improvisation-based music styles and then attempted to create their own improvisatory-based ensembles in the style of what they had viewed. These experiments resulted in the students gaining greater musical fluency in performing music from other ethnic groups, and gaining greater confidence in their ability to teach and perform improvisation.

**Teaching Improvisation**

A guideline to teaching improvisation is to develop the necessary psychomotor skills before introducing improvisation to the students (Guderian, 2014). Some psychomotor skills are developed naturally based on age of the student population; however, Guderian’s proposed guideline is directed at students who are learning a new musical instrument. The building of psychomotor skills has been accomplished using rote teaching, call and response, or through notation and music reading. Once the psychomotor skills are learned, then students can improvise within the established parameters.

To facilitate the concerns about class time, material already used in class provides material to create improvisation activities (Whitcomb, 2013). In Whitcomb’s example, the tune “Hot Cross Buns” provided the skills to improvise. Students learned to play “Hot Cross Buns” and were instructed to notice the form of the song. Three of the measures are the same, and one measure is different. The one different measure was where the students were to improvise; however, they were to use only certain notes or only certain rhythms. In the process of learning “Hot Cross Buns,” the students learned the notes and rhythms needed to improvise. The development of the psychomotor skills happened in conjunction with the preparation to improvise and in learning how to perform the necessary music. When students began to improvise it was important that they explored first, then used established patterns (Whitcomb, 2013).

Webster (2000) suggested that students learn best through activity and that secondary music education programs have long just been performance-based ensembles. He further stated that the teacher should serve as a facilitator to the educational process, and allow students the opportunity to explore music through improvisation and expressions of creativity. He advocated for general music at the secondary level and for a reform of secondary music education. He proposed that the general music classroom was the best place to teach improvisation on the secondary level. Webster (2000) suggested that the secondary music educator in a general music classroom can serve as a facilitator in this type of classroom and allow the students more opportunity to improvise than the director of a secondary performance-based ensemble class.

All improvisation has structure. Even free jazz has loose guidelines the ensemble members use to guide their creative process, and improvisation often builds from what other members of the ensemble are playing (Tirro, 1974). Whatever the genre of music, there is some sort of form present; a certain chord progression, a length of duration one person improvises, the instrumentation of the ensemble, who will improvise, and who will not, these are all part of the structure of improvisation. It is important that the student understands the form, or structure, of the music before beginning to improvise (Tirro, 1974).

Bitz (1998) suggested exercises that use only one or two notes, and that group improvisation helps students to feel more comfortable in the learning process. He stated that “the blues” is an excellent genre with which to begin an improvisational study. He stated that the blues offered simple harmonies and melodies, and it does not have to be “jazz-like” or in a swing style. The blues has been a highly adaptable format that fits many forms of “popular” music. He also suggested having secondary music teachers utilize research projects in their classrooms. These research projects would focus on improvisation and would involve the students picking a genre, researching the genre, collecting resources, including examples of the genre, introducing the genre to their peers, encouraging group improvisation, and letting the students explore the genre in their own way. Bitz (1998) stated that most improvisation instructional material is for a jazz setting, and expressed the need for material outside of a jazz setting to teach improvisation to all students. Campbell (1991) provided the following criteria for improvisation instruction: train the ear; provide models; allow for imitation; develop performance facility; guarantee success; and pace the instructions.

Giddings (2014) in his post-secondary study provided the following suggestions: start slow and speed it up; students need to have some amount of fluency in their playing before they can begin to improvise more freely; “small” improvised sections are better than “large chunks;” call and response is an excellent way to help students become comfortable with improvisation; creating a classroom environment in which students are not afraid to fail and are not judged for what they play is crucial to helping students feel that they can succeed; and placing too many guidelines on improvisation can inhibit the students ability to be creative. Giddings (2014) used an adult test subject, his sister, who had not played her instrument in several years, and had never improvised on her instrument. The subject did have a significant amount of training on her instrument when in school and was able to provide musically coherent feedback to the researcher. There is a limited scope to this research, but the project echoed findings of research projects with larger sample sizes.

Schroeder (2002) examined four different methods of teaching improvisation and found the following techniques to be solid methods for improvisation instruction: using the ii-V pattern is a great tool for modulation; students should focus on cadence points; rhythms can be reduced to simple concepts for mastery before allowing students to have more freedom; intervals should receive some focus; and a supportive, positive environment helps students learn improvisation more effectively. Schroeder (2002) wrote his article after attending a number of workshops presented by former students of famed jazz pianist, Bill Evans.

**Discussion of the Literature**

The criteria and suggestions of teaching improvisation in the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary settings display a certain amount of commonality. The following three criteria are necessary to teach improvisation: students need a positive classroom environment, students need structure, and students need training.

First, the classroom environment is important for the students to feel successful, as mentioned in the following ways: students learn through activity; students need a safe, judgment-free, and comfortable environment in which to learn; and students learn through shared experiences, both those of their peers, and those of the teacher. It is important that the teacher model, or provide models of improvisation and that the teacher models the behavior they want to see in their students.

Second the students need “structure,” as presented in the following ways: students should play small sections, the music should have a form, and call and response is a good method. Outlined in each unit of the curriculum is the structure in which the students will improvise; it will be important that the students understand the structure and have sufficient opportunity to experience that structure before assessment.

The final concept is training or skill development. The students need training in order to improvise. The following are concepts of training: skills developed, patterns taught, start simple even with one or two notes, and familiar material provides skills. The concepts relating to training were mentioned more than any other concepts in the literature.

A few criteria mentioned can be considered “cross-over” between classroom environment and structure. Those criteria are: students need the opportunity and support to explore the form with their instrument, and too many guidelines/too much structure makes it too difficult (negative classroom environment) for the students to improvise. Ultimately, the three criteria discussed above are not different from the criteria needed to teach students in a performing ensemble on a daily basis. Classroom management, development of technique, and teaching students to count rhythms and measures are utilized by music educators at all levels every day. Applying these concepts to improvisation within the ensemble setting can be a natural progression for experienced and new teachers alike.

In relation to Webster’s theory about general music classes at the secondary level and the role of the educator in those classes, his suggestion of the secondary music educator serving as a facilitator can be applied to the performance-based ensemble classes. The director of the secondary performance-based ensemble can facilitate the group learning of improvisation by the students in the same manner that the music educator of a secondary general music class. The general music teacher would most likely be able to go into more depth in their classroom; however, the concept has potential for use in the classroom of the performance-based ensemble.

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You Can Teach Improvisation in Band!

A Guide to Including Improvisation Instruction in Grades 6-8 Wind Band

By Scot H. McPhetrige

**Introduction**

Have you ever wondered how to include the improvisation requirements in State or National Standards in your band classes? It seems like an arduous task, and maybe you utilize the improvisation lines in whatever beginning method book you use, but most music educators are not doing enough to teach improvisation. The lesson plans presented in this manual are not intended to be the bulk of your instruction for your Grade 6-8 band students, but are intended to provide supplemental material you can use to develop creative, improvisational skills in your students.

The units will be easy to incorporate into beginning band instruction and band rehearsals. The manual will first present you with an outline of the curriculum that can be referenced to provide a quick review of the unit objectives. Following the curriculum outline will be the unit lesson plans. Daily individual lesson plans will not be presented here. Instead, the focus is on larger units that will utilize simple training and simple activities to keep students improvising all year.

**Curriculum Outline**

This curriculum encompasses instructional material for Grades 6-8 band students. The sixth-grade curriculum will establish a baseline in improvisation that, if followed, will set the seventh- and eight-grade students up for success in future improvisational activities. While not all junior highs and middle school share the same format or class structure, there is a certain amount of precedence for seventh- and eight-grade students being in mixed ensembles at this point in school. The seventh-grade curriculum will include optional advanced assignments for eight-grade students who may be in the same ensemble, or for seventh-grade students who are moving at a faster pace than their peers. Resist the temptation to de-rail the curriculum and force all students to take the advanced track if it is not in their best interest.

The outline of the curriculum contains two curriculum outline sub-sections with the lesson plans following in their respective sections. Feel free to copy the outlines for easy reference. Chords and pitches are in concert pitch; however, feel free to transpose as appropriate in your classroom. I prefer to use aural instruction and not provide the students with a lot of written examples. I feel the music we read in class provides enough note reading exercise and the majority of the improvisational training should be used to “liberate” the students from staring at “the page.” The improvisation training will also serve as ear training. I will provide a few notated examples after the lesson plans to serve as a guideline to generate additional supplemental material as needed.

The assessment portions of this curriculum are not intended to be graded so much as allowing an opportunity for the students to improvise and receive feedback. Towards the beginning of the year most of the feedback will be from the teacher, but as the year advances allow the students to give constructive and positive feedback to each other. Also, allow the students to be critical of themselves, but be ready with encouragement should things turn negative. If you desire to have assessments for grades, I would encourage the creation of a rubric and the use of recordings or software that could play background music for the students to utilize for improvisation. I have avoided those types of assessment and activity as I think they will require more class time and the intent of this project is to easily incorporate improvisation into the rehearsal time.

**Grade 6 Curriculum Outline**

**Grade 6 Improvisation Goals**

**Objectives:**

1. Students will feel comfortable improvising in front of their peers and teacher.
2. Students will be able to identify and improvise over the I, IV, and V chords in the key of Bb.
3. Students will be able to improvise over the following two chord, two measure “chord progression chunks:” I-IV, IV-V, and V-I.
4. Students will be able to improvise over the final four chord, four-measure progression: I-IV-V-I.

**Unit Overview**

**Unit 1 - Weeks 1-6**

**Objectives:**

1. The students will be able to identify and perform the three notes of a Bb triad: Bb, D, F (Weeks 1-3).
2. The students will be able to improvise for one measure over the Bb triad (Weeks 4-6).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise on the Bb triad (Week 6).

**Unit 2 - Weeks 7-12**

**Objectives:**

1. The students will be able to identify and perform the three notes of an Eb triad: Eb, G, and Bb (Weeks 7-9).
2. The students will be able to improvise for one measure over the Eb triad (Weeks 10-12).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise on the Eb triad (Week 12).

**Unit 3 - Weeks 13-16**

**Objectives:**

1. The students will be able to identify the I-IV (Bb-Eb) chord progression (Weeks 13-14).
2. The students will be able to perform a two measure, two chord improvisation over the I-IV (Bb-Eb) chord progression (Weeks 15-16).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise over the I-IV progression (Week 16).

**Unit 4 - Weeks 17-22**

**Objectives:**

1. The students will be able to identify and perform the three notes of an F triad: F, A, and C (Weeks 17-19).
2. The students will be able to improvise for one measure over the F triad (Weeks 20-22).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise on the F triad (Week 22).

**Unit 5 - Weeks 23-26**

**Objectives:**

1. The students will be able to identify the IV-V (Eb-F) chord progression (Weeks 23-24).
2. The students will be able to perform a two measure, two chord improvisation over the IV-V (Eb-F) chord progression (Weeks 25-26).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise over the IV-V progression (Week 26).

**Unit 6 - Weeks 27-30**

**Objectives:**

1. The students will be able to identify the V-I (F-Bb) chord progression (Weeks 27-28).
2. The students will be able to perform a two measure, two chord improvisation over the V-I (F-Bb) chord progression (Weeks 29-30).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise over the V-I progression (Week 30).

**Unit 7 - Weeks 31-36**

**Objectives:**

1. The students will be able to identify the I-IV-V-I (Bb-Eb-F-Bb) chord progression (Week 31-33).
2. The students will be able to perform a four measure, four chord improvisation over the I-IV-V-I (Bb-Eb-F-Bb) chord progression (Week 34-36).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise over the I-IV-V-I progression (Weeks 35-36).

**Grades 7-8 Curriculum Outline**

**Grades 7-8 Improvisation Goals**

**Objectives:**

1. Students will feel comfortable improvising in front of their peers and teacher.
2. Students will be able to identify and improvise over the I, IV, and V chords in the keys of Bb, Eb, and F.
3. Students will be able to improvise in Bb, Eb, and F, over the following two chord, two measure “chord progression chunks:” I-IV, IV-V, and V-I.
4. Students will be able to improvise over the final four chord, four-measure progression: I-IV-V-I, in Bb, Eb, and F.

**Unit Overview**

**Unit 1 - Weeks 1-6**

**Objectives:**

1. The students will demonstrate their understanding of the I, IV, and V chords in the key of Bb (Weeks 1-3).
2. The students in eighth-grade and advanced seventh-grade improvisers will demonstrate the use of the Bb Major Scale to enhance their improvisations (Weeks 1-3).
3. The students will perform a four measure, four chord improvisation over the I-IV-V-I progression in Bb (Weeks 4-6).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise on the I-IV-V-I chord progression in Bb (Week 6).

**Unit 2 - Weeks 7-9**

**Objectives:**

1. The students will be able to identify and perform the three notes of an Ab triad: Ab, C, and Eb (Week 7-9).
2. The students in eighth-grade and advanced seventh-grade improvisers will demonstrate the use of the Eb Major Scale to enhance their improvisations (Weeks 7-9).
3. The students will be able to improvise for one measure over the Ab triad (Weeks 7-9).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise on the Ab triad (Week 9).

**Unit 3 - Weeks 10-12**

**Objectives:**

1. The students in eighth-grade and advanced seventh-grade grade improvisers will demonstrate the use of the Eb Major Scale to enhance their improvisations (Weeks 10-12).
2. The students will be able to identify the I-IV (Eb-Ab) chord progression (Weeks 10-12).
3. The students will be able to perform a two measure, two chord improvisation over the I-IV (Eb-Ab) chord progression (Weeks 11-12).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise over the I-IV progression in Eb (Week 12).

**Unit 4 - Weeks 13-15**

**Objectives:**

1. The students in eighth-grade and advanced seventh-grade grade improvisers will demonstrate the use of the Eb Major Scale to enhance their improvisations (Weeks 13-15).
2. The students will be able to identify the IV-V (Ab-Bb) chord progression (Weeks 13-15).
3. The students will be able to perform a two measure, two chord improvisation over the IV-V (Ab-Bb) chord progression (Weeks 14-15).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise over the IV-V progression in Eb (Week 15).

**Unit 5 - Weeks 16-18**

**Objectives:**

1. The students in eighth-grade and advanced seventh-grade improvisers will demonstrate the use of the Eb Major Scale to enhance their improvisations (Weeks 16-18).
2. The students will be able to identify the V-I (Bb-Eb) chord progression (Weeks 16-18).
3. The students will be able to perform a two measure, two chord improvisation over the V-I (Bb-Eb) chord progression (Weeks 17-18).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise over the V-I progression in Eb (Week 18).

**Unit 6 - Weeks 19-21**

**Objectives:**

1. The students in eighth-grade and advanced seventh-grade improvisers will demonstrate the use of the Eb Major Scale to enhance their improvisations (Weeks 19-21).
2. The students will be able to identify the I-IV-V-I (Eb-Ab-Bb-Eb) chord progression (Weeks 19-21).
3. The students will be able to perform a four measure, four chord improvisation over the I-IV-V-I (Eb-Ab-Bb-Eb) chord progression (Weeks 20-21).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise over the I-IV-V-I progression in Eb (Week 21).

**Unit 7 - Weeks 22-24**

**Objectives:**

1. The students will be able to identify and perform the three notes of a C triad: C, E, and G (Weeks 22-24).
2. The students in eighth-grade and advanced seventh-grade improvisers will demonstrate the use of the F Major Scale to enhance their improvisations (Weeks 22-24).
3. The students will be able to improvise for one measure over the C triad (Weeks 23-24).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise on the Ab triad (Week 24).

**Unit 8 - Weeks 25-27**

**Objectives:**

1. The students in eighth-grade and advanced seventh-grade improvisers will demonstrate the use of the F Major Scale to enhance their improvisations (Weeks 25-27).
2. The students will be able to identify the I-IV (F-Bb) chord progression (Weeks 25-27).
3. The students will be able to perform a two measure, two chord improvisation over the I-IV(F-Bb) chord progression (Weeks 26-27).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise over the I-IV progression in F (Week 27).

**Unit 9 - Weeks 28-30**

**Objectives:**

1. The students in eighth-grade and advanced seventh-grade improvisers will demonstrate the use of the F Major Scale to enhance their improvisations (Weeks 28-30).
2. The students will be able to identify the IV-V (Bb-C) chord progression (Weeks 28-30).
3. The students will be able to perform a two measure, two chord improvisation over the IV-V (Bb-C) chord progression (Weeks 29-30).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise over the IV-V progression in F (Week 30).

**Unit 10 - Weeks 31-33**

**Objectives:**

1. The students in eighth-grade and advanced seventh-grade improvisers will demonstrate the use of the F Major Scale to enhance their improvisations (Weeks 31-33).
2. The students will be able to identify the V-I (C-F) chord progression (Weeks 31-33).
3. The students will be able to perform a two measure, two chord improvisation over the V-I (C-F) chord progression (Weeks 32-33).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise over the V-I progression in F (Week 33).

**Unit 11 - Weeks 34-36**

**Objectives:**

1. The students in eighth-grade and advanced seventh-grade improvisers will demonstrate the use of the F Major Scale to enhance their improvisations (Weeks 34-36).
2. The students will be able to identify the I-IV-V-I (F-Bb-C-F) chord progression (Weeks 34-36).
3. The students will be able to perform a four measure, four chord improvisation over the I-IV-V-I (F-Bb-C-F) chord progression (Weeks 35-36).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise over the I-IV-V-I progression in F (Week 36).

Grade 6 Improvisation Curriculum Units and Lesson Plans

**Introduction to Grade 6 Lesson Plans.**

The lesson plans presented in this section are not intended to be the bulk of your instruction for your Grade 6 beginning instrumentalists, but are intended to provide supplemental material you can use to develop creative, improvisational skills in your students. The year long goals have been broken down into individual units that can easily be assimilated into your daily instruction. The intent is to utilize these activities and suggestions during the beginning of your class period as you perform your daily warm-ups. The activities suggested are based around the concept of playing long tones and the teacher modeling tone for students. If this is not an activity you are familiar with, I would suggest you incorporate this activity into your daily teaching. If you do not feel proficient modeling tone on the instrument the students are playing, you may use an instrument you are more comfortable with, or find a colleague who can make some recordings with good tone on the appropriate instrument.

Below are the Grade 6 year long goals:

**Grade 6 Improvisation Goals**

**Objectives:**

1. Students will feel comfortable improvising in front of their peers and teacher.
2. Students will be able to identify and improvise over the I, IV, and V chords in the key of Bb.
3. Students will be able to improvise over the following two chord, two measure “chord progression chunks:” I-IV, IV-V, and V-I.
4. Students will be able to improvise over the final four chord, four-measure progression: I-IV-V-I.

**Unit 1 - Weeks 1-6**

**Objectives:**

1. The students will be able to identify and perform the three notes of a Bb triad: Bb, D, F (Weeks 1-3).
2. The students will be able to improvise for one measure over the Bb triad (Weeks 4-6).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise on the Bb triad (Week 6).

**Classroom Environment:**

* Begin your classes each day as you normally would for the first few weeks of school, but be sure to mention to your students that part of learning an instrument is listening, exploring, and trying to reproduce what you hear.
* Explain that while these early exploratory sounds are being made you will be encouraging the students and offering suggestions to better play their instruments.
* Those critiques are not designed to insult the students, but are offered to help the students better play their instruments.

**Define Structure:**

* As the students begin to play their first notes on their instruments, explain to them that though they may be playing only note at a time on their instruments, when they individually play different notes they will produce harmony.
* Tell the students another word relating to harmony is chords.
* Tell the students that you will be identifying that certain notes are part of certain chords as the year progresses.
* As the students learn the notes of the Bb traid: Bb, D, and F, identify those notes as part of the Bb chord.
* Use terms like, root, third, and fifth to provide or reinforce theory knowledge.

**Develop Skills:**

* As the students are learning their first notes, consider performing call and response activities.
* Play a concert Bb whole note, and call it the root or first note of the Bb triad or chord.
* The students should echo the Bb whole note.
* Repeat this exercise with concert D, and concert F.
* Play a rhythmic pattern for the students and allow them to echo that rhythmic pattern back to you.
* As the students become more proficient at making their first sounds, begin to allow the students to play the call, either whole notes or other prescribed rhythmic patterns.
* The teacher and the class will give the response, or echo.

**Assessment:**

* The assessment will take place on week 6.
* The teacher should begin to prepare the student for the assessment at the beginning of week 4 and continue through week 5.
* Assign each student a note in the Bb traid, and have each student play their note for a whole note.
* During the next measure, have a student play their own improvisation using a whole note and any of the notes in the Bb triad.
* Repeat the drone and improvised measure pattern until each student has had at least two attempts at improvisation.
* It would be appropriate to reassign notes of the traid for the drone after each student has completed the first round.

**Unit 2 - Weeks 7-12**

**Objectives:**

1. The students will be able to identify and perform the three notes of an Eb triad: Eb, G, and Bb (Weeks 7-9).
2. The students will be able to improvise for one measure over the Eb triad (Weeks 10-12).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise on the Eb triad (Week 12).

**Classroom Environment:**

* Give the students positive feedback about their first improvisation assessment.
* Ask the students what they did and did not enjoy about improvising.
* Address any of their fears, and share your own stories of being afraid to improvise.

**Define Structure:**

* As the students learn the notes of the Eb traid: Eb, G, and Bb, identify those notes as part of the Eb chord.
* Some of these notes may have already been learned, but take the time to review those notes and explain they are Eb chord tones.
* Do not worry about range, it is ok to teach the students inverted chords as their range is still developing.

**Develop Skills:**

* Play a concert Eb whole note, and call it the root or first note of the Eb triad or chord.
* The students should echo the Eb whole note.
* Repeat this exercise with concert G, and concert Bb.
* Play a rhythmic pattern for the students then allow them to echo that rhythmic pattern back to you.
* As the students become more proficient at making their sounds, begin to allow the students to play the call, either whole notes or prescribed rhythmic patterns.
* The teacher and the class will give the response, or echo.

**Assessment:**

* The assessment will take place on week 12.
* The teacher should begin to prepare the student for the assessment at the beginning of week 10 and continue through week 11.
* Assign each student a note in the Eb traid, and have each student play their note for a whole note.
* During the next measure, have a student play their own improvisation using a whole note or half notes, and any of the notes in the Eb triad.
* Students can change notes during their improvisation on this assessment.
* Repeat the drone and improvised measure pattern until each student has had at least two attempts at improvisation.
* It would be appropriate to reassign notes of the traid for the drone after each student has completed the first round.

**Unit 3 - Weeks 13-16**

**Objectives:**

1. The students will be able to identify the I-IV (Bb-Eb) chord progression (Weeks 13-14).
2. The students will be able to perform a two measure, two chord improvisation over the I-IV (Bb-Eb) chord progression (Weeks 15-16).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise over the I-IV progression (Week 16).

**Classroom Environment:**

* Give the students positive feedback about their most recent improvisation assessment.
* Ask them what they did and did not enjoy about improvising on the Eb chord.
* Address any of their fears, and share your own stories of being afraid to improvise.
* Explain to the students that during the next fours week the students will be preparing to play longer improvisations.

**Define Structure:**

* Review the chord tones in the concert Bb and concert Eb chords.
* Teach the students that the concert Bb chord can be referred to as the I chord.
* Teach the students that the concert Eb chord can be referred to as the IV chord.
* Explain to the students that as notes change the harmony often changes.
* Tell the students we call these changes in harmony, chord changes or chord progressions.

**Develop Skills:**

* Explain to the students that the call and response exercise utilized in the first 12 weeks will be modified.
* For this exercise rhythms should be restricted to whole notes, half notes, and quarter notes.
* Give the call using notes from the I chord, and have the students echo.
* Tell them which notes you will be using before giving the call, but it is not necessary to tell them the order of notes or rhythms you will utilize before every call.
* Next, give the call using notes from the IV chord, and have the students echo using the same guidelines as above.
* Now, give a two measure call with measure one being the I chord and measure two being the IV chord.
* The students should give a two measure response.
* Make sure the students understand they are using the notes from the I chord in the first measure and notes from the IV chord in the second measure.
* As the students gain confidence, allow individual students to give the call as you and the class respond.

**Assessment:**

* The assessment will take place on week 16.
* The teacher should begin to prepare the student for the assessment during week 15.
* Assign the students a note from the I chord and a note from the IV chord.
* Tell the students to play a whole note on the first note they were assigned and a whole note on the second note they were assigned.
* You may also choose to have the students play a check rhythm instead of a whole note for each of the drone measures.
* During the next two measures have a student play their own improvisation using whole notes, half notes, or quarter notes.
* The student should use notes from the I chord in the first measure and notes from the IV chord in the second measure.
* Students can change notes during their improvisation on this assessment.
* Repeat the pattern of drone and improvised measures until each student has had at least two attempts at improvisation.
* It would be appropriate to reassign notes of the traid for the drone after each student has completed the first round.
* It would also be appropriate to change the check rhythm after the first round.

**Unit 4 - Weeks 17-22**

**Objectives:**

1. The students will be able to identify and perform the three notes of an F triad: F, A, and C (Weeks 17-19).
2. The students will be able to improvise for one measure over the F triad (Weeks 20-22).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise on the F triad (Week 22).

**Classroom Environment:**

* Give the students positive feedback about their most recent improvisation assessment involving two chords.
* Ask the students what they did and did not enjoy about improvising over two chords.
* Explain to the students that they will be only improvising over one chord for the next unit.

**Define Structure:**

* As the students learn the notes of the F traid: F, A, and C, identify those notes as part of the F chord.
* Some of these notes may have already been learned, but take the time to review those notes and explain they are F chord tones.
* Do not worry about range, it is ok to teach the students “inverted chords” as their range is still developing.

**Develop Skills:**

* Play a concert F whole note, and call it the root or first note of the F triad or chord.
* The students echo the F whole note.
* Repeat this exercise with concert A, and concert C.
* Try playing a rhythmic pattern for the students then allow them to echo that rhythmic pattern back to you.
* As the students become more proficient at making their first sounds begin to allow the students to play the call, either using whole notes or prescribed rhythmic patterns.
* The teacher and the class give the response, or echo.

**Assessment:**

* The assessment will take place on week 22.
* The teacher should begin to prepare the student for the assessment at the beginning of week 20 and continue through week 21.
* Assign each student a note in the F traid, and have each student play their note for a whole note.
* During the next measure have a student play their own improvisation using a whole note, half notes, or quarter notes, and any of the notes in the F triad.
* Students can change notes during their improvisation on this assessment.
* Repeat the drone and improvised measure pattern until each student has had at least two attempts at improvisation.
* It would be appropriate to reassign notes of the traid for the drone after each student has completed the first round.

**Unit 5 - Weeks 23-26**

**Objectives:**

1. The students will be able to identify the IV-V (Eb-F) chord progression (Weeks 23-24).
2. The students will be able to perform a two measure, two chord improvisation over the IV-V (Eb-F) chord progression (Weeks 25-26).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise over the IV-V progression (Week 26).

**Classroom Environment:**

* Give the students positive feedback about their most recent improvisation assessment.
* Ask them what they did and did not enjoy about improvising on the F chord.
* Address any of their fears, and share your own stories of being afraid to improvise.
* Allow the students the opportunity to offer praise for their peers and critique of their own improvisations.
* Explain to the students, that for the remainder of the year, the students will be performing two or four measure improvisations.

**Define Structure:**

* Review the chord tones in the concert Eb and concert F chords.
* Remind the students that the concert Eb chord can be referred to as the IV chord.
* Tell the students that the concert F chord can be referred to as the V chord.
* Remind the students that as notes change the harmony often changes.
* Remind the students we call these changes in harmony chord changes or chord progressions.

**Develop Skills:**

* Remind the students that the call and response exercise utilized in the earlier weeks will again be modified for the two measure improvisation in this unit.
* For this exercise rhythms should be restricted to whole notes, half notes, and quarter notes, or a combination of those rhythms.
* Give the call using the IV chord, and have the students echo.
* Tell them which notes you will be using before giving the call, but it is not necessary to tell them the order or rhythms you will utilize before every call.
* Next, give the call using notes from the V chord, and have the students echo using the same guidelines as above.
* Now, give a two measure call with measure one being the IV chord and measure two being the V chord.
* The students should give a two measure response.
* Make sure the students understand they are using the notes from the IV chord in the first measure and notes from the V chord in the second measure.
* As the students gain confidence, allow individual students to give the call as you and the class respond.

**Assessment:**

* The assessment will take place on week 26.
* The teacher should begin to prepare the student for the assessment no later than week 25.
* Assign the students a note from the IV chord and a note from the V chord.
* Tell the students to play a whole note on the first note they were assigned and a whole note on the second note they were assigned.
* You may also choose to have the students play a check rhythm instead of a whole note for each of the drone measures.
* During the next two measures have a student play their own improvisation using whole notes, half notes, or quarter notes in any combination.
* The student should use notes from the IV chord in the first measure and notes from the V chord in the second measure.
* Students can change notes during their improvisation on this assessment.
* Repeat the drone and improvised measure patterns until each student has had at least two attempts at improvisation.
* It would be appropriate to reassign notes of the traid for the drone after each student has completed the first round.
* It would be appropriate to change the check rhythm after the first round.

**Unit 6 - Weeks 27-30**

**Objectives:**

1. The students will be able to identify the V-I (F-Bb) chord progression (Weeks 27-28).
2. The students will be able to perform a two measure, two chord improvisation over the V-I (F-Bb) chord progression (Weeks 29-30).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise over the V-I progression (Week 30).

**Classroom Environment:**

* Give the students positive feedback about their most recent improvisation assessment.
* Ask them what they did and did not enjoy about improvising on the IV-V chord progression.
* Address any of their fears, and share your own stories of being afraid to improvise.
* Allow the students the opportunity to offer praise for their peers and critique of their own improvisations.
* Explain to the students that during the next four weeks the students will be continuing the longer two measure improvisations.

**Define Structure:**

* Review the chord tones in the concert F and concert Bb chords.
* Remind the students that the concert F chord can be referred to as the V chord.
* Remind the students that the concert Bb chord can be referred to as the I chord.
* Remind the students that as notes change the harmony often changes.
* Remind the students we call these changes in harmony chord changes or chord progressions.

**Develop Skills:**

* Remind the students that the call and response exercise utilized in the earlier weeks will continue to be modified for the two measure improvisation.
* For this exercise rhythms should be restricted to whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, and eighth notes, or a combination of those rhythms.
* Give the call using notes from the the V chord, and have the students echo.
* Tell them which notes you will be using before giving the call, but it is not necessary to tell them the order or rhythms you will utilize before every call.
* Next, give the call using notes from the I chord, and have the students echo using the same guidelines as above.
* Now, give a two measure call with measure one being the V chord and measure two being the I chord.
* The students should give a two measure response.
* Make sure the students understand they are using the notes from the V chord in the first measure and notes from the I chord in the second measure.
* As the students gain confidence, allow individual students to give the call as you and the class respond.

**Assessment:**

* The assessment will take place on week 30.
* The teacher should begin to prepare the student for the assessment no later than week 29.
* Assign the students a note from the V chord and a note from the I chord.
* Tell the students to play a whole note on the first note they were assigned and a whole note on the second note they were assigned.
* You may also choose to have the students play a check rhythm instead of a whole note for each of the drone measures.
* During the next two measures have a student play their own improvisation using whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, or eight notes in any combination.
* The student should use notes from the V chord in the first measure and notes from the I chord in the second measure.
* Students can change notes during their improvisation on this assessment.
* Repeat the drone and improvised measure patterns until each student has had at least two attempts at improvisation.
* It would be appropriate to reassign notes of the traid for the drone after each student has completed the first round.
* It would be appropriate to change the check rhythm after the first round.

**Unit 7 - Weeks 31-36**

**Objectives:**

1. The students will be able to identify the I-IV-V-I (Bb-Eb-F-Bb) chord progression (Week 31-33).
2. The students will be able to perform a four measure, four chord improvisation over the I-IV-V-I (Bb-Eb-F-Bb) chord progression (Week 34-36).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise over the I-IV-V-I progression (Weeks 35-36).

**Classroom Environment:**

* Give the students positive feedback about their most recent improvisation assessment.
* Ask them what they did and did not enjoy about improvising on the V-I chord progression.
* Address any of their fears, and share your own stories of being afraid to improvise.
* Allow the students the opportunity to offer praise for their peers and critique of their own improvisations.
* Explain to the students that during the next six weeks the students will be preparing for a four measure improvisation.

**Define Structure:**

* Review the chord tones in the concert Bb, Eb, and F chords.
* Remind the students that the concert Bb chord can be referred to as the I chord.
* Remind the students that the concert Eb chord can be referred to as the IV chord.
* Remind the students that the concert F chord can be referred to as the V chord.
* Remind the students that as notes change the harmony often changes.
* Remind the students we call these changes in harmony chord changes or chord progressions.

**Develop Skills:**

* Tell the students that the call and response exercise utilized in the earlier weeks will be modified for a four measure improvisation.
* For this exercise rhythms should be restricted to whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, and eighth notes, or a combination of those rhythms.
* Give the call using notes from the I chord, and have the students echo.
* Tell them which notes you will be using before giving the call, but it is not necessary to tell them the order or rhythms you will utilize.
* Next, give the call using notes from the IV chord, and have the students echo using the same guidelines as above.
* Next, give the call using notes from the V chord, and have the students echo using the same guidelines as above.
* Finally, give the call using notes from the I chord, and have the students echo using the same guidelines as above.
* Give a simple call that lasts for four measures. Use the I-IV-V-I chord progression.
* The students will then give a four measure response.
* Make sure the students understand they are using notes from the appropriate chord for each measure.
* As the students gain confidence, allow individual students to give the call as you and the class respond.

**Assessment:**

* The assessment will take place on weeks 35-36.
* The teacher should begin to prepare the student for the assessment at the beginning of week 34.
* Assign the students a note from the I chord, a note from the IV chord, a note from the V chord, and another note from the I chord.
* Tell the students to play a whole note on each note they were assigned.
* You may also choose to have the students play a check rhythm instead of a whole note for each of the drone measures.
* During the next four measures have a student play their own improvisation using whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, or eight notes in any combination.
* The student should use notes from the I chord in the first measure, notes from the IV chord in the second measure, notes from the V chord in the third measure, and notes from the I chord in the fourth measure.
* Students should change notes during their improvisation on this assessment.
* Repeat the drone and improvised measure patterns until each student has had at least two attempts at improvisation.
* It would be appropriate to reassign notes of the traids for the drones after each student has completed the first round.
* It would be appropriate to change the check rhythms after the first round.

Grades 7-8 Improvisation Curriculum Units and Lesson Plans

**Introduction to Grades 7-8 Lessons Plans**

The lesson plans presented in this section are not intended to be the bulk of your instruction for your Grades 7-8 instrumentalists, but are intended to provide supplemental material you can use to develop creative, improvisational skills in your students. The year long goals have been broken down into individual units that can easily be assimilated into your daily instruction. The intent is to utilize these activities and suggestions during the beginning of your class period as you perform your daily warm-ups. The activities suggested are based around the concept of playing long tones and developing intonation. If this is not an activity you are familiar with, I would suggest you incorporate this activity into your daily teaching. While it is beneficial for the teacher to model tone on an instrument it is not essential for the Grade 7-8 students. You may pick advanced students to be the model in the activities described in this section.

Below are the Grades 7-8 year long goals:

**Grades 7-8 Improvisation Goals**

**Objectives:**

1. Students will feel comfortable improvising in front of their peers and teacher.
2. Students will be able to identify and improvise over the I, IV, and V chords in the keys of Bb, Eb, and F.
3. Students will be able to improvise in Bb, Eb, and F, over the following two chord, two measure “chord progression chunks:” I-IV, IV-V, and V-I.
4. Students will be able to improvise over the final four chord, four-measure progression: I-IV-V-I, in Bb, Eb, and F.

**Unit 1 - Weeks 1-6**

**Objectives:**

1. The students will demonstrate their understanding of the I, IV, and V chords in the key of Bb (Weeks 1-3).
2. The students in eighth-grade and advanced seventh-grade improvisers will demonstrate the use of the Bb Major Scale to enhance their improvisations (Weeks 1-3).
3. The students will perform a four measure, four chord improvisation over the I-IV-V-I progression in Bb (Weeks 4-6).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise on the I-IV-V-I chord progression in Bb (Week 6).

**Classroom Environment:**

* Review the improvisation activities the students completed in Grade 6 or Grade 7.
* Explain to the students that they will continue those activities inGrades 7-8.
* Address any of their fears, and share your own stories of being afraid to improvise.
* Explain to the students that during the next six weeks the students will be reviewing the final unit from 6th grade and will be preparing to complete a four measure improvisation.

**Define Structure:**

* Review the chord tones in the concert Bb, Eb, and F chords.
* Remind the students that the concert Bb chord can be referred to as the I chord.
* Remind the students that the concert Eb chord can be referred to as the IV chord.
* Remind the students that the concert F chord can be referred to as the V chord.
* Remind the students that as notes change the harmony often changes.
* Remind the students we call these changes in harmony chord changes or chord progressions.

**Develop Skills:**

* Remind the students that the call and response exercise utilized in their previous years of band will again be utilized for a four measure improvisation.
* For this exercise rhythms should be restricted to whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, and eight notes, or a combination of those rhythms.
* Give the call using notes from the I chord, and have the students echo.
* Tell them which notes you will be using before giving the call, but it is not necessary to tell them the order or rhythms you will utilize.
* Next, give the call using notes from the IV chord, and have the students echo using the same guidelines as above.
* Next, give the call using notes from the V chord, and have the students echo using the same guidelines as above.
* Finally, give the call using notes from the I chord, and have the students echo using the same guidelines as above.
* Give a simple call that lasts for four measures. Use the I-IV-V-I chord progression.
* The students will then give a four measure response.
* Make sure the students understand they are using notes from the appropriate chord for each measure.
* As the students gain confidence, allow individual students to give the call as you and the class respond.
* Encourage the eighth- and advanced seventh-grade students to incorporate passing tones, upper neighbor tones, and lower neighbor tones from the Bb Major scale into their improvisations.

**Assessment:**

* The assessment will take place on week 6.
* The teacher should begin to prepare the student for the assessment at the beginning of week 4 and continue through week 5.
* Assign the students a note from the I chord, a note from the IV chord, a note from the V chord, and another note from the I chord.
* Tell the students to play a whole note on each note they were assigned.
* You may also choose to have the students play a check rhythm instead of a whole note for each of the drone measures.
* When assigning the notes, it may be easier to assign specific pitches to sections rather than individual students.
* During the next four measures have a student play their own improvisation using whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, or eighth notes in any combination.
* The student should use notes from the I chord in the first measure, notes from the IV chord in the second measure, notes from the V chord in the third measure, and notes from the I chord in the fourth measure.
* Encourage the eighth- and advanced seventh-grade students to incorporate passing tones, upper neighbor tones, and lower neighbor tones from the Bb Major scale into their improvisations.
* Students should change notes during their improvisation on this assessment.
* Repeat the drone and improvised measure patterns until each student has had at least one attempt at improvisation.
* It may be appropriate to only have certain sections complete the assessment each day and to spend the entire week on the assessment to allow everyone the opportunity to perform.
* It would be appropriate to reassign notes of the traids for the drones after each day or as a section completes a round.
* It would be appropriate to change the check rhythms in the same manner as above.

**Unit 2 - Weeks 7-9**

**Objectives:**

1. The students will be able to identify and perform the three notes of an Ab triad: Ab, C, and Eb (Week 7-9).
2. The students in eighth-grade and advanced seventh-grade improvisers will demonstrate the use of the Eb Major Scale to enhance their improvisations (Weeks 7-9).
3. The students will be able to improvise for one measure over the Ab triad (Weeks 7-9).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise on the Ab triad (Week 9).

**Classroom Environment:**

* Give the students positive feedback about their most recent improvisation assessment.
* Ask the students what they did and did not enjoy about improvising over two chords.
* Explain to the students that they will be only improvising over one chord for the next unit.

**Define Structure:**

* Identify the notes of the Ab traid: Ab, C, and Eb, and identify those notes as part of the Ab chord.
* Do not worry about range, it is ok to teach the students “inverted chords” as their range is still developing.

**Develop Skills:**

* Play a concert Ab whole note, and call it the root or first note of the Ab triad or chord.
* The students echo the Ab whole note.
* Repeat this exercise with concert C, and concert Eb.
* Try playing a rhythmic pattern for the students then allow them to echo that rhythmic pattern back to you.
* As the students become more proficient at making their first sounds begin to allow the students to play the call, either using whole notes or prescribed rhythmic patterns.
* The teacher and the class give the response, or echo.
* Encourage the eighth- and advanced seventh-grade students to incorporate passing tones, upper neighbor tones, and lower neighbor tones from the Eb Major scale into their improvisations.

**Assessment:**

* The assessment will take place on week 9.
* The teacher should begin to prepare the student for the assessment at the beginning of week 7 and continue through week 8.
* Assign each section a note in the Ab traid, and have each section play their notes for a whole note.
* You may also choose to have the students play a check rhythm instead of a whole note for each of the drone measures.
* During the next measure have a student play their own improvisation using a whole note, half notes, quarter notes, or eighth notes and any of the notes in the Ab triad.
* Students can change notes during their improvisation on this assessment.
* Encourage the eighth- and advanced seventh-grade students to incorporate passing tones, upper neighbor tones, and lower neighbor tones from the Bb Major scale into their improvisations.
* It may be beneficial to have only certain sections improvise each day.
* Repeat the drone and improvised measure pattern until each student has had at least one attempt at improvisation.
* It would be appropriate to reassign notes of the traid for the drone after each section has completed a round.
* It would be appropriate to change the check rhythms in the same manner as above.

**Unit 3 - Weeks 10-12**

**Objectives:**

1. The students in eighth-grade and advanced seventh-grade grade improvisers will demonstrate the use of the Eb Major Scale to enhance their improvisations (Weeks 10-12).
2. The students will be able to identify the I-IV (Eb-Ab) chord progression (Weeks 10-12).
3. The students will be able to perform a two measure, two chord improvisation over the I-IV (Eb-Ab) chord progression (Weeks 11-12).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise over the I-IV progression in Eb (Week 12).

**Classroom Environment:**

* Give the students positive feedback about their most recent improvisation assessment.
* Ask them for feedback on their last improvisation assignment.
* Address any of their fears, and share your own stories of being afraid to improvise.
* Explain to the students that during the next three weeks the students will be preparing to play a two measure improvisation.

**Define Structure:**

* Review the chord tones in the concert Eb and concert Ab chords.
* Teach the students that the concert Eb chord can be referred to as the I chord.
* Teach the students that the concert Ab chord can be referred to as the IV chord.
* Remind the students that as notes change the harmony often changes.
* Remind the students we call these changes in harmony, chord changes or chord progressions.

**Develop Skills:**

* Remind the students that the call and response exercise utilized in the earlier weeks will continue to be modified for the two measure improvisation.
* For this exercise rhythms should be restricted to whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, and eighth notes.
* Give the call using notes from the I chord, and have the students echo.
* Tell them which notes you will be using before giving the call, but it is not necessary to tell them the order of notes or rhythms you will utilize before every call.
* Next, give the call using notes from the IV chord, and have the students echo using the same guidelines as above.
* Now, give a two measure call with measure one being the I chord and measure two being the IV chord.
* The students should give a two measure response.
* Make sure the students understand they are using the notes from the I chord in the first measure and notes from the IV chord in the second measure.
* As the students gain confidence, allow individual students to give the call as you and the class respond.
* Encourage the eighth- and advanced seventh-grade students to incorporate passing tones, upper neighbor tones, and lower neighbor tones from the Eb Major scale into their improvisations.
* It may be beneficial to have only certain sections improvise each day.

**Assessment:**

* The assessment will take place on week 12.
* The teacher should begin to prepare the student for the assessment during week 10 and continue through week 11.
* Assign the sections a note from the I chord and a note from the IV chord.
* Tell the sections to play a whole note on the first note they were assigned and a whole note on the second note they were assigned.
* You may also choose to have the students play a check rhythm instead of a whole note for each of the drone measures.
* During the next two measures have a student play their own improvisation using whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, eighth notes.
* The student should use notes from the I chord in the first measure and notes from the IV chord in the second measure.
* Students can change notes during their improvisation on this assessment.
* Encourage the eighth- and advanced seventh-grade students to incorporate passing tones, upper neighbor tones, and lower neighbor tones from the Eb Major scale into their improvisations.
* It may be beneficial to have only certain sections improvise each day.
* Repeat the pattern of drone and improvised measures until each student has had at least one attempt at improvisation.
* It would be appropriate to reassign notes of the traid for the drone after each section has completed the first round.
* It would also be appropriate to change the check rhythm in the same manner as above.

**Unit 4 - Weeks 13-15**

**Objectives:**

1. The students in eighth-grade and advanced seventh-grade grade improvisers will demonstrate the use of the Eb Major Scale to enhance their improvisations (Weeks 13-15).
2. The students will be able to identify the IV-V (Ab-Bb) chord progression (Weeks 13-15).
3. The students will be able to perform a two measure, two chord improvisation over the IV-V (Ab-Bb) chord progression (Weeks 14-15).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise over the IV-V progression in Eb (Week 15).

**Classroom Environment:**

* Give the students positive feedback about their most recent improvisation assessment.
* Ask them for feedback on their last improvisation assignment.
* Address any of their fears, and share your own stories of being afraid to improvise.
* Explain to the students that during the next three weeks the students will be preparing to play a two measure improvisation.

**Define Structure:**

* Review the chord tones in the concert Ab and concert Bb chords.
* Remind the students that the concert Ab chord can be referred to as the IV chord.
* Teach the students that the concert Bb chord can be referred to as the V chord.
* Remind the students that as notes change the harmony often changes.
* Remind the students we call these changes in harmony, chord changes or chord progressions.

**Develop Skills:**

* Remind the students that the call and response exercise utilized in the earlier weeks will continue to be modified for the two measure improvisation.
* For this exercise rhythms should be restricted to whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, and eighth notes.
* If the students have the rhythmic training sixteenth notes and triplets can be included.
* Give the call using notes from the IV chord, and have the students echo.
* Tell them which notes you will be using before giving the call, but it is not necessary to tell them the order of notes or rhythms you will utilize before every call.
* Next, give the call using notes from the V chord, and have the students echo using the same guidelines as above.
* Now, give a two measure call with measure one being the IV chord and measure two being the V chord.
* The students should give a two measure response.
* Make sure the students understand they are using the notes from the IV chord in the first measure and notes from the V chord in the second measure.
* As the students gain confidence, allow individual students to give the call as you and the class respond.
* Encourage the eighth- and advanced seventh-grade students to incorporate passing tones, upper neighbor tones, and lower neighbor tones from the Eb Major scale into their improvisations.
* It may be beneficial to have only certain sections improvise each day.

**Assessment:**

* The assessment will take place on week 15.
* The teacher should begin to prepare the student for the assessment during week 13 and continue through week 14.
* Assign the sections a note from the IV chord and a note from the V chord.
* Tell the sections to play a whole note on the first note they were assigned and a whole note on the second note they were assigned.
* You may also choose to have the students play a check rhythm instead of a whole note for each of the drone measures.
* During the next two measures have a student play their own improvisation using whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, eighth notes, sixteenth notes, or appropriate triplet rhythms.
* The student should use notes from the IV chord in the first measure and notes from the V chord in the second measure.
* Students can change notes during their improvisation on this assessment.
* Encourage the eighth- and advanced seventh-grade students to incorporate passing tones, upper neighbor tones, and lower neighbor tones from the Eb Major scale into their improvisations.
* It may be beneficial to have only certain sections improvise each day.
* Repeat the pattern of drone and improvised measures until each student has had at least one attempt at improvisation.
* It would be appropriate to reassign notes of the traid for the drone after each section has completed the first round.
* It would also be appropriate to change the check rhythm in the same manner as above.

**Unit 5 - Weeks 16-18**

**Objectives:**

1. The students in eighth-grade and advanced seventh-grade improvisers will demonstrate the use of the Eb Major Scale to enhance their improvisations (Weeks 16-18).
2. The students will be able to identify the V-I (Bb-Eb) chord progression (Weeks 16-18).
3. The students will be able to perform a two measure, two chord improvisation over the V-I (Bb-Eb) chord progression (Weeks 17-18).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise over the V-I progression in Eb (Week 18).

**Classroom Environment:**

* Give the students positive feedback about their most recent improvisation assessment.
* Ask them for feedback on their last improvisation assignment.
* Address any of their fears, and share your own stories of being afraid to improvise.
* Explain to the students that during the next three weeks the students will be preparing to play a two measure improvisation.

**Define Structure:**

* Review the chord tones in the concert Bb and concert Eb chords.
* Remind the students that the concert Bb chord can be referred to as the V chord.
* Remind the students that the concert Eb chord can be referred to as the I chord.
* Remind the students that as notes change the harmony often changes.
* Remind the students we call these changes in harmony, chord changes or chord progressions.

**Develop Skills:**

* Remind the students that the call and response exercise utilized in the earlier weeks will continue to be modified for the two measure improvisation.
* For this exercise rhythms should be restricted to whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, and eighth notes.
* If the students have the rhythmic training sixteenth notes and triplets can be included.
* Give the call using notes from the V chord, and have the students echo.
* Tell them which notes you will be using before giving the call, but it is not necessary to tell them the order of notes or rhythms you will utilize before every call.
* Next, give the call using notes from the I chord, and have the students echo using the same guidelines as above.
* Now, give a two measure call with measure one being the V chord and measure two being the I chord.
* The students should give a two measure response.
* Make sure the students understand they are using the notes from the V chord in the first measure and notes from the I chord in the second measure.
* As the students gain confidence, allow individual students to give the call as you and the class respond.
* Encourage the eighth- and advanced seventh-grade students to incorporate passing tones, upper neighbor tones, and lower neighbor tones from the Eb Major scale into their improvisations.
* It may be beneficial to have only certain sections improvise each day.

**Assessment:**

* The assessment will take place on week 18.
* The teacher should begin to prepare the student for the assessment during week 16 and continue through week 17.
* Assign the sections a note from the V chord and a note from the I chord.
* Tell the sections to play a whole note on the first note they were assigned and a whole note on the second note they were assigned.
* You may also choose to have the students play a check rhythm instead of a whole note for each of the drone measures.
* During the next two measures have a student play their own improvisation using whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, eighth notes, sixteenth notes, or appropriate triplet rhythms.
* The student should use notes from the V chord in the first measure and notes from the I chord in the second measure.
* Students can change notes during their improvisation on this assessment.
* Encourage the eighth- and advanced seventh-grade students to incorporate passing tones, upper neighbor tones, and lower neighbor tones from the Eb Major scale into their improvisations.
* It may be beneficial to have only certain sections improvise each day.
* Repeat the pattern of drone and improvised measures until each student has had at least one attempt at improvisation.
* It would be appropriate to reassign notes of the traid for the drone after each section has completed the first round.
* It would also be appropriate to change the check rhythm in the same manner as above.

**Unit 6 - Weeks 19-21**

**Objectives:**

1. The students in eighth-grade and advanced seventh-grade improvisers will demonstrate the use of the Eb Major Scale to enhance their improvisations (Weeks 19-21).
2. The students will be able to identify the I-IV-V-I (Eb-Ab-Bb-Eb) chord progression (Weeks 19-21).
3. The students will be able to perform a four measure, four chord improvisation over the I-IV-V-I (Eb-Ab-Bb-Eb) chord progression (Weeks 20-21).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise over the I-IV-V-I progression in Eb (Week 21).

**Classroom Environment:**

* Give the students positive feedback about their most recent improvisation assessment.
* Ask them for feedback on their last improvisation assignment.
* Address any of their fears, and share your own stories of being afraid to improvise.
* Explain to the students that during the next three weeks the students will be preparing to play a four measure improvisation.

**Define Structure:**

* Review the chord tones in the concert Eb, Ab, and Bb chords.
* Remind the students that the concert Eb chord can be referred to as the I chord.
* Remind the students that the concert Ab chord can be referred to as the IV chord.
* Remind the students that the concert Bb chord can be referred to as the V chord.
* Remind the students that as notes change the harmony often changes.
* Remind the students we call these changes in harmony chord changes or chord progressions.

**Develop Skills:**

* Remind the students that the call and response exercise utilized in their previous years of band will again be utilized for a four measure improvisation.
* For this exercise rhythms should be restricted to whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, and eight notes, or a combination of those rhythms.
* If the students have the rhythmic training sixteenth notes and triplets can be included.
* Give the call using notes from the I chord, and have the students echo.
* Tell them which notes you will be using before giving the call, but it is not necessary to tell them the order or rhythms you will utilize.
* Next, give the call using notes from the IV chord, and have the students echo using the same guidelines as above.
* Next, give the call using notes from the V chord, and have the students echo using the same guidelines as above.
* Finally, give the call using notes from the I chord, and have the students echo using the same guidelines as above.
* Give a simple call that lasts for four measures. Use the I-IV-V-I chord progression.
* The students will then give a four measure response.
* Make sure the students understand they are using notes from the appropriate chord for each measure.
* As the students gain confidence, allow individual students to give the call as you and the class respond.
* Encourage the eighth- and advanced seventh-grade students to incorporate passing tones, upper neighbor tones, and lower neighbor tones from the Eb Major scale into their improvisations.

**Assessment:**

* The assessment will take place on week 21.
* The teacher should begin to prepare the student for the assessment at the beginning of week 19 and continue through week 20.
* Assign the sections a note from the I chord, a note from the IV chord, a note from the V chord, and another note from the I chord.
* Tell the students to play a whole note on each note they were assigned.
* You may also choose to have the students play a check rhythm instead of a whole note for each of the drone measures.
* During the next four measures have a student play their own improvisation using whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, eighth notes, sixteenth notes, or appropriate triplet rhythms in any combination.
* The student should use notes from the I chord in the first measure, notes from the IV chord in the second measure, notes from the V chord in the third measure, and notes from the I chord in the fourth measure.
* Encourage the eighth- and advanced seventh-grade students to incorporate passing tones, upper neighbor tones, and lower neighbor tones from the Eb Major scale into their improvisations.
* Students should change notes during their improvisation on this assessment.
* Repeat the drone and improvised measure patterns until each student has had at least one attempt at improvisation.
* It may be appropriate to only have certain sections complete the assessment each day and to spend the entire week on the assessment to allow everyone the opportunity to perform.
* It would be appropriate to reassign notes of the traids for the drones after each day or as a section completes a round.
* It would be appropriate to change the check rhythms in the same manner as above.

**Unit 7 - Weeks 22-24**

**Objectives:**

1. The students will be able to identify and perform the three notes of a C triad: C, E, and G (Weeks 22-24).
2. The students in eighth-grade and advanced seventh-grade improvisers will demonstrate the use of the F Major Scale to enhance their improvisations (Weeks 22-24).
3. The students will be able to improvise for one measure over the C triad (Weeks 23-24).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise on the C triad (Week 24).

**Classroom Environment:**

* Give the students positive feedback about their most recent improvisation assessment.
* Ask the students what they did and did not enjoy about the last improvisation assessment.
* Explain to the students that they will be only improvising over one chord for the next unit.

**Define Structure:**

* Identify the notes of the C traid: C, E, and G, and identify those notes as part of the C chord.
* Do not worry about range, it is ok to teach the students “inverted chords” as their range is still developing.

**Develop Skills:**

* Play a concert C whole note, and call it the root or first note of the C triad or chord.
* The students echo the C whole note.
* Repeat this exercise with concert E, and concert G.
* Try playing a rhythmic pattern for the students then allow them to echo that rhythmic pattern back to you.
* As the students gain more confidence, allow them to play the call, either using whole notes or prescribed rhythmic patterns.
* The teacher and the class give the response, or echo.
* Encourage the eighth- and advanced seventh-grade students to incorporate passing tones, upper neighbor tones, and lower neighbor tones from the F Major scale into their improvisations.

**Assessment:**

* The assessment will take place on week 24.
* The teacher should begin to prepare the student for the assessment at the beginning of week 22 and continue through week 23.
* Assign each section a note in the C traid, and have each section play their notes for a whole note.
* You may also choose to have the students play a check rhythm instead of a whole note for each of the drone measures.
* During the next measure have a student play their own improvisation using a whole note, half notes, quarter notes, or eighth notes and any of the notes in the C triad.
* Students can change notes during their improvisation on this assessment.
* Encourage the eighth- and advanced seventh-grade students to incorporate passing tones, upper neighbor tones, and lower neighbor tones from the F Major scale into their improvisations.
* It may be beneficial to have only certain sections improvise each day.
* Repeat the drone and improvised measure pattern until each student has had at least one attempt at improvisation.
* It would be appropriate to reassign notes of the traid for the drone after each section has completed a round.
* It would be appropriate to change the check rhythms in the same manner as above.

**Unit 8 - Weeks 25-27**

**Objectives:**

1. The students in eighth-grade and advanced seventh-grade improvisers will demonstrate the use of the F Major Scale to enhance their improvisations (Weeks 25-27).
2. The students will be able to identify the I-IV (F-Bb) chord progression (Weeks 25-27).
3. The students will be able to perform a two measure, two chord improvisation over the I-IV (F-Bb) chord progression (Weeks 26-27).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise over the I-IV progression in F (Week 27).

**Classroom Environment:**

* Give the students positive feedback about their most recent improvisation assessment.
* Ask them for feedback on their last improvisation assignment.
* Address any of their fears, and share your own stories of being afraid to improvise.
* Explain to the students that during the next three weeks the students will be preparing to play a two measure improvisation.

**Define Structure:**

* Review the chord tones in the concert F and concert Bb chords.
* Teach the students that the concert F chord can be referred to as the I chord.
* Teach the students that the concert Bb chord can be referred to as the IV chord.
* Remind the students that as notes change the harmony often changes.
* Remind the students we call these changes in harmony, chord changes or chord progressions.

**Develop Skills:**

* Remind the students that the call and response exercise utilized in the earlier weeks will continue to be modified for the two measure improvisation.
* For this exercise rhythms should be restricted to whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, and eighth notes.
* Give the call using notes from the I chord, and have the students echo.
* Tell them which notes you will be using before giving the call, but it is not necessary to tell them the order of notes or rhythms you will utilize before every call.
* Next, give the call using notes from the IV chord, and have the students echo using the same guidelines as above.
* Now, give a two measure call with measure one being the I chord and measure two being the IV chord.
* The students should give a two measure response.
* Make sure the students understand they are using the notes from the I chord in the first measure and notes from the IV chord in the second measure.
* As the students gain confidence, allow individual students to give the call as you and the class respond.
* Encourage the eighth- and advanced seventh-grade students to incorporate passing tones, upper neighbor tones, and lower neighbor tones from the F Major scale into their improvisations.
* It may be beneficial to have only certain sections improvise each day.

**Assessment:**

* The assessment will take place on week 27.
* The teacher should begin to prepare the student for the assessment during week 25 and continue through week 26.
* Assign the sections a note from the I chord and a note from the IV chord.
* Tell the sections to play a whole note on the first note they were assigned and a whole note on the second note they were assigned.
* You may also choose to have the students play a check rhythm instead of a whole note for each of the drone measures.
* During the next two measures have a student play their own improvisation using whole notes, half notes, or quarter notes.
* The student should use notes from the I chord in the first measure and notes from the IV chord in the second measure.
* Students can change notes during their improvisation on this assessment.
* Encourage the eighth- and advanced seventh-grade students to incorporate passing tones, upper neighbor tones, and lower neighbor tones from the F Major scale into their improvisations.
* It may be beneficial to have only certain sections improvise each day.
* Repeat the pattern of drone and improvised measures until each student has had at least one attempt at improvisation.
* It would be appropriate to reassign notes of the traid for the drone after each section has completed the first round.
* It would also be appropriate to change the check rhythm in the same manner as above.

**Unit 9 - Weeks 28-30**

**Objectives:**

1. The students in eighth-grade and advanced seventh-grade improvisers will demonstrate the use of the F Major Scale to enhance their improvisations (Weeks 28-30).
2. The students will be able to identify the IV-V (Bb-C) chord progression (Weeks 28-30).
3. The students will be able to perform a two measure, two chord improvisation over the IV-V (Bb-C) chord progression (Weeks 29-30).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise over the IV-V progression in F (Week 30).

**Classroom Environment:**

* Give the students positive feedback about their most recent improvisation assessment.
* Ask them for feedback on their last improvisation assignment.
* Address any of their fears, and share your own stories of being afraid to improvise.
* Explain to the students that during the next three weeks the students will be preparing to play a two measure improvisation.

**Define Structure:**

* Review the chord tones in the concert Bb and concert C chords.
* Remind the students that the concert Bb chord can be referred to as the IV chord.
* Teach the students that the concert C chord can be referred to as the V chord.
* Remind the students that as notes change the harmony often changes.
* Remind the students we call these changes in harmony, chord changes or chord progressions.

**Develop Skills:**

* Remind the students that the call and response exercise utilized in the earlier weeks will continue to be modified for the two measure improvisation.
* For this exercise rhythms should be restricted to whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, and eighth notes.
* If the students have the rhythmic training sixteenth notes and triplets can be included.
* Give the call using notes from the IV chord, and have the students echo.
* Tell them which notes you will be using before giving the call, but it is not necessary to tell them the order of notes or rhythms you will utilize before every call.
* Next, give the call using notes from the V chord, and have the students echo using the same guidelines as above.
* Now, give a two measure call with measure one being the IV chord and measure two being the V chord.
* The students should give a two measure response.
* Make sure the students understand they are using the notes from the IV chord in the first measure and notes from the V chord in the second measure.
* As the students gain confidence, allow individual students to give the call as you and the class respond.
* Encourage the eighth- and advanced seventh-grade students to incorporate passing tones, upper neighbor tones, and lower neighbor tones from the Fb Major scale into their improvisations.
* It may be beneficial to have only certain sections improvise each day.

**Assessment:**

* The assessment will take place on week 30.
* The teacher should begin to prepare the student for the assessment during week 28 and continue through week 29.
* Assign the sections a note from the IV chord and a note from the V chord.
* Tell the sections to play a whole note on the first note they were assigned and a whole note on the second note they were assigned.
* You may also choose to have the students play a check rhythm instead of a whole note for each of the drone measures.
* During the next two measures have a student play their own improvisation using whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, eighth notes, sixteenth notes, or appropriate triplet rhythms.
* The student should use notes from the IV chord in the first measure and notes from the V chord in the second measure.
* Students can change notes during their improvisation on this assessment.
* Encourage the eighth- and advanced seventh-grade students to incorporate passing tones, upper neighbor tones, and lower neighbor tones from the Fb Major scale into their improvisations.
* It may be beneficial to have only certain sections improvise each day.
* Repeat the pattern of drone and improvised measures until each student has had at least one attempt at improvisation.
* It would be appropriate to reassign notes of the traid for the drone after each section has completed the first round.
* It would also be appropriate to change the check rhythm in the same manner as above.

**Unit 10 - Weeks 31-33**

**Objectives:**

1. The students in eighth-grade and advanced seventh-grade improvisers will demonstrate the use of the F Major Scale to enhance their improvisations (Weeks 31-33).
2. The students will be able to identify the V-I (C-F) chord progression (Weeks 31-33).
3. The students will be able to perform a two measure, two chord improvisation over the V-I (C-F) chord progression (Weeks 32-33).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise over the V-I progression in F (Week 33).

**Classroom Environment:**

* Give the students positive feedback about their most recent improvisation assessment.
* Ask them for feedback on their last improvisation assignment.
* Address any of their fears, and share your own stories of being afraid to improvise.
* Explain to the students that during the next three weeks the students will be preparing to play a two measure improvisation.

**Define Structure:**

* Review the chord tones in the concert C and concert F chords.
* Remind the students that the concert C chord can be referred to as the V chord.
* Remind the students that the concert F chord can be referred to as the I chord.
* Remind the students that as notes change the harmony often changes.
* Remind the students we call these changes in harmony, chord changes or chord progressions.

**Develop Skills:**

* Remind the students that the call and response exercise utilized in the earlier weeks will continue to be modified for the two measure improvisation.
* For this exercise rhythms should be restricted to whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, and eighth notes.
* If the students have the rhythmic training sixteenth notes and triplets can be included.
* Give the call using notes from the V chord, and have the students echo.
* Tell them which notes you will be using before giving the call, but it is not necessary to tell them the order of notes or rhythms you will utilize before every call.
* Next, give the call using notes from the I chord, and have the students echo using the same guidelines as above.
* Now, give a two measure call with measure one being the V chord and measure two being the I chord.
* The students should give a two measure response.
* Make sure the students understand they are using the notes from the V chord in the first measure and notes from the I chord in the second measure.
* As the students gain confidence, allow individual students to give the call as you and the class respond.
* Encourage the eighth- and advanced seventh-grade students to incorporate passing tones, upper neighbor tones, and lower neighbor tones from the F Major scale into their improvisations.
* It may be beneficial to have only certain sections improvise each day.

**Assessment:**

* The assessment will take place on week 33.
* The teacher should begin to prepare the student for the assessment during week 31 and continue through week 32.
* Assign the sections a note from the V chord and a note from the I chord.
* Tell the sections to play a whole note on the first note they were assigned and a whole note on the second note they were assigned.
* You may also choose to have the students play a check rhythm instead of a whole note for each of the drone measures.
* During the next two measures have a student play their own improvisation using whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, eighth notes, sixteenth notes, or appropriate triplet rhythms.
* The student should use notes from the V chord in the first measure and notes from the I chord in the second measure.
* Students can change notes during their improvisation on this assessment.
* Encourage the eighth- and advanced seventh-grade students to incorporate passing tones, upper neighbor tones, and lower neighbor tones from the F Major scale into their improvisations.
* It may be beneficial to have only certain sections improvise each day.
* Repeat the pattern of drone and improvised measures until each student has had at least one attempt at improvisation.
* It would be appropriate to reassign notes of the traid for the drone after each section has completed the first round.
* It would also be appropriate to change the check rhythm in the same manner as above.

**Unit 11 - Weeks 34-36**

**Objectives:**

1. The students in eighth-grade and advanced seventh-grade improvisers will demonstrate the use of the F Major Scale to enhance their improvisations (Weeks 34-36).
2. The students will be able to identify the I-IV-V-I (F-Bb-C-F) chord progression (Weeks 34-36).
3. The students will be able to perform a four measure, four chord improvisation over the I-IV-V-I (F-Bb-C-F) chord progression (Weeks 35-36).

**Assessment:**

1. Assess the students’ ability to improvise over the I-IV-V-I progression in F (Week 36).

**Classroom Environment:**

* Give the students positive feedback about their most recent improvisation assessment.
* Ask them for feedback on their last improvisation assignment.
* Address any of their fears, and share your own stories of being afraid to improvise.
* Explain to the students that during the next three weeks the students will be preparing to play a four measure improvisation.

**Define Structure:**

* Review the chord tones in the concert F, Bb, and C chords.
* Remind the students that the concert F chord can be referred to as the I chord.
* Remind the students that the concert Bb chord can be referred to as the IV chord.
* Remind the students that the concert C chord can be referred to as the V chord.
* Remind the students that as notes change the harmony often changes.
* Remind the students we call these changes in harmony chord changes or chord progressions.

**Develop Skills:**

* Remind the students that the call and response exercise utilized in their previous years of band will again be utilized for a four measure improvisation.
* For this exercise rhythms should be restricted to whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, and eighth notes, or a combination of those rhythms.
* If the students have the rhythmic training sixteenth notes and triplets can be included.
* Give the call using notes from the I chord, and have the students echo.
* Tell them which notes you will be using before giving the call, but it is not necessary to tell them the order or rhythms you will utilize.
* Next, give the call using notes from the IV chord, and have the students echo using the same guidelines as above.
* Next, give the call using notes from the V chord, and have the students echo using the same guidelines as above.
* Finally, give the call using notes from the I chord, and have the students echo using the same guidelines as above.
* Give a simple call that lasts for four measures. Use the I-IV-V-I chord progression.
* The students will then give a four measure response.
* Make sure the students understand they are using notes from the appropriate chord for each measure.
* As the students gain confidence, allow individual students to give the call as you and the class respond.
* Encourage the eighth- and advanced seventh-grade students to incorporate passing tones, upper neighbor tones, and lower neighbor tones from the F Major scale into their improvisations.

**Assessment:**

* The assessment will take place on week 36.
* The teacher should begin to prepare the student for the assessment at the beginning of week 34 and continue through week 35.
* Assign the sections a note from the I chord, a note from the IV chord, a note from the V chord, and another note from the I chord.
* Tell the students to play a whole note on each note they were assigned.
* You may also choose to have the students play a check rhythm instead of a whole note for each of the drone measures.
* During the next four measures have a student play their own improvisation using whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, eighth notes, sixteenth notes, or appropriate triplet rhythms in any combination.
* The student should use notes from the I chord in the first measure, notes from the IV chord in the second measure, notes from the V chord in the third measure, and notes from the I chord in the fourth measure.
* Encourage the eighth- and advanced seventh-grade students to incorporate passing tones, upper neighbor tones, and lower neighbor tones from the F Major scale into their improvisations.
* Students should change notes during their improvisation on this assessment.
* Repeat the drone and improvised measure patterns until each student has had at least one attempt at improvisation.
* It may be appropriate to only have certain sections complete the assessment each day and to spend the entire week on the assessment to allow everyone the opportunity to perform.
* It would be appropriate to reassign notes of the traids for the drones after each day or as a section completes a round.
* It would be appropriate to change the check rhythms in the same manner as above.

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