

Secondary 4

Making (Musical) Waves:

The History and Evolution of the Ukulele and Banjo

Danielle Larrick

Grade Level/Class

Upper Secondary Grades

50 Minute Music Class

Overall Theme

Just as musical genres and styles shift in and out of the popular spotlight, instruments move with them.

Essential Questions

1. How has the ukulele evolved throughout music history?
2. How has the banjo evolved throughout music history?
3. What factors influenced the shifts in popularity of the ukulele and the banjo in recent history?
3. How do the physical changes of these instruments, if any, connect to the evolution of musical genres and styles?

National Standards

Respond

MU:Re7.2.8b Identify and compare the context of programs of music from a variety of genres, cultures, and historical periods.

MU:Re9.1.8a Apply appropriate personally developed criteria to evaluate musical works or performances.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Describe the history and evolution of both the banjo and ukulele.
2. Analyze the physical changes in both instruments.
3. Draw connections between the physical changes of the instruments and the evolution of musical styles.
4. Listen to and evaluate two different performances using the banjo and/or ukulele.

Materials Needed

1. S4 Presentation
2. S4 Worksheet
3. Writing Utensil

Procedures

Lesson Introduction (10 Min):

- Students (S) brainstorm anything they know about the ukulele or banjo (facts, popular songs, musicians, etc.) on their worksheet.
- Teacher (T) invites S to form small groups to discuss ideas.
- T leads the whole class (WC) in a discussion based on group ideas.

Lesson Activity (30 Min):

- T provides S with the history and evolution of both the banjo and ukulele using the slideshow and supplementary videos.
- S will answer related questions on the worksheet.
- Throughout the presentation, T includes pictures of the evolution of instruments. T asks S to analyze the pictures, noting physical changes and/or observations on their worksheet.
- After the presentation, T forms T-selected small groups. S discuss their observations.
- T leads WC in a discussion based on S's observations.
- T draws connections between these physical changes and the evolution of musical eras they reflect (From Point three in museum-provided material).

Assessment Strategies

Wrap-up and Assessment (10 Min):

- T provides S listening examples choices.
- S select a listening example of interest.
- S listens and reflects on their worksheet.
- As time allows, S share their opinions.
- T collects S worksheets.

Extensions/Adaptations

- This Lesson Plan has so many possibilities for cross-curricular instruction:
 - History: Provide students with listening examples that are out of historical order. Allow students to collaborate to discern if they can identify the correct historical order of given examples.
- STEAM: Provide students with basic materials to build their own version of these instruments.
- Careers: Invite students to choose a provided listening example, or a student-selected example, and write a review of the performance from the perspective of a music critic.

Adaptations

- Share a guided packet with one question/discussion question at a time to help students with pacing.
- For helping students get into groups, consider assigning random numbers or seemingly random groups by pairing students who may need assistance with leaders.

- Give students specific questions or sentence stems for reflections on their worksheets.
- Ask students to prepare one sentence to share out with the class as part of the assessment.

Spotlight on Careers in Music

This lesson plan can be tied to specific careers in music:

- Performer
- Music critic
- Manufacturer
- Handcrafter
- Luthier
- Business owner
- Business Manager

For comprehensive information on careers in the music industry, please visit [Consider a Career in Music](#)