

# Arts Education Key Learning Area

## Music Curriculum and Assessment Guide (Secondary 4-6)

Jointly prepared by the Curriculum Development Council and  
The Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority

Recommended for use in schools by the Education Bureau  
HKSAR

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## Preamble

This Curriculum and Assessment (C&A) Guide, jointly prepared by the Curriculum Development Council (CDC) and the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) in 2024, is based on the goals of senior secondary education and on other official curriculum and assessment documents, including the *Secondary Education Curriculum Guide* (2017) and the *Primary Education Curriculum Guide* (2024)<sup>1</sup>. It is published for use in secondary schools and should be read in conjunction with all related documents.

This C&A Guide is designed to provide the rationale and aims of the subject curriculum, followed by chapters on the curriculum framework, curriculum planning, pedagogy, assessment and use of learning and teaching resources. One key concept underlying the senior secondary curriculum is that curriculum, pedagogy and assessment should be well aligned. While learning and teaching strategies form an integral part of the curriculum and are conducive to promoting learning to learn and whole-person development, assessment should also be recognised not only as a means to gauge performance but also to improve learning. To understand the interplay between these three key components, all chapters in the C&A Guide should be read in a holistic manner.

The CDC is an advisory body that gives recommendations to the HKSAR Government on all matters relating to curriculum development for the school system from kindergarten to senior secondary level. Its membership includes heads of schools, practising teachers, parents, employers, academics from tertiary institutions, professionals from related fields/bodies, representatives from the HKEAA and the Vocational Training Council, as well as officers from the Education Bureau (EDB).

The HKEAA is an independent statutory body responsible for the conduct of public assessment, including the assessment for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE). Its governing council includes members drawn from the school sector, tertiary institutions and government bodies, as well as professionals and members of the business community. The subject curriculum forms the basis of the assessment designed and administered by the HKEAA. In this connection, the HKEAA will issue a handbook to provide information on the rules and regulations of the HKDSE Examination as well as the structure and format of public assessment for each subject.

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to the latest version of the curriculum documents in accompany with the ongoing renewal of the school curriculum.

The CDC and HKEAA will keep the subject curriculum under constant review and evaluation in the light of classroom experiences, students' performance in the public assessment, and the changing needs of students and society. All comments and suggestions on this C&A Guide may be sent to:

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# Chapter 1 Introduction

This chapter provides the background, rationale and aims of Music as an elective subject in the three-year senior secondary curriculum, and highlights how it articulates with the junior secondary curriculum, post-secondary education, and future career pathways.

## 1.1 Background

Music is one of the elective subjects in the Arts Education Key Learning Area (KLA). To continue the music development offered in basic education, the senior secondary Music curriculum is a three-year course designed for students who choose Music as an elective subject.

This C&A Guide first explains the rationale and the aims of the curriculum, followed by chapters and/or sections on the curriculum framework, curriculum planning, pedagogy, assessment, and supporting measures. One key concept underlying the development of the senior secondary curriculum is that curriculum, pedagogy and assessment form a trinity. The learning and teaching strategies are to be an integral part of the curriculum which promotes learning to learn and whole-person development. Furthermore, assessment should be recognised as a means to understand students' performance and, more importantly, improve learning.

## 1.2 Rationale

Music is an important and fundamental human means for communication and for emotional and cultural expression. It is a significant art form that contributes to nurturing human beings' aesthetic sensitivity, and to developing their social, intellectual, physical and mental abilities. As a unique artistic language, music records human civilisation and develops concurrently with human culture. It enlightens our thinking and enriches our spirits and our lives.

The 21st century is characterised by unprecedented changes in politics, economics, technology and culture. Living in a knowledge-based economy and a dynamically changing society, it is crucial for students to develop creativity, critical thinking and communication skills to cope with these ever-changing challenges. Music education contributes to the development and connection of these skills in a unique way. It stimulates students' curiosity about sounds and music in the environment, helps them understand and express themselves with music. The abstraction of music contributes to extending students' thinking, and provides them with unlimited space to freely express their imagination and emotions. Music education can, therefore, cultivate their creativity and aesthetic sensitivity.

The senior secondary Music curriculum provides students with broad and balanced music learning experiences. In addition to Western classical music, students learn to appreciate a wide range of music genres and styles such as Chinese instrumental music, Cantonese operatic music and popular music, in ways that broaden their music and cultural horizons, strengthen their knowledge and promote their respect for local and other cultures. The curriculum is also designed to cater for students with diverse music backgrounds and strengths. For instance, they may choose to perform and compose music in various music genres and styles noted above.

Through active participation in listening, performing and creating, students not only apply music knowledge and skills, but also exercise creativity, imagination, aesthetic sensitivity and critical thinking skills to express the substance, characteristics and feelings of the music. Such meaningful learning processes and music experiences help students learn how to learn, enhance their confidence, cultivate generic skills and develop positive values and attitudes. The senior secondary Music curriculum plays an indispensable role in raising students' musical awareness and competence, and in facilitating their all-round individual development.

### 1.3 Curriculum Aims

The aims of the Music curriculum are to enable students to:

- develop creativity and nurture aesthetic sensitivity;
- further develop their musical competence;
- construct knowledge and understanding of diverse music cultures;
- develop critical responses to music, and communicate effectively through music;
- build a foundation for pursuing further studies in music and preparing for careers in music and related areas; and
- cultivate a lifelong interest in music and develop positive values and attitudes towards music.

## 1.4 Interface with the Junior Secondary Curriculum and Post-secondary Pathways

In the junior secondary Music curriculum, students gain rich music learning experiences through practical music activities in the areas of listening, performing and creating. The senior secondary Music curriculum extends students' music learning from junior secondary education, and allows them to pursue their music studies in the three areas mentioned. Both curricula are closely linked, and contain precise Learning Objectives so as to provide a flexible framework for students' music learning. These Learning Objectives lead to the four Learning Targets of the Music curricula, i.e. Developing Creativity and Imagination, Developing Music Skills and Processes, Cultivating Critical Responses in Music and Understanding Music in Context. The Learning Targets and the Learning Objectives of the senior secondary Music curriculum are listed in Section 2.2 "Learning Targets" and Section 2.3 "Curriculum Structure and Learning Objectives" on pages 6 to 10.

Junior secondary education is an important phase for students to develop their music abilities and construct music knowledge. Students' interest in music, creativity, critical response, as well as performing and creating skills can be developed to the full. In S3, students decide whether they wish to take Music as an elective subject, based on their interest, abilities and knowledge of music. Teachers should design a suitable Music curriculum for junior secondary students in accordance with the suggestions provided in the *Music Curriculum Guide (Primary 1 to Secondary 6)* (2024), and thus help develop their abilities in listening, performing and creating comprehensively in order to build a firm music foundation. Teachers have to carefully observe junior secondary students' performance in music, nurture in them appropriate values and attitudes in Music studies, and encourage them to select Music as an elective in their senior secondary studies. In addition, teachers should discuss with the school authority the possibility of offering Music as an elective at the senior secondary level, and the related arrangements for staffing and other resources.

The selection of elective subjects at the senior secondary level has a long-lasting effect on students' future studies and careers. Teachers and parents should help students understand their musical competence and future pathways in order to help them make appropriate decisions. For example, teachers may arrange briefing sessions for S3 students and their parents, to introduce the requirements of the senior secondary Music curriculum and the future possibilities for studies and careers. Alumni who have studied Music may be invited to share their experience in music learning with current students.



Students choosing Music at the senior secondary level can become better equipped for studying Music at tertiary level. Such study helps lay a firm foundation for further artistic, academic and intellectual development, and for further studies and future careers. The study of Music at the senior secondary level connects well with other subjects. For instance, the study of Music together with:

- Visual Arts, Design and Applied Technology, and the Applied Learning (ApL) courses related to the arts contribute to students' development in multi-media and web page production, advertisement and theatre production, television and film production, broadcasting and record production as well as other creative industries;
- Language subjects contribute to students' development in arts management, script writing, critiquing and mass media related to the arts;
- Biology as well as Health Management and Social Care contribute to students' development in music therapy; and
- Physics contributes to students' development in sound engineering as well as architectural acoustics design.

## Chapter 2 Curriculum Framework

The curriculum framework for Music embodies the key knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that students are to develop at senior secondary level. It forms the basis on which schools and teachers plan their school-based curriculum and design appropriate learning, teaching and assessment activities.

### 2.1 Design Principles

The design of the senior secondary Music curriculum is founded on the following principles:

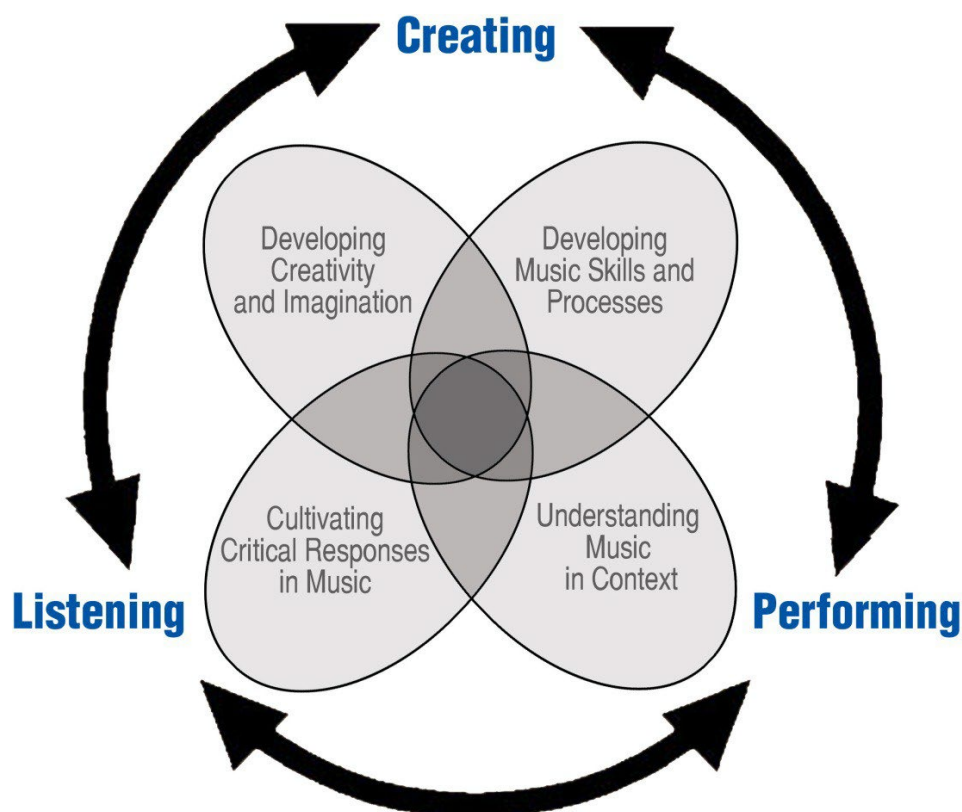
- Addressing the essence and characteristics of music and ensuring the coherence of the curriculum;
- Adopting a human-oriented curriculum by making students' learning the central concern;
- Building on the knowledge, experiences, skills and proper values, attitudes and behaviours that students have developed through the Music curriculum in basic education;
- Achieving a balance between breadth and depth in music learning to facilitate students' further studies and career development;
- Emphasising the significance of both theories and applications;
- Providing flexibility to cater for students' learning diversity;
- Promoting independent learning through developing students' skills in learning to learn;
- Ensuring close alignment between curriculum and assessment; and
- Ensuring the feasibility of implementing this curriculum in the local educational context.

## 2.2 Learning Targets

In the process of music learning, students use creativity, and performing and listening skills to express the qualities and emotions embedded within music. Through the practical music activities of listening, performing and creating, students gain rich and all-round music learning experiences, and work towards the four Learning Targets of the Music curriculum. These are:

- **Developing Creativity and Imagination**  
Develop music ideas and acquire creating skills, together with performing and listening, to cultivate creativity and imagination.
- **Developing Music Skills and Processes**  
Develop performing skills to experience and express music, with an emphasis on cultivating musical imagination and musicality in practice.
- **Cultivating Critical Responses in Music**  
Comprehend, respond to and appraise music so as to nurture aesthetic sensitivity and awareness.
- **Understanding Music in Context**  
Understand the functions of music and the relationship between music and cultures.

Figure 2.1 Achieving the Four Learning Targets through Listening, Performing and Creating



## 2.3 Curriculum Structure and Learning Objectives

The curriculum consists of three compulsory modules, which both comprehensively develop students' abilities in critical listening, performance and creativity, and enable students with different musical backgrounds and abilities to display their strengths. The weighting of the three compulsory modules in the Public Assessment of Music is as follows:

<b>Compulsory Modules</b>	
Module 1: Listening	50%
Module 2: Performing	30%
Module 3: Creating	20%

The three compulsory modules are not to be taught as discrete modules. In the course of music learning, listening, performing and creating activities should be conducted in an integrated and well-connected manner. For details, please refer to Section 3.3 “Learning Progression” on page 14.

Learning Objectives are specifically set out to assist teachers in planning and organising the learning and teaching of Music. The following tables set out the Learning Objectives leading to the four Learning Targets and the requirements, as well as the study guidelines and the weightings for the three compulsory modules:

*Learning Targets				Learning Objectives	Requirements	Study Guidelines & Weightings
CI	SP	CR	MC			
✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop critical listening skills and understanding of how music elements are used in various compositional devices.</li> <li>Identify and respond critically to the music genres and styles of different cultures and periods, and express understanding of their significant features.</li> <li>Analyse the artistic qualities of diverse music genres and styles in relation to their historical and cultural contexts.</li> </ul>	<b>Module 1 (Listening)<sup>2</sup> (50%)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listen to and study musical works from the periods and genres/styles listed in Areas of Study 1 to 4 (AoS 1 to 4).</li> <li>Use appropriate music terminology/notation to demonstrate the development of aural perception and knowledge about music elements, structures, expressive qualities and compositional devices.</li> <li>Describe and discuss music in relation to its historical and cultural contexts.</li> </ul>	<b>AoS 1: Music in the Western Classical Tradition (24%)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Baroque concerto grosso (movement in ritornello form) and Classical solo concerto (1st movement)</li> <li>Baroque to Romantic oratorio</li> <li>Classical string quartet</li> <li>Italian opera in the Classical and Romantic periods</li> <li>Romantic piano character piece (etude, nocturne, waltz only)</li> <li>Romantic German <i>Lied</i></li> <li>Romantic programme symphony and symphonic poem</li> <li>20th century styles up to 1945: Impressionism and 12-tone serialism (Second Viennese School only)</li> </ol> <b>(two set works<sup>3</sup> are assigned in AoS 1)</b> <b>AoS 2: Chinese Instrumental Music (12%)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traditional solo without accompaniment: <i>guqin, guzheng, pipa</i></li> <li>Traditional ensemble: <i>Jiangnan Sizhu</i> (silk and bamboo music of Jiangnan) and <i>Guangdong Yinyue</i> (Cantonese music)</li> <li>Modern solo with or without accompaniment: <i>dizi, erhu</i></li> <li>Modern large-scale ensemble: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arrangements of traditional pieces</li> <li>Original modal / tonal works (up to 1990s)</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <b>(one set work<sup>4</sup> is assigned in AoS 2, section iv)</b> <b>AoS 3: Cantonese Operatic Music (6%)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Banghuang</i>: <i>baziju erhuang manban, fanxian shiziju zhongban, qiziqing zhongban, shigong gunhua</i></li> <li><i>Shuobai</i>: <i>bailan, koubai, kougu, shibai</i></li> <li><i>Shuochang</i>: <i>manban nanyin (zhengxian, yifan)</i></li> <li><i>Qupai</i>: <i>xiaoqu</i></li> </ol> <b>AoS 4: Local and Western Popular Music (8%)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contemporary Rhythm &amp; Blues</li> <li>Hard rock</li> <li>Hip-hop</li> <li>Pop Ballad</li> </ol>

\*Learning Targets: CI – Developing Creativity and Imagination SP – Developing Music Skills and Processes CR – Cultivating Critical Responses in Music MC – Understanding Music in Context

<sup>2</sup> Refer to the Assessment Framework published by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority for details on the weightings and examination duration of Paper 1 Listening.

<sup>3</sup> Refer to the Assessment Framework published by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority for details on the set works.

<sup>4</sup> Refer to the Assessment Framework published by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority for details on the set work.

*Learning Targets				Learning Objectives	Requirements	Study Guidelines & Weightings
CI	SP	CR	MC			
	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perform music accurately and fluently with appropriate control of technique and expression.</li> <li>Perform different types of music using appropriate styles to demonstrate interpretive skills and aesthetic sensitivity.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Module 2 (Performing)<sup>5</sup> (30%)</b></p> <p><b>Part A: Ensemble Performance (15%)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sing or play two or more vocal or instrumental ensemble pieces in contrasting styles in a performance, and take part in an oral presentation to explain their understanding and interpretation of the music performed.</li> </ul>	<p>Sing or play two or more vocal or instrumental ensemble pieces in contrasting styles in a performance (12%) and take part in an oral presentation (3%):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The total duration of the performance should range from 5 to 10 minutes, and the duration of the oral presentation should range from 3 to 5 minutes;</li> <li>Any Chinese or Western instruments, including voice, as well as any music styles, including Cantonese operatic songs and popular songs, are permitted;</li> <li>The basic requirement of Part A is equivalent to the Grade 4 practical examination of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) / the Grade 5 practical examination of the Royal Conservatory of Music of Toronto-Canada for Western instruments, and the Grade 4 practical examination of the Central Conservatory of Music, Beijing, for Chinese instruments;</li> <li>The ensemble should consist of at least 2 players;</li> <li>Ensemble performance involves the collaboration and interaction of two or more performers. Therefore, the candidate's part should not consistently overlap with that of any other performer. If an accompaniment part lacks independence, it will not meet Part A's requirements;</li> <li>The structural integrity of the music should be preserved, and the performance should comprise complete movements/pieces rather than excerpts; and</li> <li>The areas of discussion in the oral presentation may include the compositional background of music pieces, stylistic characteristics and ways of interpretation.</li> </ol>
✓	✓	✓	✓			

\*Learning Targets: CI – Developing Creativity and Imagination SP – Developing Music Skills and Processes CR – Cultivating Critical Responses in Music MC – Understanding Music in Context

<sup>5</sup> Refer to the Assessment Framework published by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority for details on the weightings of Paper 2 Performing.

<sup>6</sup> Refer to the Assessment Framework published by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority for details on the recognised qualifications and principles of mark conversion.

*Learning Targets				Learning Objectives	Requirements	Study Guidelines & Weightings
CI	SP	CR	MC			
✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create and develop music ideas employing appropriate compositional devices.</li> </ul>	<b>Module 3 (Creating)<sup>7</sup> (20%)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create two compositions of different styles based on specific briefs.</li> <li>Present a reflective report to record and display the creating process of each composition.</li> </ul>	Compose two compositions (16%): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The total duration of the compositions should range from 4 to 12 minutes, with at least one composition scored for an ensemble of two or more performers;</li> <li>The compositions must be based on two out of five composition briefs<sup>8</sup> that specify a creative approach or context, including (1) structural / technical / motivic device, (2) programme / context, (3) function / occasion, (4) music with own-choice text and (5) free composition;</li> <li>The compositions may be in different genres and styles, utilising any combination of instrument(s) and/or voice(s), e.g. solo pieces, choral pieces, electro-acoustic music, Cantonese operatic songs and popular songs; and</li> <li>The recordings of the compositions, whether they are computer-generated, studio-recorded, or from live performances, must be submitted along with the scores.</li> </ol> Write a reflective report (4%): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write a reflective report that covers each composition. It may include the aims of the composition, development of music ideas, compositional devices employed, performance practice, use of information technology and a list of reference repertoire; and</li> <li>The length requirement of the report is 400 to 600 words in Chinese or English. Candidates should use the same language that they chose for the examination as a whole.</li> </ol>
✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop musical understanding of different creative requirements and potential in a variety of compositional contexts.</li> </ul>		
	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss and explain the structural design and uses of music elements in their compositions.</li> </ul>		

\*Learning Targets: CI – Developing Creativity and Imagination SP – Developing Music Skills and Processes CR – Cultivating Critical Responses in Music MC – Understanding Music in Context

<sup>7</sup> Refer to the Assessment Framework published by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority for details on the weightings of Paper 3 Creating.

<sup>8</sup> Refer to the Assessment Framework or website published by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority for details on the five composition briefs.

## 2.4 Learning Outcomes

Students' listening, performing and creating abilities, as well as generic skills, values and attitudes can be developed in the course of music learning. By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- (1) identify and analyse how music elements are used in compositional devices;
- (2) identify and analyse the artistic qualities of diverse music genres and styles in different cultures and periods, as well as the relationships with their historical and cultural contexts;
- (3) use their critical thinking skills to appreciate and respond to music critically from multiple perspectives, and express their personal opinions;
- (4) perform music accurately and fluently with appropriate control of techniques and expression;
- (5) perform different types of music using appropriate styles to demonstrate interpretative ability and aesthetic sensitivity;
- (6) explain and justify their interpretation of the music being performed;
- (7) create and develop music ideas employing appropriate compositional devices;
- (8) explain the use of music elements in the compositional devices of their own compositions;
- (9) establish personal values with regard to music, and respect other people's different orientations;
- (10) communicate with others and express themselves effectively through creating and performing;
- (11) establish collaborative relationships through participating in an instrumental or vocal ensemble; and
- (12) respect different music traditions and cultures.



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## Chapter 3 Curriculum Planning

This chapter provides guidelines to help schools and teachers develop a flexible and balanced curriculum that suits the needs, interests and abilities of their students, and the context of their school, in accordance with the central framework provided in Chapter 2.

### 3.1 Guiding Principles

Curriculum planning should aim to facilitate music learning, and at the same time develop students' generic skills and proper values, attitudes and behaviours. When planning the three-year senior secondary Music curriculum, teachers should respond to the needs and abilities of their students and the requirements of the various modules when devising learning content and working out suitable teaching strategies. Curriculum development is a continuous process; however, teachers should make adjustments to curriculum planning, learning and teaching, as well as assessment strategies whenever necessary.

When planning and developing the school-based Music curriculum at the senior secondary level, teachers and schools are encouraged to:

- ensure that there is continuity with the junior secondary Music curriculum to provide holistic and comprehensive music learning to students;
- design a school-based Music curriculum with reference to the school context, curriculum aims and framework, learning and teaching strategies and modes of assessment suggested in this curriculum;
- set clear and manageable learning objectives to develop students' music skills, creativity, critical thinking and communication skills, and proper values, attitudes and behaviours conducive to lifelong learning;
- take into account students' strengths, interests and learning pace, and design suitable learning and teaching activities and assessment modes to cater for learner diversity;
- develop a progressive and appropriate school-based Music curriculum by applying the recommended Learning Objectives flexibly and/or designing suitable Learning Objectives leading to the four Learning Targets;
- allocate sufficient lesson time and use learning time effectively to facilitate students' learning;
- develop and make good use of learning resources to suit students' needs; and
- design appropriate assessment tasks to inform students' progress in learning and adjust learning and teaching strategies.

### 3.2 Time Allocation

Schools need to provide sufficient lesson time for students who have chosen Music as an elective. About 10% of the total lesson time (i.e., about 250 hours) should be allocated to the Music elective subject. Also, since students will sit for a public examination in S6, the recommended distribution of lesson time across S4, S5 and S6 should be around 95, 95 and 60 hours. For instance, a school with a timetable of 40 lessons per week should allocate at least four Music lessons per week. It is generally advisable that two double Music lessons be arranged per week in order to provide students with adequate sustained time for listening, performing and creating activities. The suggested percentage and amount of lesson time for each of the three areas of learning, i.e. listening, performing and creating, are listed below:

<b>Area</b>	<b>Suggested Percentage of S4 to S6 Lesson Time (Approximate number of hours)</b>
Listening	50 – 60% (125 – 150 hours)
Performing	15 – 25% (37.5 – 62.5 hours)
Creating	25 – 35% (62.5 – 87.5 hours)

Taking these suggested percentages into account, teachers should assign and use the lesson time for the three main areas flexibly according to students' music abilities and learning progress as well as the requirements of the modules. Through listening extensively to different kinds of music, students can develop sensitive listening abilities and gain rich music nourishment and experience so as to enhance their abilities in performing and creating. Thus, teachers may assign more lesson time to listening. If students have acquired a considerable level of performing skills, the lesson time in this area can be reduced, and teachers can assign more lesson time to the areas of listening and creating according to learning and teaching needs.

### 3.3 Learning Progression

The three compulsory modules in this curriculum, i.e. Listening, Performing and Creating, are designed to develop students' creativity, critical response and musical competence progressively from S4 to S6. In S4, students should acquire an overview on the requirements of all the modules as they begin to study the content of the three compulsory modules. Also, to lay a firm foundation for their studies in S5 and S6, it is beneficial for students to have a preliminary understanding of the development and trends in Western classical music, Chinese music, Cantonese operatic music and popular music, and to acquire knowledge on Chinese and Western instrumentation, compositional devices and elementary harmony. Teachers need to help students develop their musical competence through listening, performing and creating activities so that they have a sound foundation for applying music knowledge and skills. After the first year of study, students will have a fuller understanding of their own preferences, strengths and curriculum requirements.

Students will continue to study all the compulsory modules in the second and third years. In this process, their appraising, performing and creating skills will be further developed as they acquire more music-related knowledge. With such support, they can analyse and explore various music styles and artistic characteristics from multiple perspectives, and be encouraged to express personal views on different musical works and interpretations with evidence.

Teachers should plan the progression of their studies flexibly to help students develop their abilities in appraising, performing and creating music. In the course of music learning, listening, performing and creating are carried out in an integrated and well-connected manner. Therefore, the three areas should not be conducted discretely in the three years of senior secondary studies. Some important points in the three areas are provided below to facilitate further illustration.

In the aspect of listening, students' development in listening has to be consolidated first by promoting their abilities in analysing music elements through listening. In addition to developing sensitive listening skills, students also need to understand the compositional devices, artistic characteristics of different genres and music styles in relation to the historical and cultural contexts. Such knowledge must also be applied in the areas of performing and creating. Teachers may use "vertical development" and "horizontal linkage" to arrange and organise the teaching in the area of listening, for instance, by adopting a chronological method for Western classical music. Teachers can guide students to study the music and artistic characteristics of different periods from the Baroque period onwards. Alternatively, a particular topic can be chosen for the study of Music in different periods and genres, such as the relationship between lyrics and music, melodic characteristics and development, the timbre and structure of an orchestra, in order to effectively strengthen students' understanding of music from different cultures. There is no need to arrange the progression of studies for topics in Western classical music, Chinese instrumental music, Cantonese operatic music and popular music in a particular sequence. Teachers should make flexible arrangements according to learning and teaching needs and students' interests.

In the aspect of performing, students are guided to understand the music characteristics and ways of interpreting music from different periods and genres through extensive listening so that their performing and interpretation skills will be enhanced. Moreover, teachers have to develop students' sight-singing skills at an early stage, and help them organise choral and ensemble activities in order to develop collaborative skills in music. As students' strengths and standards in performing vary, teachers need to discuss with them the progression of studies and performance repertoire based on individual needs.

In the aspect of creating, students should listen to different styles of music in order to broaden their music and cultural horizons, and to accumulate music nourishment for stimulating

inspiration and ideas for creating. Students have to acquire knowledge related to music creating, such as the development of music ideas, and the use of orchestration, form, harmony and texture. They should then apply this knowledge to create music in order to enhance their compositional skills and aesthetic sensitivity. Teachers should arrange performances of students' compositions, and guide them in appraising compositions of their own and their classmates, as this will give them a more in-depth understanding of and experience in music creating. In addition, teachers should help students decide on the content of their portfolios based on individual students' abilities and inclinations.

### 3.4 Suggested Learning Focuses

Teachers should plan learning content based on the requirements and study guidelines of the modules in this curriculum, and decide on the depth and breadth of each topic. As students have different interests and abilities with regard to listening, performing and creating, teachers need to arrange the learning content flexibly and select suitable materials based on learning and teaching needs. The suggested learning focuses for the three areas are as follows:

Area	Suggested Learning Focuses
Listening	<p>Develop awareness and understanding of music, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Pitch:</b> intervals, scales, range</li> <li>• <b>Duration/Rhythm:</b> syncopation, polyrhythm, polymetre, backbeat, <i>dingban (yibansanding, yibanyiding, liushuiban)</i></li> <li>• <b>Dynamics:</b> gradation of dynamics, subtle differences and changes in dynamics</li> <li>• <b>Tempo:</b> gradation of tempi, subtle differences and changes in tempi</li> <li>• <b>Timbre:</b> timbres of different combinations of voices and instruments, different ways of sound production in voices and instruments, effects of recorded and mixed sounds</li> <li>• <b>Texture:</b> monophony, homophony, polyphony, heterophony</li> <li>• <b>Harmony:</b> chords, harmonic progression, cadences</li> <li>• <b>Tonality:</b> modes, atonality, modulation, polytonality, concept of modes and <i>xian</i> of Cantonese opera (<i>shigongxian, hehexian, yifanxian, fanxian</i>)</li> <li>• <b>Structure/Form:</b> repeated and contrasting sections (e.g. binary, ternary and rondo form), forms with developing ideas (e.g. theme and variation, sonata), Chinese instrumental forms (e.g. <i>liushibaban, taoquti</i>), <i>banshi</i> in Cantonese opera (e.g. <i>qiziqing zhongban, baziju erhuang manban</i>), <i>yuyaowei, hetouhewei</i></li> <li>• <b>Notation:</b> five-line staff notation, <i>jianpu, gongchepu</i></li> <li>• <b>Genres and music styles:</b> please refer to the study guidelines of Compulsory Module 1 on page 8</li> </ul>

Area	Suggested Learning Focuses
<b>Performing</b>	Develop performing skills, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clarity and accuracy of rhythm and pitch</li> <li>• technical control and fluency</li> <li>• appropriate musical expression</li> <li>• appropriate tempo</li> <li>• effective use of dynamics</li> <li>• phrasing</li> <li>• stylistic awareness</li> <li>• interpretation</li> <li>• sense of ensembleship</li> <li>• sight-singing</li> </ul>
<b>Creating</b>	Develop creating skills, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• development of music ideas</li> <li>• exploiting and controlling the medium</li> <li>• use of music elements</li> <li>• structural interest (unity, contrast, balance, form)</li> <li>• consistency of style</li> <li>• notation</li> </ul>

### 3.5 Curriculum Planning Strategies

To facilitate students' effective learning of Music, teachers and schools may consider adopting the following strategies in curriculum planning:

#### 3.5.1 Designing authentic music experiences

To stimulate students' learning interests and develop comprehensively their musical abilities, teachers should design and organise music activities in accordance with learning and teaching needs to provide them with authentic music and aesthetic experiences. Through actively participating in activities that integrate listening, performing and creating, students can identify, apply and understand different compositional techniques deepening their understanding of music. For instance, in designing activities in curriculum planning, teachers may invite students to play and sing music in order to gain a better understanding of musical style. Teachers may also ask students to play or sing some of their own or peers' compositions in a live performance. Students can thus more actively explore, encounter and experience music, thereby consolidating and applying music skills and knowledge.

### 3.5.2 Integrating curriculum and learning with assessment

Assessment is an integral part of the curriculum, learning and teaching, and feedback cycle. To facilitate effective learning and teaching, it is essential to ensure a close alignment between curriculum and assessment and to integrate learning with assessment in the learning and teaching process. In the course of curriculum planning, teachers have to select an appropriate pedagogy and design a range of assessment tasks based on the learning content and the expected learning outcomes. Quality feedback on students' music performances should be given immediately to let them know their level of attainment. In addition to giving a grade or mark for students' assignments, appropriate comments and recommendations should be provided to help students understand their strengths and weaknesses, and ways for improvement. Teachers should also employ flexibly a range of assessment tasks, such as individual presentations, group discussions, solo and ensemble performances, and the writing of concert reports and music programme note, in order to assess students' abilities and progress holistically. Nevertheless, it is the quality, not the quantity, of assessment that matters. The number and frequency of assessments should be planned in a reasonable way to avoid imposing unnecessary pressure on students.

### 3.5.3 Catering for learner diversity

Students differ in their abilities, interests, learning styles, social and cultural backgrounds, and such differences give rise to learner diversity. To effectively cater for students' diverse learning needs, and promote their learning interests, teachers should plan the curriculum flexibly by, for example, using graded learning materials and designing diversified learning activities and assessment tasks. Teachers should provide them with ample opportunities and guidance so as to help them make choices appropriate to their own needs with regard to selecting repertoire for performance as well as styles and genres in music creating. Moreover, teachers should also bring in resources and support from a variety of sources to cater for students' varied learning needs and development paths. For instance, if students are interested in Chinese music and wish to further their studies in this area, they could be encouraged to study Chinese Literature and/or Chinese History so as to deepen their understanding of Chinese music.

### 3.5.4 From teacher-dominated to autonomous learning

In designing the curriculum and learning and teaching activities, teachers should adopt a less teacher-centred approach, and guide students towards autonomy and independence in music learning. At the initial stage, students tend to require more instruction and guidance, and teachers thus play a more instructional role in helping them to set the learning direction and focus. However, as students gradually build up their music skills and ability to appraise music, and widen their knowledge and interests, teachers should provide them with greater autonomy

and space so as to help them become self-initiated and independent music learners. Most importantly, teachers need to help students understand their own needs and appropriately choose learning content, method and pace suited to themselves so that they can devise concrete and practical learning plans. Students should also reflect on and evaluate their own learning and adopt appropriate measures to improve and promote learning effectiveness.

### 3.5.5 Using a variety of resources

When planning the curriculum, schools should make appropriate use of resources available in school and the community to provide a learning environment conducive to music learning. If schools, teachers, parents and members of the community can jointly establish close networks, they can not only exchange experiences and information effectively but also share and jointly use resources. Schools may create a webpage to provide references in music learning and teaching, report information related to music learning within and outside school, and display students' music performances and compositions to encourage sharing and discussion among students as well as with members outside school. Musicians-in-school, part-time music instructors and parties who are talented in music including teachers of other subjects, students, alumni and parents are all valuable human resources to facilitate the implementation of the Music curriculum and support students' music learning. Moreover, schools can participate in music events organised by different organisations, and collaborate with other schools or tertiary institutions in organising activities and exchanges in music so as to stimulate students' learning interests and enrich their music learning experiences.

### 3.5.6 Using learning time effectively

As noted in Section 3.2 "Time Allocation" on page 14, schools should allocate sufficient lesson time to the subject in the formal curriculum, i.e. at least 10% of the total lesson time (about 250 lesson hours over the three years). Schools need to be flexible and creative in timetabling formal lesson time. For instance, they may arrange double or triple periods per week or cycle, a combination of long and short periods or different learning periods that vary according to levels to facilitate teachers' use of diversified modes in music teaching based on needs, so as to provide ample time for students' participation in listening, performing and creating activities, and to facilitate reflection and evaluation. Besides, schools may arrange a special time slot for S4 – S6 students taking Music to participate together in various music activities, such as concerts or performances in creative musical works every Friday afternoon. Nevertheless, apart from formal lesson time, students' music learning can take place at any time and place, such as during recesses, lunchtime breaks, after-school hours and holidays. Given appropriate guidance from teachers, the sounds and music that students encounter daily can be materials to stimulate their learning interest in music, and help extend music learning to everyday life.



### 3.5.7 Engaging in life-wide learning

Life-wide learning can take place within and beyond the classroom, both supplementing and complementing each other. With appropriate planning, teachers can help students participate in a variety of activities. Gaining exposure to and learning music in authentic settings help students widen their horizons and enrich their learning experiences. For instance, ritual performances of Cantonese opera are frequently staged at temporarily built performance halls every year during a number of festivals such as the Birthday of *Tian Hou* (the Queen of Heaven) and the *Yu Lan Jie* (Ghost Festival) in Hong Kong. Teachers may plan and organise learning and teaching activities related to Cantonese operatic music during these festivals, and encourage students to observe some of these performances, so as to deepen their understanding of the performance practice of the music. Moreover, teachers can arrange for students to attend concerts, take part in music competitions, participate in training in bands and choirs, and organise solo music performances. All these activities can effectively consolidate students' music skills, foster their aesthetic sensitivity and develop their capacity for lifelong learning.

## 3.6 Curriculum Management

### 3.6.1 Areas of work

In managing the school-based Music curriculum, teachers should consider the following:

#### **(1) Understanding the curriculum and learning context**

- Understand the *Secondary Education Curriculum Guide* and the C&A Guide with a view to adapting the central curriculum in school-based curriculum development;
- Understand the school's vision and mission, strengths and policies, as well as students' abilities and interests; and
- Understand the community culture and the changing needs of society.

#### **(2) Planning and implementing the curriculum**

- Design and implement schemes of work to help students achieve the curriculum aims and Learning Objectives of the Music curriculum; and
- Design modes of assessment and tasks to promote assessment *for* learning.

#### **(3) Evaluating the curriculum**

- Evaluate the school-based Music curriculum continually through collecting data from different sources and analysing evidence of student learning; and
- Review the curriculum in accordance with the learning and teaching context and make adjustments whenever necessary.

#### **(4) Developing resources**

- Develop, collect and organise learning and teaching resources and enable students to access them whenever needed;
- Make effective use of schools and community resources to facilitate student learning; and
- Expand learning and teaching resources by exploiting the use of information and digital technology.

(For more ideas on learning and teaching resources, please refer to Chapter 6 “Learning and Teaching Resources” on page 53.)

#### **(5) Building professional capacity**

- Keep abreast of the latest curriculum development, teaching strategies and subject knowledge; and
- Build networks with other schools to foster mutual support.

### 3.6.2 Roles of different personnel

Music teachers, Arts Education KLA curriculum leaders / Music panel chairpersons, principals / vice-principals / curriculum leaders and parents play different roles in the planning, development and implementation of the school-based Music curriculum. A collaborative effort is vital in developing and managing the curriculum.

#### **(1) Music teachers**

- Keep abreast of the latest changes in curriculum, learning and teaching strategies and assessment practices;
- Contribute to the school-based Music curriculum development, implementation and evaluation, and make suggestions on the strategies in learning and teaching and assessment;
- Stretch students’ potential in learning Music, and encourage them to learn actively; and
- Participate actively in professional development, peer collaboration and professional exchange.

#### **(2) Arts Education KLA curriculum leaders / Music panel chairpersons**

- Lead and plan the school-based Music curriculum development, and set a clear direction for it;
- Monitor the implementation of the curriculum, and make appropriate adjustments in

strategies for learning and teaching and assessment with due consideration to students' needs;

- Facilitate professional development by encouraging panel members to participate in training courses and workshops;
- Hold meetings (both formal and informal) with panel members to strengthen coordination and communication among them;
- Promote professional exchange on subject knowledge and learning and teaching strategies; and
- Make the best use of the resources available in the school and the community.

### **(3) Principals / vice-principals / curriculum leaders**

- Understand students' strengths and interests, as well as the significance of music learning;
- Take into consideration students' needs, the school context and the central curriculum framework in formulating the curriculum, and instructional and assessment policies;
- Coordinate the work of KLA curriculum leaders and panel chairpersons, and set clear targets for curriculum development and management;
- Empower and support Arts Education KLA curriculum leaders / Music panel chairpersons and teachers to promote a culture of collaboration among teachers and facilitate the learning and teaching of Music;
- Understand the strengths of teachers, deploy them flexibly to teach different parts of the curriculum;
- Convey a clear message to parents regarding the significance of music education; and
- Build networks among schools, community sectors, and various organisations at the management level to facilitate the development of school-based Music curriculum.

### **(4) Parents**

- Support the development of the school-based Music curriculum; and
- Understand the value of music education, and encourage and support their children to pursue the study of Music with commitment.

The joint and best efforts of the above parties are important to bring about students' effective learning in Music. Schools need to adopt a student-centred teaching approach to stimulate students' learning interest and motivation. Through a wide range of practical music activities, students gain personal experience, and develop comprehensive music skills and aesthetic sensibility, as well as skills in critical thinking, self-directed learning and collaboration. Besides, teachers should adopt diversified modes of assessment, and use formative and summative assessment flexibly in order to assess comprehensively students' performance and understand

their development in generic skills, values and attitudes. Please refer to Chapters 4 “Learning and Teaching” and 5 “Assessment” on page 24 and page 43 respectively for further suggestions on learning and teaching, and assessment strategies.

## Chapter 4 Learning and Teaching

This chapter provides guidelines for effective learning and teaching of the Music curriculum.

### 4.1 Knowledge and Learning

Faced with the enormous changes in a knowledge-based society, students need to learn how to learn and make flexible use of knowledge. To help them develop these abilities, teachers need to understand the changes in the concepts of knowledge and learning. While a one-way transmission approach to teaching may help students become familiar with certain music skills and knowledge reasonably quickly, it is unlikely to develop their creativity, aesthetic sensitivity and critical thinking skills. The Music curricula in the past were more oriented towards Western music theories and knowledge of classical music. Students' learning focused mainly on theoretical and historical knowledge, and insufficient attention was given to nurturing their creativity and appraising skills. With the changed emphases in learning and teaching, teachers need to make the following adjustments when organising learning and teaching for the senior secondary Music curriculum:

- Shift the learning and teaching paradigm from a teacher-centred to a student-centred approach, with a greater emphasis on hands-on experience and interaction;
- Guide students to participate in listening, performing and creating activities, and give them ample opportunities to experience music, and to synthesise and apply what they have learned in new contexts so as to help them construct music knowledge;
- Reduce the use of direct instruction to the whole class, and use a more flexible grouping approach, involving individual and group work, to guide students to handle music issues from multiple perspectives and to help them develop the ability to learn how to learn;
- Create learning contexts for students, and through peer collaboration and interactive learning, stimulate positive thinking and active learning so as to gradually build a learning community; and
- Guide students to acquire knowledge in a wide variety of ways, in addition to learning from books, such as reading scores, programme notes, recording catalogues and web-based information; attending concerts, master classes and music lectures; listening to radio broadcasts; and enjoying community music programmes.

Because of the paradigm shift in learning and teaching, teachers act not only as transmitters of music knowledge and demonstrators of skills, but also as facilitators, reflective practitioners and assessors. Especially when students are engaged in creating music, teachers should keep an open mind, listen carefully to their views, and provide guidance on solving problems, feedback and encouragement whenever appropriate. In the process of learning and teaching, teachers should plan teaching activities thoughtfully and attend carefully to students' needs. At different stages of learning, teachers should switch their various roles flexibly to facilitate effective learning. On the other hand, students are at the centre of the process of learning and teaching, and are discoverers, inquirers and constructors of knowledge. They have to be keenly involved in learning activities, think actively and inquire boldly so as to construct and apply knowledge. Students have to understand their strengths and weaknesses, consciously regulate, adjust and assess their own learning in order to build and continually improve their musical abilities and musicianship.

## 4.2 Guiding Principles

When planning and implementing the senior secondary Music curriculum, teachers should take the following guiding principles into consideration.

### 4.2.1 Setting clear learning directions

Teachers should plan teaching holistically, set clear learning purposes and directions for students, and devise Learning Objectives in accordance with the curriculum requirements and students' needs. In the learning and teaching of listening, performing and creating, systematic planning and implementation are essential in various areas such as time allocation, depth and breadth of content and use of teaching materials, to ensure that students do not deviate from the appropriate learning direction. Before teaching a major topic, teachers can briefly introduce students to the Learning Objectives, procedures for activities and assessment methods so as to engage them in active learning and stimulate their learning motivation. Students can therefore understand the learning direction, and proceed with purposeful and meaningful learning.

### 4.2.2 Building on students' prior knowledge and experience

The planning of learning and teaching should be centred on students, who may vary in their music potential and the pace at which they develop their abilities. When structuring the curriculum content, arranging teaching procedures and selecting teaching strategies and materials, teachers should be mindful of students' musical abilities and prior knowledge. Finding out more about students' music background and experience through talking to them, administering simple diagnostic tests and listening to their performances can form a sound basis for curriculum planning. It allows teachers to not only tailor the curriculum according to

students' needs and interests, but also increase their motivation and help them develop their strengths in music.

#### 4.2.3 Teaching to facilitate understanding

Teachers should not only impart knowledge of music theory and history, but also allow students to experience and understand music through listening, performing and creating in order to construct music knowledge and develop music skills. For instance, by means of repeated listening to a piece of music, teachers can guide students to identify the artistic characteristics of the work and analyse how the treatment of music elements brings about its overall effect. Students then listen to other musical works and apply the knowledge they have acquired to further analysis and discussion. In addition, students can demonstrate their ability to acquire and apply music knowledge and techniques by being engaged in creating and performing. Such learning processes enable them to manage, integrate, apply and transfer knowledge gained, expand their understanding of music, and facilitate the consolidation and internalisation of knowledge.

#### 4.2.4 Adopting a range of learning and teaching strategies

There is no one set of learning and teaching strategies that can accommodate all teaching situations and cater for all students. To bring about effective learning and stimulate interest, teachers should flexibly adopt different strategies. For instance, when guiding students to identify and appreciate music, they should not only elaborate on and analyse its features through instruction and demonstration, but also engage them in information-gathering, interactive discussion and sharing the artistic qualities of music and personal views. Subsequently, students can apply their knowledge to creating and performing. In this learning process, teachers have to make good use of a variety of teaching strategies such as traditional instruction, demonstration and exercises, as well as inquiry, discussion and interaction, so as to help students construct music knowledge, formulate independent views, develop their creativity and nurture their spirit of inquiry.

#### 4.2.5 Promoting interaction

Through interacting with teachers and peers, students not only develop their communicative and collaborative skills and enhance their ability for independent learning, but they also actively construct new knowledge and apply it to listening, performing and creating. When students are engaged in collaborative learning, teachers should still provide guidance, and act as facilitators at appropriate points by raising open-ended questions and giving feedback to stimulate their higher-order thinking and promote continuous learning. Teachers should encourage students to raise questions and express opinions freely. They should also be role

models for students by respecting different opinions in order to cultivate a liberal and open atmosphere for learning.

#### 4.2.6 Enhancing students' motivation

Teachers play a vital role in stimulating students' interest in music as this increases their motivation for learning. Teachers have to be music lovers themselves and adopt an open attitude, which allows students to learn in a relaxed and harmonious atmosphere. Through impressive demonstrations of singing or instrumental playing, the use of excellent music compositions, lively teaching and setting tasks of appropriate standards, teachers can stimulate students' desire for learning and their motivation to strive for excellence. To make students more proactive in learning, teachers need to clearly indicate their expectations to them and show appreciation for their efforts. While it is inevitable that students make mistakes, teachers should encourage them to keep trying rather than criticising them. If students raise immature questions or express immature thoughts, teachers should still listen attentively to them and guide them along.

#### 4.2.7 Developing self-directed and independent learning

As students' music abilities increase, teachers should develop their capacity for self-directed learning step by step, and guide them actively to experience and analyse music, think independently, acquire music knowledge, create music and tackle music issues at their own pace. For instance, when introducing the composition techniques and artistic features of a specific piece of music, teachers may not give any direct instruction at first, but ask students to gather relevant information, and let them listen to the piece of music repeatedly to feel and analyse it. They may then ask students to discuss and share their understanding of and views on the piece. Teachers act as facilitators whenever necessary to provide information, hints and guidance. Through the process of self-directed and interactive learning, students no longer passively receive knowledge. Instead, they are actively engaged in discovering and solving problems, and acquiring ways to construct knowledge, thereby learning gradually how to become autonomous in learning.

#### 4.2.8 Using a rich variety of learning and teaching materials

A wide variety of learning and teaching materials can be used to stimulate student interest and broaden their learning experience, such as music-related featured articles, music instruments, audio-visual equipment, music software and information on the Internet. Teachers should select music of different genres, styles and cultures from a variety of sources as teaching materials to widen students' musical horizons. Teachers should also encourage students to listen to Chinese and Western music from a wide range of historical periods extensively and to attend various kinds of concerts. Through personal experience, students are exposed to different kinds of



music, which can enhance their understanding of music styles and compositional techniques, provide them with inspirational ideas for composing, and develop their musical interpretation skills and styles in performing.

### 4.3 Approaches and Strategies

#### 4.3.1 Approaches

There is no single approach that can accommodate all learning and teaching situations. Teachers should flexibly adopt and combine different learning and teaching approaches, with due consideration of the actual contexts and students' needs.

##### **(1) Direct instruction**

Direct instruction is a commonly used learning and teaching approach. Teachers present and explain the learning content and, through questioning and feedback, help students acquire basic music knowledge, for example, by explaining the music features of genres and musical periods, and analysing the formal structures of music compositions and compositional techniques. Teachers need to deliver instruction in a lively manner with the subject matter suitably graded from easy to difficult, and organise systematically their teaching focuses and procedures. Monotonous and long-winded narration should be avoided. Instead, teachers should develop students' higher order thinking and try to foster a spirit of inquiry through precise and lively instruction and explanation. They should also use interactive dialogue wherever appropriate to encourage the exchange of opinions and stimulate students' thinking.

##### **(2) Expert performance**

Music is an art of listening. Students cannot comprehend the real meaning of music through mere instruction. Expert performance is an approach that allows students to experience music directly. It converts abstract music concepts into concrete ideas, facilitates students' memory and understanding of music, and stimulates their motivation. For instance, through teachers' singing or instrumental demonstrations, students can effectively understand the musical techniques and ways of expressing emotion. Teachers may not be able to play all kinds of instruments and music, but they can make use of recordings or videos to guide students to understand music techniques, artistic features and compositional techniques. If circumstances permit, teachers can arrange for musicians or orchestras to give live demonstrations and talks in school, or lead students to participate in master classes so that students have direct contact with musicians and authentic aesthetic experiences. In the process of learning and teaching, teachers should design meaningful learning contexts and flexibly combine direct instruction, expert performance and enquiry learning. Teachers can make use of a wide range of activities to help students revisit and revise their views, and modify their learning strategies so that

students can develop their music skills and construct music knowledge progressively.

### **(3) Enquiry learning**

Enquiry learning is a flexible learning and teaching approach that promotes active learning and also provides room for autonomous learning based on students' interests and pace of learning. In the process of enquiry learning, students actively construct knowledge, develop their skills, and become acquainted with methods for searching for knowledge. In general, the process of enquiry learning can be divided into three stages:

- (i) *Choosing a topic and searching for information:* based on selected music issues, students choose a topic of enquiry, set a clear focus, and search for related materials.
- (ii) *Collating and analysing information:* based on the materials collected, students try to understand the pertinent phenomena and related structures, analyse and compare from multiple perspectives, and relate what they are learning to relevant previous experiences and concepts to clarify the issues being studied.
- (iii) *Reflecting and making judgements:* after considering different views, students reflect on the inquiry topic, make objective judgements, explain the relevant phenomena and express personal opinions.

Teachers should guide students to explore problems on their own and use different strategies to find solutions. The use of an enquiry learning approach can deepen understanding of the topic, and help them acquire the necessary learning skills and ways of constructing knowledge.

Also, students can imagine themselves in different roles as composer, performer and listener to analyse, reflect on and judge music compositions. This will help them develop their imagination, refine their own compositions and interpretations, and sharpen their views. For instance, in the process of creating, students can imagine how performers would interpret their compositions and how an audience would understand them, which can help them revise their work. Likewise, when performing or listening to music, students can imagine themselves in different roles for the purposes of reflection and inquiry to obtain a more comprehensive review, understanding and appraisal of the music.

### 4.3.2 Strategies

To help students engage effectively in the learning of listening, performing and creating, teachers should take the following learning and teaching strategies into consideration:

#### **(1) The learning and teaching of listening**

Listening is the foundation of music learning. It is essential for students to listen to and appraise their own and others' creative works when learning music. Listening, performing and creating activities are intertwined and often take place simultaneously. For instance, students have to listen carefully when creating and performing in order to achieve better results. To develop the ability to appraise music and aesthetic sensitivity, students need to concentrate on listening and learn how to identify the use of music elements in a composition, analyse the structure and compositional devices of the music, and understand the style and music context of the piece. Through extensive listening to music, students' listening and appraising abilities will be enhanced. They will gain rich musical nourishment, which helps them conduct performing, creating and project learning activities. The recommended strategies for designing and implementing listening activities are:

##### *(i) Listening repeatedly with specific purposes*

There are often many focal points in a piece of music or a music excerpt, which can be used for study. Before listening, teachers should set clear listening objectives and make them known to students. Based on their needs and abilities, teachers may arrange for students to listen to an excerpt repeatedly, concentrating on aspects such as music elements, style, interpretation and expression. As the lesson time is limited, the selected excerpts need to be of an appropriate length. Moreover, teachers may put recordings on reserve in the school library or a listening corner to provide opportunities for students to listen frequently to the whole piece and to derive enjoyment from listening to music.

##### *(ii) Designing diversified activities*

Teachers may employ a range of activities to promote attentive listening, thereby consolidating students' listening skills and developing other skills. These activities include:

- listening to musical pieces with music scores in order to understand the structure of the piece;
- singing or playing the main theme of a piece before listening, and identifying and analysing the development of the theme during listening;
- describing verbally the characteristics of the music and expressing personal feelings towards it;

- completing worksheets to strengthen the ability to identify music elements, genres and periods; and
- writing a brief report to appraise the styles of the music.

*(iii) Cultivating a critical response to music*

Experiencing and appraising music through listening is an effective way to cultivate students' aesthetic sensitivity. Teachers should encourage students to listen to recordings and to their own and peers' performances in lessons. Through questions and discussion, students learn to use music terms and knowledge to describe and appraise music with reference to its contexts, and to put forward arguments to support their views. Students can collect information from various sources to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the style and background of a piece and its relationship to society and culture. A deeper understanding of music in context will help students understand, interpret and appraise music. Besides, teachers should guide students in learning how to develop assessment criteria for appraising music according to the contexts so as to enhance their aesthetic sensitivity and appraising ability progressively.

*(iv) Creating room for imagination*

Apart from training students' listening abilities, listening activities can help develop students' imaginations. The ideas and feelings students have when listening to a piece of music will vary from person to person, and may not be in line with the composer's intentions or the teacher's views on the piece. Therefore, teachers should be open to students' opinions as long as they are able to give reasonable explanations and justifications for their views. Teachers should guide students to understand how music elements are used in a piece of music, and recognise the emotions expressed. Besides, teachers should help students analyse music objectively and understand music in context. Nevertheless, personal feelings and preferences in music should be respected.

*(v) Making good use of listening resources*

Teachers need to make good use of various published and online audio-visual resources to build a listening database with a good variety of repertoire. Teachers should use music of different styles, genres and cultures to offer students extensive music experiences. For good sound quality, teachers have to ensure that the audio equipment and listening environment are of a reasonable standard. A listening corner in the Music room or school library should be set up with rich listening resources to expose students to different kinds of music after lessons, so that they can develop their personal tastes in music. In general, students experience more direct and profound feelings towards music in a live performance. Teachers may introduce performances

by renowned artists and performing groups to students and encourage them to attend concerts. These invaluable opportunities not only enrich students' music experience, but also arouse their interest in listening to music and nurture them as music lovers. In addition, students should grasp the opportunities for learning and listening to music programmes on radio and television.

## **(2) The learning and teaching of performing**

Performing is an essential way to express and experience music. Performing activities that include the interpretation of students' own or others' creative works using the human voice and instruments are vital experiences for developing students' understanding of music. Through participating in performing activities, students develop music reading, listening and performing skills; experience and express their feelings; and enhance their aesthetic sensitivity. In recreating music appropriately during a performance, students learn to interpret composers' ideas and express their personal understanding of the music. During the pleasant process of performing, students learn to communicate with others through music making. This enables them to develop generic skills, cultivate proper values, attitudes and behaviours, and derive aesthetic pleasure.

Based on individual students' strengths, teachers should consider the strategies recommended below to help students participate effectively in various kinds of performing-related activities. They need to explain clearly to students the requirements of the assessment for each item. The recommended strategies for designing and implementing performing activities are:

### *(i) Emphasising both aesthetic and technical development*

Apart from developing performing techniques, performing activities enable students to cultivate their aesthetic sensitivity and ability to express themselves. Clear objectives should be set to guide individual students to practise persistently so that the required skills are developed progressively. However, mechanical drilling of technical skills is inadequate as students' imagination, listening abilities and aesthetic sensitivity for interpreting and expressing feelings also need to be cultivated. Undue emphasis on technical skills may be devoid of artistic quality. On the other hand, the internal meaning of music cannot be adequately expressed without fluent performing techniques. Therefore, the development of performing skills and aesthetic sensitivity should be given equal emphasis, as they complement each other.

### *(ii) Selecting suitable repertoire*

As regards the choice of repertoire, teachers need to guide students to choose pieces in various styles based on their performing abilities in order to display their understanding of the characteristics of the instrument, performing techniques and styles of music. The technical level

of the piece should match students' abilities, thus enabling them to express the feelings of the piece with technical assurance, and display their performing skills and musical understanding. Teachers should encourage students who are more capable performers to select and learn pieces of higher technical difficulty, to elevate their performance levels through suitable challenges and training.

*(iii) Practising effectively*

With teacher guidance, students should first understand their own abilities, and subsequently identify the more demanding sections in a piece of music. They can then adopt appropriate methods to overcome any technical difficulties and practise effectively. Teachers need to alert students to avoid mechanical drills, and also guide them to develop a "self-listening" ability to compare, appraise, and reflect on their own performance from a listener's perspective. Students should be fully aware of their own strengths and weaknesses so that they can make suitable adjustments to articulation, pitch and tone colour. The use of audio or video recording in practice and performance sessions may help students understand their own performance more objectively and thoroughly, and improve their performance techniques. Also, it is important for students to have experience performing an entire movement or a whole piece of music, as it is only in this way that they will be able to gain a holistic understanding of the piece of music.

*(iv) Developing abilities in interpretation*

In general, there is more than one way to interpret music. Considerable room should be left for performers to make their own music decisions in aspects such as tempo, dynamics, tone colour and mood. In the process of learning, students should observe the style and context of a piece, and try to explore different creative ways of interpreting it for desirable effects. Teachers may ask questions about the music and discuss it with students for deeper analysis and understanding, to enable them to make informed decisions on musical interpretation. Also, enhancing students' understanding of the way composers manipulate music elements will develop their critical abilities in musical interpretation. However, allowing students to interpret music by following instructions from scores indiscriminately will hinder the development of their imagination and creativity.

*(v) Cultivating positive attitudes to performing*

Proper attitudes towards performing need to be cultivated among students, and teachers should give them timely support and encouragement. Students should be encouraged to develop positive self-improvement attitudes both in and out of formal classes. Concerts, music competitions and master classes can be promoted to help students develop self-confidence and musical expression, and offer them opportunities to appreciate and learn from the performances

of others. In ensemble playing or group singing, students should learn to respect others' opinions, understand their own roles, and appreciate group members' contributions. In addition, performing activities should be carried out with discipline, thus developing students' self-management skills and self-discipline.

(vi) *Conducting ensemble playing or choral singing effectively*

Through ensemble or choral activities, students can broaden their experience in performing and listening. Teachers may help students who have similar levels of performing ability organise ensembles or choral groups. The number of members in an ensemble group should not be too large; in general, two to six students in a group are an appropriate size. When selecting the repertoire, students should choose a piece of music which suits their own performing abilities and strengths so that each member's performing standard can be demonstrated. Members should be familiar with their own parts/voices before ensemble practice. In the course of practising, they should listen carefully to each other's performance, and adjust the pitch, tone colour and balance of the parts as appropriate. Teachers should direct students to discuss the mood, style and interpretation of the piece of music, and encourage them to try out various ways of interpretation. Students have to analyse the music carefully, reflect on it, and reach a consensus among themselves – a process through which their communicative and collaborative skills can be enhanced.

**(3) The learning and teaching of creating**

Music creating is an innovative activity, which helps students explore sounds and understand the possibilities of combining and manipulating them. Creativity is an important quality, which enables human beings to face future challenges. Through music creating, students will be stimulated to think in diverse ways and express their emotions and thoughts more openly. In the process, students not only apply their music knowledge and skills, but also exercise their creativity, imagination and aesthetic sensitivity and so gain a sense of satisfaction and achievement. As music creating can also enhance their generic skills, both the process and product are equally important. The recommended strategies for designing and implementing music creating activities are:

(i) *Creating an open environment*

Students need an open and receptive learning environment in which they can take risks when creating music. Because there are no right or wrong ways of doing so, teachers should be objective and receptive towards students' creative work, helping them feel safe to express and explore their own creative ideas. In guiding students to use compositional devices more effectively, teachers may ask open-ended questions, for example, about how to develop music

ideas in creative works to capture the audience's attention, and how to use instrumental timbre to make the music more interesting. This will promote students' discussion, encourage innovative attempts, and get them to think about how to make appropriate revisions. Teachers have to provide students with the freedom to create, by encouraging them to choose their own themes and means of expression. However, they should be guided to try to produce music in different styles and genres in order to fully extend their creative abilities.

*(ii) Using different points of entry*

Teachers may make use of issues in daily life or specific contexts to arouse students' motivation for music creating. Making use of music elements, such as contrasting and varying pitch, rhythm, dynamics, tempo, timbre and texture, is a common and effective entry point in guiding students to create. Students should listen to music of various styles to gain inspiration and ideas that will help them create their own work. Therefore, a broad range of listening repertoire and resources should be made available for students. Teachers should guide students to analyse the compositional devices employed in different examples of music. Students' imagination and motivation can also be stimulated by exposing them to visual arts, literature and media arts. In addition, students often learn from imitation; for example, they may learn creative skills by imitating outstanding musical works. However, if students possess a certain level of skill in this area, they should not focus on imitation, but rather begin to create music with new ideas and innovative methods.

*(iii) Developing inner hearing*

When students are creating and performing music, it is important for them to imagine the musical and sound effects of their own works, thus further developing their abilities in inner hearing. Teachers may encourage them to describe their own ideas verbally, and compare this with the actual effects of the works in performance to see if it matches what they had imagined. With repeated attempts and trials, students' inner hearing abilities, imagination and creativity will be developed simultaneously, which will have immense benefits for their creation of music.

*(iv) Designing appropriate music creating assignments*

In the process of learning to create music, students are not required to complete an entire composition on each occasion. Taking learning content into account, teachers may design assignments related to compositional devices such as melodic developing techniques, orchestration techniques for a melody, ways of modulation, and the writing of counterpoint so that students grasp creating techniques gradually. When students know some of these techniques, teachers can then ask them to apply them to create an entire piece. Since the processes and modes of creating vary among people, teachers should not try to coerce all students into creating



in a uniform manner. Nevertheless, at an early stage, teachers may provide certain key points, for instance, the message conveyed in the composition and the expected sound effects, the main style adopted in the composition and its mode of development, and possible considerations for revisions to the performance of the composition. This will help students compose systematically, appraise their own compositions from various angles, and gradually establish their personal styles of creating.

(v) *Handling student progress flexibly*

Teachers should provide students with room for creating. Students should be allowed to progress in accordance with their own paces, whether they are faster or slower than expected. Those who progress at a slower speed or lose track should not be blamed or discouraged. Indeed, all students should be encouraged appropriately. For instance, those with better abilities should be provided with more challenging tasks, while others should receive more guidance. Teachers should let students know that their efforts are appreciated in order to sustain their interests and confidence in creating music.

(vi) *Using a range of methods to keep a record of creative works*

Maintaining systematic records helps students keep track of their own creative works, and assists teachers in understanding students' abilities and progress. Teachers can encourage students to record creative works by means of scores, audio/video recordings or music software. Teachers should guide students to use suitable notations, such as staff notation, graphic notation, *jianpu* and *gongchepu*, to record their work. Students may also use a process diary to record the process of creating for further improvement, and this can serve as a basis for writing a reflective report. Through reflective reports, students can express their aims in creating, the characteristics of their works and their personal feelings.

(vii) *Assessing creative works in a positive manner*

Process and product are equally important in creating. Apart from assessing students' creative works, teachers should also assess their performance during the process from different perspectives and provide appropriate feedback. Teachers should guide students to discuss and reflect on the creating process through questions such as:

- Does the creative work have a clear purpose? Can this purpose be achieved?
- What is the structure of the creative work? Does it have any apparent contrast?
- Is the length of the creative work appropriate? Are there parts where the desired effects cannot be achieved?

- Are there unique features in the creative work? How are these to be achieved?
- If the creative work is to be performed more than once, will the effects be similar for each performance?

Teachers could set appropriate assessment criteria with students that are in line with the objectives and content of each individual activity, and students should be informed of these criteria before they start creating. However, teachers need to be flexible and open-minded when using these criteria to assess students' creative works. For instance, when students are asked to create a piece in rondo form, teachers should not regard their work as wrong if another form is employed. Teachers can assess the work with reference to other criteria, and take subsequent follow-up action at a later stage when appropriate. Students' interest and confidence in creating can only be fostered through positive reinforcement and encouragement.

#### **(4) Information and digital technology for interactive learning**

The development of information and digital technology has been very rapid and it is now used extensively in music teaching. Apart from tape recorders, compact discs and video disc players, the information and digital technology equipment commonly-used in Music lessons includes computers and a series of peripherals such as synthesizers, electronic keyboards, mixers and music software. Through using these tools, students can explore, create and experience music freely, and their creative thinking is stimulated in the learning process. Students can use computers and related software (e.g. sequencing, wave editing and notation software) to improvise, perform and record music. They can listen to the effects of their creative work immediately and make revisions at any time.

The main focuses of creating are the demonstration of creativity, the development of musical ideas and the use of compositional devices. When creating music, if students simply adopt the pre-set formats of music software entirely, the originality of the music will be seriously undermined. Therefore, despite the benefits, teachers should remind students that the use of music software is only a means, and that they should not rely on it excessively.

With the assistance of information and digital technology, students can conduct self-directed music learning through activities such as aural training, music reading and listening without the presence of teachers. They can also use computer software and information on the Internet for self-directed learning according to their own learning pace. The Internet provides a rich and updated source of information, which offers considerable help to students in project work involving an inquiry approach, and it encourages interactive learning. In addition, through designing music websites, students can learn to construct knowledge, develop their communication skills, and exchange and share music information with others. Teachers need to familiarise students with the methods for operating music hardware and software, but it is

even more important to help them develop effective search techniques and skills for processing and analysing information.

### **(5) Reading to learn**

Reading can enrich students' knowledge, broaden their perspectives, enhance their language and thinking skills, and cultivate different interests. Reading also helps enhance students' abilities in listening, performing and creating, and deepens their understanding of music theory and contexts. Therefore, teachers should create an environment that encourages reading, and make effective use of resources to cultivate good reading habits by, for example:

- collaborating closely with teacher librarians to create a reading culture;
- regularly recommending music books and scores to be purchased for the library collection;
- introducing library facilities to students, and ways to use music reference books and search for music information and scores;
- putting suitable books, newspapers or featured articles in a reserve collection, and encouraging and arranging for students to read them;
- providing students with the latest information on music by posting and updating relevant news, such as information and critical reviews on concerts;
- arranging a variety of follow-up activities, such as making brief presentations in lessons, lunchtime concerts or reading sharing sessions, to encourage students to collect and read information about different pieces of music; and
- encouraging students to read extensively, using different resources such as the Internet, recording catalogues, programme notes, newspapers and magazines.

With a favourable reading environment and a rich diversity of music activities, teachers should promote reading in music progressively to broaden students' perspectives and their acceptance of different viewpoints and values.

### **(6) Life-wide learning**

Life-wide learning can be organised within and beyond the classroom in ways which are complementary. Through participating in a wide range of activities, students can gain authentic experiences of learning music, broaden their music experiences and develop their capacity for lifelong learning. Schools are advised to arrange music activities for students such as going to concerts; attending performances of Western and Cantonese opera; participating in music competitions and performances; joining instrumental classes, orchestras and Chinese orchestras; and taking part in choral training. Also, life-wide learning activities in music such

as performing in hospitals, centres for the elderly or youth centres help students develop positive attitudes towards community service and a sense of belonging to society.

Besides inviting artists to conduct activities for students, teachers should make good use of community resources to provide life-wide learning activities in music. As music programmes are presented by many organisations, teachers should select or recommend the most appropriate ones for students according to their needs and interests. The support and participation of parents in life-wide learning activities can also be very helpful in encouraging their children to learn music in a positive and active manner. Apart from financial support, parents may also assist in conducting, supervising and organising events.

Teachers should note the following points when planning and organising life-wide learning activities:

- Plan in great detail, discuss matters of timing, venue, human resources and finance with the school management first, and organise and coordinate the activities accordingly;
- Set clear targets and objectives, and consider organising activities with other KLAs if possible;
- Provide a range of high-quality activities for student choice;
- Maintain effective communication with and provide appropriate support to the artists-in-school or part-time tutors, and review students' learning progress from time to time; and
- Review the arrangements for each activity and its effectiveness and gauge students' responses to it.

#### 4.4 Interaction

Interactive learning helps develop students' problem-solving skills and nurtures self-directed learning. Teachers should make the learning purposes and requirements of music activities clear to students at the start. During the activities, they should provide suitable guidance and feedback whenever appropriate. Apart from any necessary support and demonstrations, teachers should offer students sufficient room for independent learning and encourage peer interactive learning, for instance, by appraising peers' compositions and performances. With increased student understanding and experience in working independently, teacher guidance should be reduced as much as possible. Finally, after the activities, teachers should encourage students to reflect on and sum up their learning, for example, by sharing their observations, opinions and experiences with their peers.

Asking questions is a method commonly used by teachers in teaching and assessing students'

understanding. It can stimulate students' creative thoughts, thinking from multiple perspectives, and reflections on emotions. The types of questions asked should be related to the students' needs and the learning context. For instance, closed questions can be used to find out about students' prior knowledge and help them revise newly acquired knowledge, for example:

- Is the piece you have just heard composed in a binary or ternary form?
- Which type of *banqiang* does the extract from Cantonese operatic music just played belong to?
- What are the compositional devices used to develop the melodic motive in the piece?
- What are the major differences between a concerto grosso and a solo concerto?

Open-ended questions can enable students to apply, analyse, integrate and evaluate, and so help develop creativity and higher-order thinking, for example:

- What is the intention behind the composer's use of dissonance in certain melodic phrases?
- What instruments would you choose if you had to re-orchestrate the piece, and why?
- Do you think the work achieves the expected music effects, and why? How could these effects be intensified?
- Do you agree with your classmates' interpretations of the piece? Why? Suggest some ways in which it could be improved.

Assessment is integral to learning and teaching, and "assessment *for* learning" is particularly important in the process of music learning and teaching. Teachers should give appropriate feedback on students' performance to enable them to be clear about their own musical abilities and improve on their weaknesses. Timely and effective feedback allows students to reflect on their learning and thinking, and to comprehend, analyse and reorganise knowledge so that they can formulate their own views. During the process of learning and teaching, teachers can provide informal feedback, for example, by praising good performance, and encouraging and assisting those whose performance is less satisfactory. Formal feedback also needs to be given, but simply using grades and marks does not promote student learning effectively. The feedback should be constructive, identifying students' strengths and areas for improvement, and positive to avoid undermining their self-esteem.

## 4.5 Building Learning Communities

Building a learning community in school and developing a culture conducive to learning contribute greatly to students' progress. In a community of learners, members learn from each other by exchanging views and collaborating to co-construct knowledge. In the process, they can stimulate and inspire each other. Teachers should foster among students an openness of mind, appreciation for others' contributions, and respect for others' limitations. Members of a dynamic learning community make a concerted effort to contribute as effectively as they can and to pool their collective wisdom and strengths. Activities involving instrumental/choral ensembles and music-creating groups are good examples of such collaborative activities in which the members practise division of labour, complement each other's shortcomings, and consult each other in solving problems. This kind of learning and teaching process can help students acquire learning skills and enhance their collaboration and communication skills as they progress and grow together.

Learning communities in school can be extended to the wider community, and even to other regions, thus overcoming physical boundaries. For instance, composers and performers can be invited to give demonstrations and briefings, and make comments on students' achievements. Students can also make use of the Internet to conduct inquiries together on a music topic, share music compositions, and exchange views on compositions with professional musicians.

## 4.6 Catering for Learner Diversity

To cater for learner diversity, teachers need to know students' characteristics and understand their strengths and weaknesses, so that they can respond to their learning needs, guide them to set suitable expectations for progress in learning, and help them develop their potential to the full. By knowing students as individuals, teachers will be able to provide better guidance to showcase students' strengths.

When organising music teaching, teachers should set appropriate Learning Objectives based on students' needs; and in the process of learning and teaching, they should always be alert to students' responses, adjust their strategies and pace accordingly, and provide assistance whenever necessary. They should adopt a wide range of activities, for both individuals and groups; and they can place materials of different levels in the library, or upload them onto the school intranet, so that students have an opportunity to learn independently in accordance with their abilities. Similarly, they should utilise a variety of types of assessment to enhance students' motivation and facilitate their learning.

Students who are more adept at music need to be involved in more challenging tasks. For instance, they may be invited to take up the role of a conductor, give performing demonstrations,

handle the more difficult sections in an ensemble, attend master classes and music competitions, and present their own compositions in assemblies. This will not only give them a sense of achievement but also sustain their interest in music learning. For those who progress more slowly, teachers should provide encouragement and constructive assistance so that their music abilities show gradual improvement and they become more confident in learning. For instance, when students are relatively weak at listening, teachers may give them increased support in this area by guiding them to listen purposefully to various musical works, and encouraging them to attend concerts and use computer software to develop their aural skills. They should also try to enhance their confidence and motivation by acknowledging their achievements in other aspects.

Teachers should appreciate the fact that each student's learning progress in listening, performing and creating is different – for example, some students may make faster progress in performing skills than in creating. Therefore, teachers should encourage students to set their own learning progress in the various domains of music learning, and allow them to work systematically towards the objectives. In this way, students' strengths can be positively reinforced and recognised, and they are also helped to address their weaker areas.

## Chapter 5 Assessment

This chapter discusses the role of assessment in learning and teaching Music, the principles that should guide assessment of the subject and the need for both formative and summative assessment. It also provides guidance on internal assessment and details of the public assessment of Music. Finally, information is given on how standards are established and maintained and how results are reported with reference to these standards.

### 5.1 The Roles of Assessment

Assessment is the practice of collecting evidence of student learning. It is a vital and integral part of classroom instruction, and serves several purposes and audiences. First and foremost, it gives feedback to students, teachers, schools and parents on the effectiveness of teaching and on student strengths and weaknesses in learning. Secondly, it provides information to schools, school systems, government, tertiary institutions and employers to enable them to monitor standards and facilitate selection decisions.

The most important role of assessment is in promoting learning and monitoring students' progress. However, in the senior secondary years, the more public roles of assessment for certification and selection come to the fore. Inevitably, these imply high-stakes uses of assessment since the results are typically used to make critical decisions about individuals.

The Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) provides a common end-of-school credential that gives access to university study, work, and further education and training. It summarises student performance in the four core subjects (including Chinese Language, English Language, Mathematics and Citizenship and Social Development) and in various elective subjects, including both discipline-oriented subjects (e.g. Music and Visual Arts) and the Applied Learning courses. It needs to be interpreted in conjunction with other information about students as shown in the Student Learning Profile.

### 5.2 Formative and Summative Assessment

It is useful to distinguish between the two main purposes of assessment, namely “assessment *for* learning” and “assessment *of* learning”.



“Assessment *for* learning” is concerned with obtaining feedback on learning and teaching, and utilising this to make learning more effective and to introduce any necessary changes to teaching strategies. We refer to this kind of assessment as “formative assessment” because it is all about forming or shaping learning and teaching. Formative assessment should take place on a daily basis and typically involves close attention to small “chunks” of learning.

“Assessment *of* learning” is concerned with determining progress in learning, and is referred to as “summative” assessment, because it is all about summarising how much learning has taken place. Summative assessment is normally undertaken at the conclusion of a significant period of instruction (e.g. at the end of the year, or at a key stage of schooling) and reviews much larger “chunks” of learning.

In practice, a sharp distinction cannot always be made between formative and summative assessment, because the same assessment can in some circumstances serve both formative and summative purposes. Teachers can refer to the *Secondary Education Curriculum Guide* for further discussion of formative and summative assessment.

Formative assessment should be distinguished from continuous assessment. The former refers to the provision of feedback to improve learning and teaching based on formal or informal assessment of student performance, while the latter refers to the assessment of students’ ongoing work and may involve no provision of feedback that helps to promote better learning and teaching. For example, accumulating results in class tests carried out on a weekly basis, without giving students constructive feedback, may neither be effective formative assessment nor meaningful summative assessment.

There are good educational reasons why formative assessment should be given more attention and accorded a higher status than summative assessment, on which schools tended to place a greater emphasis in the past. There is research evidence on the beneficial effects of formative assessment when used for refining instructional decision-making in teaching and generating feedback to improve learning. For this reason, there should be a change in assessment practices, with schools placing due emphasis on formative assessment to make assessment *for* learning an integral part of classroom teaching.

Another distinction to be made is between internal assessment and public assessment. Internal assessment refers to the assessment practices that teachers and schools employ as part of the ongoing learning and teaching process during the three years of senior secondary studies. In contrast, public assessment refers to the assessment conducted as part of the assessment process in place for all schools. Within the context of the HKDSE, this means the public examinations conducted by the HKEAA. On balance, internal assessment should be more formative, whereas public assessment tends to be more summative. Nevertheless, this need not be seen as a simple

dichotomy.

### 5.3 Assessment Objectives

The assessment objectives in Music are closely aligned with the curriculum framework and the Learning Outcomes presented in earlier chapters. Students will be assessed on their ability to:

- demonstrate critical listening skills and understanding of how music elements are used in compositional devices, and respond critically to diverse music genres in relation to their historical and cultural contexts;
- perform different types of music accurately and fluently using appropriate styles and expression, and explain the interpretations of the music being performed; and
- create music using appropriate compositional devices, and explain the uses of music elements in their compositions.

### 5.4 Internal Assessment

This section presents the guiding principles that can be used as the basis for designing internal assessment and some common assessment practices in Music for use in schools. Some of these principles are common to both internal and public assessments.

#### 5.4.1 Guiding principles

Internal assessment practices should be aligned with curriculum planning, teaching progression, student abilities and local school contexts. The information collected will help to motivate, promote and monitor student learning, and it will also help teachers find ways to promote more effective learning and teaching.

##### **(1) Alignment with the learning objectives**

A range of assessment modes should be used to facilitate students' whole-person development through activities that integrate listening, performing and creating – such as classroom performance, worksheets, practical tests, listening tests, concert reports, project learning and portfolios. The weighting given to different areas in assessment should be discussed and agreed upon among teachers. The assessment purposes and criteria should also be made known to students so that they have a full understanding of what is expected of them.

## **(2) Catering for the range of student ability**

Assessment practices incorporating different levels of difficulty and diverse modes should be used to cater for students with different aptitudes and abilities. This helps to ensure that the more able students are challenged to develop their full potential and the less-able ones are encouraged to sustain their interest and succeed in learning.

## **(3) Tracking progress over time**

As internal assessment should not be a one-off exercise, schools are encouraged to use practices that can track learning progress over time (e.g. portfolios). Assessment practices of this kind allow students to set their own incremental targets and manage their own pace of learning, which will have a positive impact on their commitment to learning.

## **(4) Timely and encouraging feedback**

Teachers should provide timely and encouraging feedback through a variety of means, such as constructive verbal comments during classroom activities and written remarks on assignments, together with suggestions for improvement. Such feedback helps students sustain their momentum in learning, and to identify their strengths and weaknesses.

## **(5) Making reference to the school's context**

As learning is more meaningful when the content or process is linked to a setting which is familiar to students, schools are encouraged to design assessment tasks that make reference to the school's own context, e.g. getting students to compose Chinese instrumental ensemble music for their school's Chinese orchestra.

## **(6) Making reference to current progress in student learning**

Internal assessment tasks should be designed with reference to students' current progress, as this helps to overcome obstacles that may have a cumulative negative impact on learning. Teachers should be mindful in particular of related musical knowledge and skills which form the basis for further development in learning.

## **(7) Feedback from peers and from the students themselves**

In addition to giving feedback, teachers should also provide opportunities for peer assessment and self-assessment of student learning. The former enables students to learn among themselves, and the latter promotes reflective thinking which is vital for students' lifelong learning.

## **(8) Appropriate use of assessment information to provide feedback**

Internal assessment provides a rich source of data for providing evidence-based feedback on learning in a formative manner.

### **5.4.2 Internal assessment practices**

Assessment in Music should include listening, performing and creating, and through various modes of assessments, it can reflect students' development of values and attitudes as well as generic skills. The suggestions below are by no means exhaustive, and teachers should select and adopt a combination of these and other modes according to actual needs.

#### **(1) Classroom performance**

Observe students' classroom performance and understand their development in different areas such as music knowledge and skills, generic skills, as well as values and attitudes. Through discussions, presentations, class work and answering questions, teachers can effectively understand students' learning progress and identify their learning needs.

#### **(2) Worksheets**

It is commonly used for identifying students' listening abilities, and their abilities to use compositional devices and analyse music. They can effectively indicate students' understanding of a given topic.

#### **(3) Practical tests**

Assess students' abilities in singing, solo and ensemble instrumental playing and sight-singing with five-line staff to understand their abilities in performing, interpretation and aesthetic appreciation, as well as their development of communication and collaboration skills.

#### **(4) Listening tests**

Assess students' abilities in listening, applying music knowledge, analysing and appraising music through various kinds of questions on listening.

#### **(5) Concert reports**

Understand students' views and comments in oral or written form after attending concerts. Teachers can ask them to collect information on the music to be performed before the concert and discuss it afterwards so as to help develop their communication skills and ability in appraising

music.

## **(6) Portfolios**

Provide evidence of students' learning process and achievements in creating, and help students develop their abilities in self-reflection and self-regulated learning. Portfolios may consist of composition sketches, records of revisions, music analysis, music scores, audio/video recordings and reflections at different stages. Students are encouraged to use portfolios to keep track of the creating process in their compositions. Portfolios can also be helpful when writing a reflective report on each composition in fulfilment of the study requirements of Module 3.

## 5.5 Public Assessment

### 5.5.1 Guiding principles

Some principles guiding public assessment are outlined below for teachers' reference.

#### **(1) Alignment with the curriculum**

Students' performance assessed and examined through the public assessment should be aligned with the aims, objectives and intended learning outcomes of the senior secondary curriculum. To enhance the validity of public assessment, the procedures should address the range of learning outcomes, not just those that are assessable through external written examinations. As the Music curriculum emphasises the comprehensive development of students' abilities in listening, performing and creating, these three areas should be assessed.

#### **(2) Fairness, objectivity and reliability**

Assessment should be fair and objective and under the control of an independent examining authority that is impartial and open to public scrutiny. Moreover, fairness implies that assessments provide a reliable measure of each student's performance in a given subject so that, if they were to be repeated under similar conditions, very similar results would be obtained. In Music, a series of measures will be adopted to ensure reliability and fairness, such as clear marking schemes, proper marking procedures, a fair and transparent moderation mechanism, and the provision of sufficient training for markers.

#### **(3) Inclusiveness**

The assessments and examinations in the HKDSE need to accommodate the full spectrum of student abilities. The Music curriculum provides students with broad and balanced music learning

experiences, and is designed to cater for students with diverse music backgrounds and strengths – for instance, they may choose to perform and compose music in various genres and styles.

#### **(4) Standards-referencing**

The reporting system is “standards-referenced”, i.e. students’ performance is matched against standards which indicate what students have to know and be able to do to merit a certain level of performance. The standards in the Music curriculum address various aspects of students’ performance in listening, performing and creating, and the “written descriptors” of the different levels will be developed according to the Learning Outcomes specified in Section 2.4 “Learning Outcomes” on page 11. They will be announced by the HKEAA at a later stage for teachers’ reference

#### **(5) Informativeness**

The HKDSE qualification and the associated assessment and examination system provide useful information for different stakeholders by accurately and effectively reflecting students’ performance so as to help students understand their own ability and performance. It provides information on students’ learning standards to teachers, parents, tertiary institutions and employers, and it also helps tertiary institutions and employers make fair and reasonable selections.

#### 5.5.2 Assessment design

The table below shows the assessment design of the subject with effect from the 2027 HKDSE Examinations. The assessment design is subject to continual refinement in light of feedback from live examinations. Full details are provided in the Regulations and Assessment Frameworks for the year of the examination and other supplementary documents, which are available on the HKEAA website ([www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/hkdse/assessment/assessment\\_framework/](http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/hkdse/assessment/assessment_framework/)).

The following table outlines the various components of the public assessment of Music:

<b>Compulsory Part</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
Paper 1: Listening	Public written examination Part A: Music in the Western classical tradition Part B: Chinese instrumental music, Cantonese operatic music, Local and Western popular music	Part A: about 90 minutes  Part B: about 90 minutes	50%
Paper 2: Performing	External assessment Part A: Ensemble Performance (Practical examination) Part B: Solo Performance (Practical examination) <i>OR</i> other recognised qualifications	Part A: about 15 minutes  Part B: about 20 minutes	30%
Paper 3: Creating	External assessment (Portfolio)	N.A.	20%

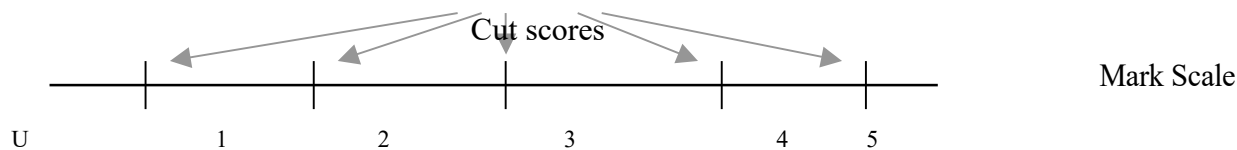
### 5.5.3 Public examinations

Different types of assessment modes are used to assess students' performance in a broad range of skills and abilities. These include public written examination, practical examination and portfolio. Papers 1A and 1B Listening are written examination papers. The types of items include multiple choice, matching, as well as long and short questions. Papers 2A and 2B are practical examinations. The portfolio is adopted in Paper 3. Schools may refer to the past examination papers regarding the format of the examination and the standards at which the questions are pitched.

### 5.5.4 Standards and Reporting of Results

Standards-referenced reporting is adopted for the HKDSE. What this means is that candidates' levels of performance are reported with reference to a set of standards as defined by cut scores on the mark scale for a given subject. Standards referencing relates to the way in which results are reported and does not involve any changes in how teachers or examiners mark student work. The set of standards for a given subject can be represented diagrammatically as shown in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1 Defining Levels of Performance via Cut Scores on the Variable or Scale for a Given Subject



Within the context of the HKDSE there are five cut scores, which are used to distinguish five levels of performance (1–5), with 5 being the highest. A performance below the cut score for Level 1 is labelled as ‘Unclassified’ (U).

For each of the five levels, a set of written descriptors has been developed to describe what the typical candidate performing at this level is able to do. The principle behind these descriptors is that they describe what typical candidates *can* do, not what they *cannot* do. In other words, they describe performance in positive rather than negative terms. These descriptors represent ‘on-average’ statements and may not apply precisely to individuals, whose performance within a subject may be variable and span two or more levels. Samples of students’ work at various levels of attainment are provided to illustrate the standards expected of them. These samples, when used together with the level descriptors, will clarify the standards expected at the various levels of attainment.

In setting standards for the HKDSE, Levels 4 and 5 are set with reference to the standards achieved by students awarded grades A–D in the HKALE. It needs to be stressed, however, that the intention is that the standards will remain constant over time – not the percentages awarded at different levels, as these are free to vary in line with variations in overall student performance. Referencing Levels 4 and 5 to the standards associated with the old grades A–D is important for ensuring a degree of continuity with past practice, facilitating tertiary selection and maintaining international recognition.

To provide finer discrimination for selection purposes, the Level 5 candidates with the best performance have their results annotated with the symbols \*\* and the next top group with the symbol \*. The HKDSE certificate itself records the Level awarded to each candidate.



## References

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## Chapter 6 Learning and Teaching Resources

This chapter discusses the importance of selecting and making effective use of learning and teaching resources to enhance student learning. Schools need to select, adapt, and where appropriate, develop relevant resources to support student learning.

### 6.1 Purpose and Function of Learning and Teaching Resources

There are many learning and teaching resources in Music which can provide students with a basis for learning. Besides the teaching packages and web-based reference materials produced by the EDB, they also include materials on the Internet and from the media, audio-visual recordings, music software, music scores and printed music materials. The effective use of learning and teaching resources can help students consolidate what they have learned; construct knowledge; develop learning strategies, generic skills, values and attitudes; and broaden their learning experiences – and thereby lay a solid foundation for lifelong learning. Also, the appropriate use of reading materials about music can promote good reading habits in students, enrich their knowledge, and enhance their creative thinking and communication skills.

### 6.2 Guiding Principles

When selecting from the wide range of learning and teaching materials in Music, teachers should take the following points into consideration. Learning and teaching resources should:

- be aligned with the aims and learning objectives of the curriculum;
- be suited to students' abilities and arouse their interest in learning music;
- provide accurate and quality materials to promote effective learning;
- provide a range of materials with different levels of difficulty to cater for learner diversity;
- promote independent learning by complementing and extending what students have learned in class; and
- stimulate thinking from various perspectives and further inquiry.

### 6.3 Types of Learning and Teaching Resources

#### 6.3.1 Materials produced by the Education Bureau and others

Teachers should make use of different types of materials to support student learning, as well as to promote the principle of “Reading across the Curriculum”. These resources include online resource banks, multi-media materials and teaching packages developed by the EDB, as well as

other music resources such as software, Internet resources, reference books, house programmes, newspaper and featured articles, music scores and audio-visual materials. Teachers need to develop and choose suitable materials to stimulate students' interest and support their learning, and they should classify the materials, set up a systematic resource bank and update it whenever necessary so as to facilitate easy retrieval for teaching purposes. Teachers should also utilise the school intranet for uploading appropriate materials so that students can browse and refer to them at any time. Students should also be encouraged to publish their own compositions on the Internet for other students to share and respond to critically.

The EDB continues to develop learning and teaching materials and these materials will be uploaded to the webpage of the Arts Education Key Learning Area for the reference of teachers and students. Examples of the resources to be developed will include materials on music listening including Chinese instrumental music, Cantonese operatic music and popular music; materials on music creating highlighting salient points and skills on composing, analysis of musical works and a list of references, e.g. "Module 1: The Areas of Study 1 to 4 — Learning and Teaching References".

### 6.3.2 The Internet, information and digital technology

As information and digital technology develop rapidly, teachers and books should no longer be regarded as the only sources for music information and knowledge. A vast quantity of music resources are available on the Internet for teacher and student access, for example, various kinds of audio music files, music scores, music freeware, and information about instruments, composers, performers, music critiques, music competitions and concerts. As many websites and software related to music may not be developed primarily for music education purposes, it is essential for teachers to develop students' ability to judge and select appropriate materials. Teachers should also equip students with the necessary skills for searching, selecting, collating, processing, analysing and making effective use of these Internet materials to facilitate learning. The effective use of information and digital technology can enhance the learning and teaching of music by, for example:

- guiding students to carry out self-regulated learning according to their individual abilities and progress;
- allowing them to explore and create music freely, and make revisions at any time to develop their creative thinking;
- facilitating students' recording of their own performances to improve their performing skills and interpretations through repeated listening;
- illustrating abstract music concepts in concrete ways through audio-visual materials;
- allowing the sharing of music information through the Internet to promote interaction among

peers, as well as between students and teachers; and

- providing rich and up-to-date music information which is conducive to enquiry learning.

### 6.3.3 Venues and facilities

In addition to the music room, teachers can use other venues and facilities in schools – such as classrooms, the school hall, the playground, the student activity room, the multi-media learning centre and the library – to create an environment conducive to learning. Schools may also consider the installation of suitable peripherals and music software in the multi-media learning centre for students to use information and digital technology as a tool for conducting interactive learning and creating activities. The information and digital technology equipment in the music room and the multi-media learning centre can be made accessible for student learning activities and rehearsals after school hours. Teachers can also set up a listening corner in the library, and use a variety of audio-visual materials for students to listen to music extensively, which can help them develop sensitive listening abilities and the capacity for learning to learn. Where resources permit, teachers need to upgrade and purchase audio equipment in order to provide quality listening facilities for students.

### 6.3.4 Human resources

Teachers are the most valuable human resource, as they are lovers of music and role models who can help stimulate students' motivation and cultivate their proper values, attitudes and behaviours in music learning. Teachers need to have adequate subject knowledge, and should participate actively in professional development programmes organised by the EDB and tertiary institutions in order to enhance their professionalism and deepen their understanding of the latest trends in curriculum development. Also, other subject teachers, students, alumni and parents who are competent in music can help guide students or give demonstrations on various occasions to support the learning and teaching of the subject. Teachers may also invite professional orchestras or ensembles to give performances in school, or employ musicians-in-school and part-time music instructors to help conduct music training, as well as promote creating and performing activities. Through close contact with these personnel, students can gain inspiration directly and widen their musical horizons.

### 6.3.5 Financial resources

With the implementation of school-based management, teachers can request funding from their schools and sponsoring bodies to meet the development and needs of the subject. Schools may make use of various grants provided by the Government to meet current and development expenses for the teaching and learning of Music. For example, schools can apply for a Diversity

Learning Grant, which is provided to schools in the form of a cash grant, and can help them cater for the diverse needs of students. One of the purposes of this grant is to support collaboration with other schools to operate networked classes for senior secondary subjects with low enrolments. Moreover, schools may apply for funding from other sources such as the Quality Education Fund, the parent-teacher association and the alumni association for support in acquiring additional facilities and other developments in the subject. To assist schools in implementing the senior secondary curriculum, the EDB will continue to provide them with additional funding and to allow flexibility in the use of resources to cater for their diverse needs. Schools are advised to refer to the relevant circulars issued by the EDB from time to time.

#### 6.3.6 Community resources

Teachers should fully utilise community resources to help students learn, experience and respond critically to music through participation in music activities organised by various organisations. For example, teachers may arrange for students to attend music activities organised by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, the Music Office, the Hong Kong Arts Festival Society, the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, the Hong Kong Sinfonietta and other performing groups, in order to widen their exposure to music. The music programmes produced by Radio and Television Hong Kong (RTHK) also provide valuable listening resources and offer a range of useful information on music. In addition, the facilities and resources in public libraries may be utilised – for example, the Hong Kong Central Library, which houses a large collection of different music resources, is an important community source for reference materials.

### 6.4 Resource Management

There are a wide variety of learning and teaching resources for music available in the market, such as instruments, audio-visual and information and digital technology equipment, reference books, music scores, CD-ROMs and music software. Teachers have to exercise their professional judgement when selecting and purchasing these resources. Teachers need to develop new materials regularly to support students' various learning needs. Such a wide range of resources requires clear records and regular inventory checks. A data bank of music resources can be built up systematically for easy reference. Also, instruments have to be maintained and upgraded, and obsolete items have to be replaced when necessary. Teachers should do their best to get their schools to allocate funds for these purposes. The effective use of financial resources for procuring materials, equipment and furniture can enhance the quality of music learning and teaching, but teachers should bear in mind that it is more important to use resources appropriately than to accumulate a large quantity of materials.

The culture of resource sharing is crucial as it not only facilitates the exchange of music information, but also encourages peer collaboration and interactive learning. Teachers and students can share information and resources related to music through the school intranet and the Internet; and teachers can build up networks with Music teachers in others schools and establish professional development groups for the exchange of materials, experiences and ideas on teaching. Teachers should also note that the curriculum resources available on the EDB's "Music – Curriculum Support Resources" webpage are updated from time to time.

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