

POPULAR MUSIC AND TRANSCRIPTION: DEVELOPING NEW APPROACHES
FOR THE PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

By
DURRELL L. JULES

SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE:
PROFESSOR MATTHEW THIBEAULT, CHAIR
DR. JOHN A. DUFF, MEMBER

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Abstract

The subjects of popular music and transcription studies are topics of discussion among music educators. This project explored approaches and synthesized curricular considerations for implementing both transcription and popular music study into the percussion ensemble classroom. A review of literature was done in the areas of popular music pedagogy, transcription study, and percussion pedagogy. Curricular considerations for percussion ensemble revolved around three primary stages: teaching students how to transcribe music; popular music study through transcription; and performance of transcriptions. The project aimed to develop students' ability to listen deeper, understand the meanings of popular music, and ultimately transcribe and arrange music of their own to become better consumers of music.

Keywords: transcription, popular music, percussion ensemble

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In recent decades, music classrooms have undergone change, with some educators beginning to see that their students' responses to music lack enthusiasm (Green, 2006). New approaches attempt to help students and teachers regain the initial joy of music that once came so naturally. The use of techniques like transcription have the ability to open up music to pupils making music fresh but also enhancing students' aural listening abilities (Gamsso, 2011). This project explores the literature of popular music inclusion and applies the findings in development of curricular guidelines for the percussion classroom through transcription. The curriculum is supported by a review of literature that summarizes the potential benefits of using popular music practices, as well as transcription study in a percussion ensemble and additional recommendations for building a curriculum around these ideas for music educators.

There is a great deal we can learn from popular music and the way it is created. Green (2006) in her study about popular music notes that there is a distinction between the learning styles of popular musicians and classical musicians. Namely, popular musicians operate often without the need of formal music education. There is also a deep connection to listening and aural transcription, where musicians listen to a particular pattern, then play it in different variations. Her study points out that small ideas or riffs are presented to the group, in which the group begins the composition process. She notes the process showcases the democracy of music making, indicating that each performer plays a role. This dynamic changes the traditional music classroom from a class run by solely the teacher to one, which incorporates the ideas of the individual performer. These ideas pose interesting things to consider for the future of music education and how music learning continues to change.

Music learning can vary in many different ways especially with the acclimation of new technology. Transcription, an older form of music study, used the technology of the time, or lack there of, to notate music that was previously not recorded. Berliner (1994) in his book, *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation*, explores the jazz tradition, which uses transcription as a form of study. “Just as children learn to speak their native language by imitating older competent speakers, so young musicians learn to speak jazz by imitating seasoned improvisers” (p. 95). This proposes an interesting idea of the possible benefits of this type of study in other music genres.

The current state of percussion pedagogy is focused on the general techniques need to start beginning percussionists journey through music. This can be seen in articles such as “Flamboyancy in Percussion Class” by Dan Distefano (2005), indicates the importance of demonstrating the use of the large muscle groups used to produce sounds. Studies such as Gzibovskis and Marnauza’s (2012) indicate how important the development of fine motor skills is when learning a percussion instrument. There are studies available such as Lubart’s (1998) dissertation, which provides a teacher training manual for teaching improvisation in the percussion ensemble. Interestingly, there is a lack of literature aimed specifically at the secondary level that teaches students from an approach that aims to teach them about their instrument and the music process holistically. This project aims to provide a fresh take on building a curriculum that begins to encompass current percussion strategies as well as exploring new ideas.

Review of Literature

Popular Music Pedagogy

Traditional music education aims to teach music from the classical standpoint, a standard held in many classrooms today. While the importance of the Western canon remains, as society changes, our approach to this way of teaching music must be reconsidered towards expanding to better embrace the musical and cultural diversity of the world. Among the research for new approaches to music education and music learning, there are progressive benefits to teaching music through the lens of popular music (Green, 2006). Sometimes, the classroom can become a place where the meaning of music can be taken out of context causing confusion for the learner. Green (2006) suggests that one consider the possibilities of teaching music in a way that promotes personal and musical autonomy, an organic approach that stems from common popular music practices.

Green (2006) explores the process of composing popular music along with teaching music skills. The study begins by explaining inherent and delineated meanings; inherent dealing with the sounds and delineated dealing with the extra-musical aspects such as cultural or religious associations. Since popular music is a broad category, it should be met with caution and be approached as music that is promoted by media and influences students through peer and social media responses (Green, 2006). Despite these influences, popular music serves as a genre that students can call their own. As the article suggests, popular musicians typically acquire musical skills without formal education. This is quite interesting, primarily since the idea of music education aims to teach students musical skills.

Green's project establishes the informal learning practices that popular music learning usually involves which are: (1) allowing learners to choose the music; (2) learning by listening

and copying recordings; (3) learning in groups with minimal adult guidance; (4) learning in personal ways; and (5) integration of listening, playing, singing, improvising and composing. Students were asked to bring their own music to the class and then copy the song aurally from the recording using instruments of their own choice. Teachers were asked to spend much less time teaching and more time observing. Interestingly, after students arranged their compositions the performances seemed to have “a sense of vitality”(p.108). Notable conclusions point to the process of music making which in this instance became very democratic. Students decided on the role of each instrument and their part allowing for mistakes to be made and self-correction from individual students. Also, teachers noticed that they assumed the role of onlooker.

Despite the natural urge to help, teachers only provided direction for students to use to create. One teacher made the interesting point that her normal routine involved a substantial amount of work on her part, while the students didn't seem to do much of anything. On the other hand, Green's project put the control of learning completely into the hands of the students. During the project there would be moments where students would struggle with being able to solve problems in their compositions. This raises questions about the students' progression and if the students need to fail to get better. A student's progression is related to the student's ability to identify problems, find a solution to the problem, then put the solution into practice. An example of this would be a student trying to determine the key signature to a song. Left to their own devices, students can use many different methods to come to a consensus about the key signature. As Green (2006) suggests, the teacher would not be able to typically offer advice to help the student. Teachers were encouraged in this project to observe and let students work on their own. Possible concerns included students not able to stay on task or be able to work through

the project. The same project was done with classical music. Students initially reacted with requests to choose music they liked. Once the activity was complete, students begin to appreciate classical music from a different approach.

This project suggests that popular music study, coupled with the common informal learning practices typically used to create such music, can help benefit students in a variety of ways. These include the promotion of autonomy, the meanings of music, both inherent and delineated, and enhancing the ability to listen to music. In addition to the educational benefits, learning in this way may represent a more appealing approach to learning music, one where students are more receptive to music and more in control of their learning.

Woody in his article challenges the long-term goals of music education. He addresses the issue of authenticity and stresses the need to be true to the music; he suggests that popular music cannot be taught solely using classical methods (p33). The focus here is on the meanings behind the music as opposed to the analysis of popular music. Interestingly, this is where Green indicates the value in both inherent and delineated musical meanings. Another notable point about popular music and the learning involved is the amount of listening required. A key skill developed is listening for learning and analysis, one that many traditional school students do not participate in as frequently. Most of the practice popular musicians do revolve around licks or riffs in the given repertoire, not discounting the use of scales and arpeggios as well. Improvisation, an often-neglected skill in formal music education, is another key skill that is developed by popular music

Ultimately, a central goal for music educators is to provide students with skills to be participatory members of groups that create music outside of school. Some of the challenge, says Woody (2007), is that many teachers are merely passive consumers, which doesn't indicate a

rejection of the music, but more of a lack of knowledge. As Green (2006) indicates in her research, the teacher becomes an observer and participates in the learning process with the students. The idea here should open up the experiences and knowledge of students, giving them the opportunity to guide students in the music-making process.

Research in popular music education thus far praises collaborative activities and suggests that independent, creative, and critical thinking can all be practiced in small groups (Allsup, 2011, p. 31). Allsup (2011) article discusses the ideas of classroom garage bands. These are similar to chamber groups in their size but not in their functionality. Allsup (2011) instated the garage bands in a college secondary course in which students would be given certain challenges and perform what was achieved in the next class. Each performance was recorded and played back for discussion. As the semester ended, students performed some of their music. An interesting notion was revealed using the garage band format in that students experienced nonhierarchical music education. Each group will be exposed to true democracy; a number of problems will be faced, leadership roles will shift, and composition will showcase an array of musical tastes and preferences. Students will learn how to manage the different views of their peers to create an end product.

Often in question is the analysis of popular music and its ability to work effectively. Green's position is that popular music, to be understood and recreated effectively, does not need to be studied in the same way that classical music does. Adversely, Allsup (2011) states there is some merit to studying popular music using traditional methods of study. He notes that connecting the "bridge" between the two genres expands understanding of each genre. This project proposes something of the middle path where the informal approaches are used, but the

material studied becomes a bit more traditional in approach through transcriptions that require some analysis to be completed.

When thinking of creating pedagogy around popular music, it is important to keep in mind authentic practices that come along with the culture of popular music. Attempting to approach the music from a classical standpoint would take away from the delineated meanings of popular music, meanings that make the music an integral part of society. However, traditional methods of teaching music can be used to connect classical music to popular music.

Incorporating activities such as the “garage band” projects add a fresh take to teaching students about music, their approach to creating such music, and ultimately its performance. Avoiding a charge for a popular music-only curriculum, it is necessary to make the connections between classical music and popular music. This approach will ensure students gain an appreciation of music as a whole, and understand that despite preferences, all music has merit.

Transcription Study

For the purposes of this project, I begin with a definition. Transcription is the art or means of arranging music for a performing medium other than the original. It can also mean the conversion of composition from one system of notation to another (Oxford Music Online). Depending on its use, this can apply to music that has been notated before, however, the previous notations cannot be used during new transcription.

The origins of transcribing practice can be traced to many different time periods and music styles. Jazz is a style of music that almost exclusively acknowledges the use of transcription as a tool to learn jazz language. The scarcity of printed scores creates a need for material to be transcriptions that preserve ideas, with the transcription process actually facilitating learning. Paul Berliner (1994) presents a comprehensive look at jazz. Learning

practices of the jazz tradition seem to stem from listening and transcribing music. Berliner explains that the published materials can serve as learning aids but are not the only tool needed in learning jazz. Total immersion—listening, transcribing and playing—were needed to get a grasp of the musical components that the jazz greats used in their performances (p. 102). Masters of the jazz tradition cite the study of small patterns as primary means of developing ideas for your own performance. These segments were called many names including licks, tricks, pet patterns, or crips to name a few. Berliner (1994) quotes Turrentine;

‘The old guys used to call those things crips. That’s from crippled...In other words, when you’re playing a solo and your mind is crippled and you cant think of anything different to play, you go back into one of your old bags and play one of your crips. You better have something to play when you cant think of nothing new or you’ll feel funny laying out there all the time....That’s all I play is crips” (p. 102).

Improvisation is a key point of the jazz tradition often shrouded in mystique.

Transcriptions were useful in helping jazz musicians discover what was really happening during solos. The accounts of various jazz musicians like Tommy Turrentine support this picture, one that has a sense of calculation to the art of improvisation. The transcription of other artists’ licks influenced the solos of others and often created new songs within themselves. This proposes a very interesting idea about the nature of music composition and how it began among early jazz musicians; a notable method of using performances or recordings as a blueprint for creating new musical ideas. Figure 1 displays a transcription of the drum set part for “Cissy Strut” by The Meters, which was played by drummer Zigaboo Modeliste. This song has a distinct linear groove with a series of syncopated hi-hat rhythms while accompanied by a double back-beat. This transcription is the general pattern that he would play but often he took liberty and added several

variations. In 2010, a drummer named Stanton Moore, know for his work with the band Galactic wrote a book entitled *Groove Alchemy* (2010). The book details notable funk drummers like Zigaboo Modeliste and the iconic grooves they contributed to the funk tradition. Each section opens with transcriptions of songs that featured each drummer. Moore (2010) took the groove from Modeliste and flipped it on its head for his song “Pie-Eyed Manc,” in which he uses similar linear grooves in the hi-hat but changes beat four to beat two (pp.28, 148). This creates a similar feel but sounds different because the double backbeat that was on beat four is now on beat two. This is a clear example of how transcription, aural or written, can inspire musicians to create their own music by paying homage to musicians before them (Figure 2).

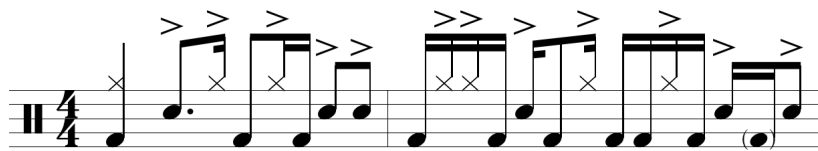


Figure 1. “Cissy Strut”, The Meters 1969, Zigaboo Modeliste.

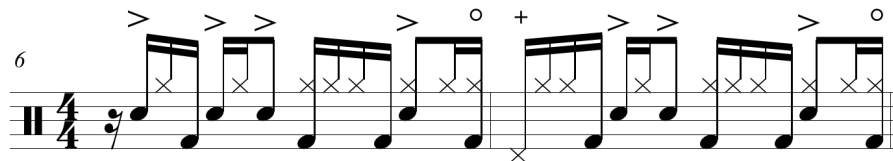


Figure 2. “Pie-Eyed Manc”, 2010, Stanton Moore

The musical choices in the jazz tradition also identified who was playing the solo. Their signature was rooted in the phrases or licks they decided to play. Turrentine explains “I can tell by the fourth bar of a solo who it is that’s playing” (Berliner, 2005, p.103). An artist’s ability to label music in this way is paramount to the learning of such music and the charge that it leaves for music educators and their students. Brian Blade’s performance on “Unknowing” (2002) by Joshua Redman, is a staple in his playing style. He often is known for his melodic playing,

disregarding bar lines and utilizing unconventional means for creating different sounds and feels. Typically, tunes with a slower tempo remove the conventional uses of hi-hat or ride cymbal for time keeping and uses them as set pieces for what seems as one giant solo throughout the song. Figure 3 shows a snippet of a section of the song. To the untrained ear, one may not notice the groove that is found in this section. However, it does seem as if Blade is sparsely soloing throughout the section, not giving a clear indication of bar line or groove. Blade's trademark is rooted in a sense of freedom; one which is not confounded by the cliché patterns and tendencies of a typical drummer. It is important for students to recognize such tendencies not just for personal awareness but for the ability to see these tendencies in the music they perform, and if given the opportunity to express themselves in a manner that states who they are musically. (See Figure 3)

Figure 3. Joshua Redman's "Unknowing", m 54-62

Current literature points to a variety of benefits one of which includes intense aural learning, understanding the role of memorization in a performance, and the relationship between aural listening and memorization (Gamso, 2011, p.65). Like most of the studies in the field of music transcription, many have a connection to practices commonly found in jazz. Gamso (2011) begins to implement jazz practices in the classical tradition during his applied woodwind lesson

curriculum. Using jazz studies as a foundation, he found that the primary form of practice was listening. After playing a recording a couple of times, he noticed that a form of aural absorption occurred, as musicians picked up on the inflection of specific notes, vocabulary, tone, and technique, to name a few. Next, he found that it was quite common for jazz musicians to transcribe solos from a model jazz musician. This was the impetus of Gasmó's Aural Learning Project (ALP) (2011). The project required students to listen to two professional recordings of works with analysis, two recording projects with written evaluation of performance, SmartMusic practice, memorization and transcription projects, assigned readings and research on the works studied, and composed and improvised technique exercises. Gasmó's initial intentions through his Aural Learning Project were to explore the cognitive connections between memorization and expression. His students, however, enjoyed the process and the ability to listen to music more intimately than they usually did. Students also noted they could measure their own technical process and their musical expressiveness. A noteworthy conclusion resulting from this project is the element of the students' caring about the process of learning. Gasmó (2011) suggests that this type of project is reasonable for K-12 music learning as well, although he points out it would need to be small assignments. This project strengthens the idea that two different music genres can be used to understand each other. This study showcases a jazz tradition and its use in teaching classical woodwind music. Questions begin to form around the idea that musical practices, despite their cultural pedagogies, can be interchanged to understand music in a different way.

Often argued is the position that supports or discredits written music notation. There is much more to just writing music than the action of paper and pencil or notation software. Nettl (2005) confronts the issues that often face transcription in his book *The Study of*

Ethnomusicology: Thirty-one Issues and Concepts. Five primary issues are covered spanning the types of transcription (descriptive, prescriptive), the nature of the piece, the relationship of transcription to the way the notation is perceived of the transcriber's society, the role of human versus machines, and idea of transcription as a unified technique (p. 77). Western society seems to require the need for music to be notated in order to be valid. As technology continues to progress, an idea that began around the invention of music recordings, the need for written music seems to be unnecessary.

“Before the days of recording, any scholarly writing about music was hardly complete without notation. The transcription proved that the music existed, and that the transcriber had really heard it. But the notation was not of great help to readers of the accompanying commentary because it didn't really tell how the music sounded. Taking recording for granted, it is hard for us today to step into the shoes of a scholar of those days” (Nettl, 2005, p.80).

Despite Nettl's point about changes in technology and the inability to indicate how music sounds, there are some key uses of transcription that are worth exploring. The primary use of transcription seems to be two-fold: a blueprint for the performer and written notation of what has happened aurally. For example, this would include ideas like note length, articulation of notes, or phrasing. Analysis is also a bi-product of transcription. These products can be used not only to analyze music, but also to gain insight from a professional musician on how they created the music. Pedagogically, this seems to open up a variety of content that keeps students “inside” of the music rather than only playing or listening casually. Almost like taking a private lesson from your favorite musician, transcription can give a sense of personal connection to the music, one that can draw the musician closer to the art form. Problem solving is another aspect of

transcription that is evident in transcription. Deciphering rhythms commonly used in a specific style or melodic structure of a piece are important aspects of music learning that can help propel the creative process.

Descriptive transcription implies the transcriptionist's attempt to notate everything that is heard while prescriptive transcriptions include what performers of the musical style would require for performance. For this project, the balance between these two concepts is crucial to having students do much more than just learn how to transcribe. Cultural and stylistic tendencies coupled with precise rhythmic content and melodic ideas are the elements that will drive a well-rounded learning experience.

Transcription can be done in many ways; direct to same instrument or from one instrument family to another. When considering transcribing instruments from different families, one of the goals of this project is to consider how the music is transcribed for the instruments. An example of this can be seen in Joseph Phillip Felice's dissertation (2013), which displays a pedagogical look at J. S. Bach's "Sonata I in G minor for guitar". Felice's goal was to provide a performance guide and pedagogical processes in regard to the transcription of such a work. Ideally, several considerations had to be made in regard to a transcription from violin to guitar. From the instrument composition, though similarly chordophones, the guitar has a percussive quality and the strings are attached directly to the soundboard. Meanwhile, the violin's strings do not touch the soundboard, creating a difference in technical approach, specifically articulation. (p. 33-34). Other considerations include tempo, note duration, and ornamentation. This will be further explained throughout the project. The functions of transcriptions can vary as well, often the most beneficial way to transcribe is to do the work needed to transcribe. "It is useful from an analytical and academic perspective to study solos

someone else has transcribed, but to learn to speak the language of jazz it is significantly more beneficial for individuals to transcribe themselves” (Gardiner, 2008, p. 147). Gardiner suggests that simply looking at someone’s transcription can help one “see” the form and analyze it, but for it to affect a musician’s understanding of individual voice, one must transcribe themselves. Throughout his dissertation, each saxophonist’s study is preceded by their historical significance followed by a brief biography. The transcription is studied in enough depth to distinguish each individual voice, including tendencies that made each solo unique. An example of such detail can be seen in the segment on Wayne Shorter.

“Shorter’s playing typically has an abstract quality both rhythmically and melodically, but changes depending upon who he is playing with and the setting. With Art Blakey, Shorter’s style leans more toward straight-ahead hard-bop, is typically very aggressive and forceful, and sometimes reminiscent of Coltrane’s modal approach from the early 1960s. Generally, his tone has a very rough edge. His sound on ESP with the Miles Davis Quintet, however, is warmer, smooth and more relaxed. His playing is more legato, with an introspective approach”(Gardiner, 2008, p.110).

It is evident that many qualities of a musician can be seen in a study of his or her music. Transcription along with a study of historical background can help solidify the qualities a musician typically displays when performing. Studies such as these can help students and teachers examine personal proficiency and provide models that can be used to shape tone and articulation after. This allows one to begin to develop a sense of personal voice. The outcome of this project is aims to help students achieve this as well.

Small (2006) proposes a similar argument with his curriculum focused around the art of jazz transcription. His dissertation details the process of transcribing jazz solos for the

development of a curriculum, which serves as a great model for this project. Small equates transcription to “learning and translating a language,” which is an interesting correlation between music and spoken language (p. 3). A detailed list of instructions for the process of transcription is given which includes: the gathering of materials, choosing a solo, listening to the solo, writing out the solo, playing the solo, extracting the melody from the solo, creating exercises from the solo, composing original melodies from the solo, and incorporating ideas from the solo into performance. Notably, the concise process listed paints a clear picture of the total process of transcription; skills such as active listening, writing, composing, arranging, and improvisation are all practiced using this method. This adds density to the possibilities this type of process could yield for the current project.

Transcription and the effects on memory seem to be an area not as heavily explored. Pembroke’s study (1986) aimed to see the difference in dictation scores as a result of different transcription practices (p.240). Melody was the primary focus of the study and rhythm was left out due to the approximate length the trials would need to be extended. Prior to the test, subjects ranging from freshmen to sophomores from Florida State University were assessed to see if they could sing pitches from the range of B-flat to D2 for women and B flat to D1 for men. In addition to this the Taylor Music Perception Ability Test (TMPAT) was given to test the subjects thinking processes as they sung specific pitches. Lastly, subjects were given an answer sheet with fifteen different melodies. The first three were warm-ups, while the remaining twelve were the experimental melodies. Subjects were divided into six groups each with a different process. Groups 1 to 3 consisted of subjects listening to and notating melody simultaneously, listen, or just sing the melody respectively. Groups 4 to 6 had subjects do the processes in the first three groups twice.

The results showed that subjects who participated demonstrated little increase in scores across the board. There are some conclusions that were drawn that present a case for the process of transcription. Subjects that listened to the melodic material twice did consistently better than participants who only listened to the examples once. Also noted, was that dictation errors were more apparent in melodies that were from ten to sixteen notes long. Despite the thirty years of this study, this would suggest that an effective curriculum for developing transcription skills would need to have short examples in order for the memory of students to be stronger.

Traditionally, in Western culture, transcription is a study of music that is used and practiced by jazz musicians. The art form most likely has been done long before jazz and is a comprehensive way of learning music from the “inside out.” For music education, there are several benefits of transcription including a different approach of studying music, understanding rhythms and melodies, and developing skills from composition and arranging of music. Looking at music from both the performer and the composer puts the students in a position to understand music in a new way. Another benefit of developing transcription skills is to help with memory. Memory is an integral part of music, which is noted in Pembroke’s (1986) study as one of the skills that aural transcription can help develop. Establishing a sense of voice is also a pertinent skill for the musician and according to Small (2006) transcription can help develop that as well. He notes that transcription can help you learn the “nuts and bolts” of a work. Helping students identify the compositional nature of works can help open up ways for students to be creating their own music using the frameworks studied. Establishing a curriculum for transcription is also made feasible in this study, which will help lay the groundwork for building the curriculum that has been the subject for this project.

Considering the purpose of the project, the best approach would seem to be one that starts students off with small assignments that teach students how to transcribe but also how to approach the technology. Selecting one song to transcribe as a group and using it as the basis for material throughout the unit is ideal. This would allow for sections to be broken down into digestible bits allowing students to pick up on the process of transcription. Balance between descriptive and prescriptive styles will be paramount; the goal is for students to be able to transcribe effectively then draw musical conclusions that inform the students on their musical decisions needed for their final project as well as their own personal musical development.

Percussion Pedagogy

There is limited research in regard to percussion pedagogy but from what is available there is a common theme. The most logical approach to creating curricula for secondary school percussion would seem to start with the basics. Unlike wind instruments whose concerns deal with fingerings, the approach for percussion should deal with the kinesthesia of the instrument; that is how the body is incorporated in producing sound. Distefano (2005) suggests that early percussion should start with very simple ideas like eight strokes on each hand. This should be followed by alternating buzz strokes on each hand using a full stroke, then flams. These ideas are a great way to keep beginning percussionist focused on the macro ideas of playing their instrument (p.41-42). Ideally, this process seems optimal for making sure percussion students are learning and understanding the big motions used to create sounds.

A deeper look at this idea can be found in Tails Gziboviskis and Mara Marnuaza's study, which tested the development of fine motor skills through playing percussion instruments (Gziboviski, 2012). Twenty-seven students from ages 15-27 were put into three main groups: an experimental group comprised of students with a basic music education; a benchmark control

group of people who have played percussion for over five years; and a control group consisting of people who have never learned to play a musical instrument. Eight subtests were administered using the MLS test from the Vienna Test System. The tests were very precise and measured arm movement from each individual hand, aiming for each hand, mistakes made in each hand and arm steadiness. In addition to these tests, coordination exercises were created to help the development of percussion concepts throughout each of the three groups.

- 1.) “Fist-Reference” – development of precision hand movements
- 2.) “18 x 3” – development of coordination of horizontal/vertical movements
- 3.) “Rhythmicization of quarter notes” – speed of thinking, elasticity
- 4.) “9 x 3” – motor coordination, feel of rhythm, meter, tempo
- 5.) “Coordination of sounded and clapped rhythm” – performance different rhythms simultaneously
- 6.) “Independence” - perfects feel for poly meter
- 7.) “Seven Steps” – develop concentration, reaction, endurance

The results, intended to measure hand speed and precision, indicated that the experimental group had the lowest average of scores among the other two groups, which is an indication of the experimental group’s recent foray into percussion. It also suggests an interesting idea that students with no prior music education had better results. This seems somewhat of an inconsistent form of measurement. The measurement results from the mistake test seemed to be as expected. The experimental group and control group made more mistakes while the group of more experienced percussionists had the least number of mistakes. The fine motor skills results indicated that percussionists who were playing for a while performed better in this area as well.

The results of the development exercises indicate that the experimental group had the most improvement with the results having a 95 percent success rate. This indicates that through structured development of specific skills, students can drastically improve. For this project, it will be key for any curriculum to have a similar structure style for maximum effectiveness.

When considering the pedagogy available for percussion students, we need to consider repertoire important as well. Moyer's (2010) dissertation on the analysis of a select group of percussion literature studies three percussion ensemble pieces each scrutinized at a very detailed level to offer guidelines for the arrangement of future percussion ensemble pieces. The analysis of the three pieces yield general guidelines to consider when arranging for percussion ensemble. The range of topics discussed primarily focus on how to score parts for the instruments in a typical percussion ensemble.

Most of the percussion curricula revolve around understanding the extra-musical concepts around percussion and implementing concepts in the classroom. Learning an instrument is also about the mechanics of the instrument and percussion is no different. Distefano (2005) suggests that beginning percussionists should be focused on the kinesthetic motions of playing a percussion instrument before looking at notes. Much like wind-instrument fingerings, percussionists need to be familiar with the motions involved with producing sound. This is not a new conclusion but it will serve as a support for some of the activities designed in the curriculum for this project. The understanding of the motor skills involved with a percussionist is paramount to their long-term success, so there are exercises that can be designed to help facilitate the development of motor skills. The assignments and final project will be approached keeping in mind the technique considerations for the literature review as well as the arrangement

considerations. It will need to be clear what students will be notating as well, so a notation guide would be ideal as well.

Final Thoughts

There is one major connection that was discovered in the project. Most popular music research is grounded in some type of composition or aural transcription. The two ideas help realize the connections between the two topics and seem to work well together when considering developing a curriculum. The project proposes to develop a curriculum with teaching popular music and teaching students how to transcribe and ultimately arrange music. Interestingly, the studies done on transcription show that memory increases with the study of music by transcription. This is an indication that aside from the end goal of helping students become better consumers of music, they will also gain skills that can be applied to performance, both individual and ensemble.

The curricular considerations for this project were done with a percussion ensemble class of about 10 to 15 students. From personal experience, this type of curriculum would be best suited for students who have a strong grasp on basic theory. Understanding note values and key signatures are paramount for students to begin learning how to transcribe.

One challenge may be the balance between the components. Ensuring that we hold fast to the authenticity of popular music creation, while showing students the art of transcription seems quite comprehensive. With the curriculum structured in with the three main goals in mind, this should be an achievable goal. Another consideration is the audience of such a curriculum. Suggestions for this project were done with a high school percussion class in mind. Adapting this for younger students would be a challenge because they most likely will not have a grasp on the theory of music. Complex rhythms, melodies, and form will be new concepts

for them and most likely lead to confusion. On the other hand, this type of curriculum could prove beneficial on the collegiate level. In fact, multiple pieces could be used to do a survey of popular music, indicating the variety of content that is available. Transcription is often first discussed in detail at the college level, so this would prove to be a new approach to apply the study while exploring music that is relevant to society today.

Considerations for building a curriculum are detailed in Appendix A, which includes the development of the curriculum, the project materials, and instrument choice. The section of instrument will also have a brief analysis of a sample score from “Uptown Funk” by Tim Akers and the Smoking Section. Appendix B details a standard notation guide for students to use as they begin the transcription process. The guide will inform students on a standard method of notating their exercises during each lesson. Appendix C details the curriculum stages. This section details the makeup of the curriculum. Appendix D has three sample lesson plans from different points in the curriculum.

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Appendix A

Curricular Considerations

Development Process

The purpose of this project is to synthesize the current research in the field of popular music pedagogy, transcription study, and current percussion pedagogy to create considerations for a fresh curriculum for percussion ensemble. Using *The Understanding by Design Guide to Creating High-Quality Units* by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, I have developed a curriculum that aims to teach students how to study popular music through the study of transcription. For this project I have transcribed and arranged two popular songs that will serve as examples of the considerations listed below. The Tim Akers version of Mark Ronson's "Uptown Funk" is presented here. Two parts of the score for "Uptown Funk" will be available in the appendices. Students will also arrange a piece of their own using the techniques taught and perform the final arrangement at the end of the unit.

Project Materials

There are a few tools that will be needed to facilitate the transcription and arrangement of music. Namely, two tools will be used Audacity and MuseScore. Audacity is a free to use audio editing software that has a variety of uses. For this project, its primary use will be for slowing down music so it can be transcribed. This will be done using the effects tab, which has an option to "Change Tempo." The use of this option is critical because it will slow down the music without changing the pitch. Looking to the past, Berliner (1994) reminds us that similar tools were used to transcribe jazz solos.

"Early record players had controls enabling listeners to slow a record's speed by gradations until they could catch a particularly fast passage, albeit at a lower pitch,

transposing the retarded phrase into its original pitch immediately thereafter. Those lacking such equipment slowed the turntable by applying slight finger pressure to the record (HO). Tape recorders with half-speed controls, which drop the pitch a complete octave, are an additional help, as are recent compact disc players, which allow for the repeated play of isolated passages.” (Berliner, 1994, p. 96)

The use of technology to transcribe music is not new, but the depth of the technology, especially in the last 10 years, has allowed for this practice to be much easier. For the notation of the transcriptions, it is typical to begin writing down the notes using staff paper. For this project we will put the transcriptions directly into music notation software. Muse Score is a free to download program that has a full suite of tools for arranging and writing music. The website also has full support including tutorials on how to get the most out of the program. In some ways, the program is similar to Finale Notepad but far more robust. Technology used in the project was intended to be accessible for students at no cost.

Instrument Choice

The instruments used in this project were picked with the common instruments that most high school percussion programs should have. There is room for the addition of instruments that are not in this project to be used in the unit however, instrument choice should be based on its use and application to popular music. With this in mind, there is much room for experimentation, allowing teachers the ability to adapt this unit to their specific program. The instruments used in this project will be marimba, xylophone, vibraphone, bells (glockenspiel), chimes, timpani, drum set, electric bass (key bass can be substituted), and accessories (a wide array of instruments can be used depending on the song transcribed).

Ideally, the mallet instruments will be instruments transcribed for the melody of songs, which can be the vocal or instrumental lead parts. Vocal parts can be used for any lead parts and should be up to the discretion of the composers. For parts that need sustain the marimba and vibraphone would be the best choice; vibraphone has a sustain pedal and depending on the range of song and implement choice (mallets), marimba rolls can serve as an additional sustain effect. Some bass parts can be doubled in the lower register of the marimba adding a different timbre to the bass line.

The Tim Akers version of “Uptown Funk” allows a big opportunity for ambitious transcribers due to its added horn line riffs, modulation, and complex drum-set fills. The opening phrase begins with a syncopated phrase in the horn line while the rhythm section is accenting beat 1, the “&” of beat 2, beat four and the “&” of beat 1 of measure 2. Here all mallet instruments are playing the horn line parts except the vibraphone to simulate the effect of a synth pad accenting a C7 chord (Figure 4). The melody is represented in this transcription by the xylophone. The vibraphone serves many purposes in this transcription but at measure 12, it is the only form of sustain throughout the opening verse. A sense of pulse is represented by the drum-set, using only the hi-hat, which is an almost direct transcription of the recording. The base line drops out with a few rhythmic stabs throughout the verse (Figure 5). The examples shown use the guidelines set earlier for deciding which instruments will be used for each transcribed part of the song. These are suggestions as instruments can be interchanged or removed based on the needs of the program.

The image displays a musical score for the first four measures of the song "Uptown Funk". The score is arranged in a multi-staff format with the following instruments and parts:

- Xylophone:** Treble clef, 4/4 time. Starts with a tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 115$. Features a melodic line with eighth notes and triplets, marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic.
- Vibraphone:** Treble clef, 4/4 time. Provides harmonic support with chords and melodic fragments, marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic.
- Marimba 1:** Treble clef, 4/4 time. Plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic.
- Marimba 2:** Treble clef, 4/4 time. Plays a melodic line similar to the Xylophone, marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic.
- Bongo Drums:** Treble clef, 4/4 time. Features a rhythmic pattern with eighth notes and rests, marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic.
- Drum Set:** Bass clef, 4/4 time. Provides the main rhythmic foundation with a pattern of eighth notes and rests, marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic.
- Bass Guitar:** Treble clef, 4/4 time. Plays a simple bass line with notes on frets 0, 4, 0, and 2, marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic.
- Electric Bass:** Bass clef, 4/4 time. Plays a melodic line with eighth notes and rests, marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic.
- Accessories:** Bass clef, 4/4 time. Includes a section for a **Shaker** in the final measure, marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic.

Figure 4. "Uptown Funk"-Measures 1-4

The image shows a musical score for measures 12-17 of "Uptown Funk". The score is arranged in a multi-staff format. The instruments and parts are as follows:

- Xyl. (Xylophone):** Treble clef, playing a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including accents.
- Vib. (Vibraphone):** Treble clef, playing a harmonic accompaniment with chords and eighth notes, marked *mp*.
- Mrb. 1 (Maracas 1):** Treble clef, mostly silent.
- Mrb. 2 (Maracas 2):** Treble clef, mostly silent.
- So. Dr. (Snare Drum):** Treble clef, playing a steady backbeat pattern.
- D. S. (Double Bass):** Bass clef, playing a rhythmic pattern with eighth notes and accents, marked *mp*.
- Bass (Electric Bass):** Bass clef, playing a walking bass line with fingerings like 5-6-7, 5-17, and 0-2-0-3-3-0.
- E.B. (Electric Bass):** Bass clef, playing a melodic line with eighth notes and triplets.
- Acc. (Accompaniment):** Bass clef, mostly silent.

The score includes measure numbers 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4.

Figure 5. "Uptown Funk" Measures 12-17

Appendix B

Notation Considerations

Through out the curriculum there should be some thought put into what and how students are notating their transcriptions. This is important so students can have a universal way of notating instruments. Also the ranges of the percussion instruments need to be discussed when beginning melodic transcriptions. With this preparation, students can get an understanding of the typical range of the instruments. The ranges shown will be for the standard instruments, as there are extended ranges of these instruments, which may not be accessible at every music program. Below are some examples of instrument notations suggestions and ranges to help with clarity throughout the unit.

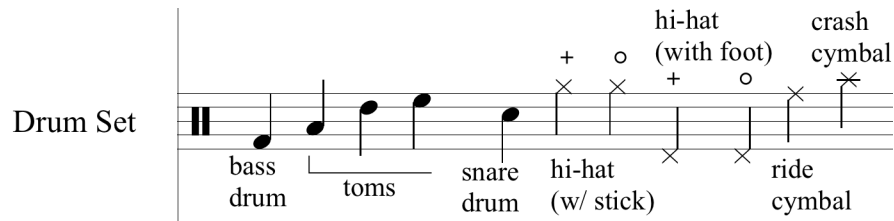


Figure 5. Drum Set Notation Key

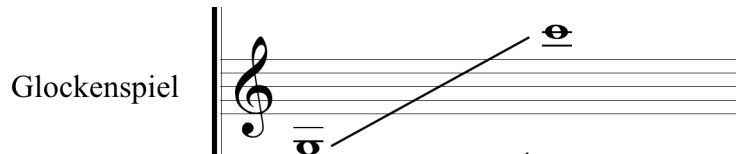
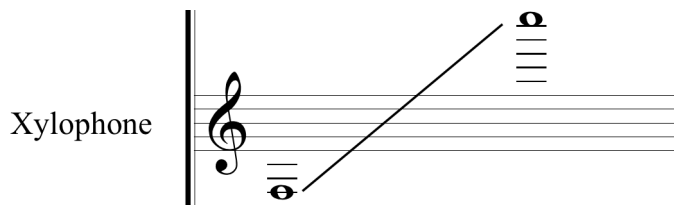


Figure 6. Glockenspiel -Ranges D3 to C6



*Figure 7. -Xylophone A3 to C7
(Sounds an Octave Higher)*

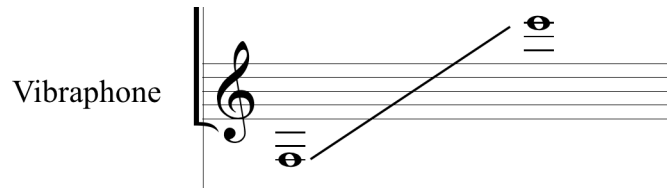


Figure 8. - Vibraphone A3 to F6



Figure 9. Chimes C4 to F5

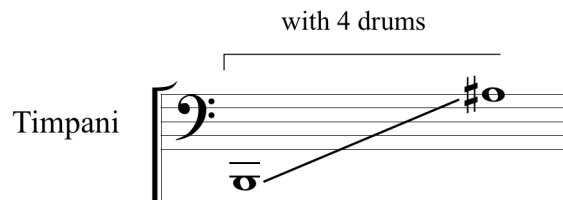


Figure 10. Timpani D1 to A#3

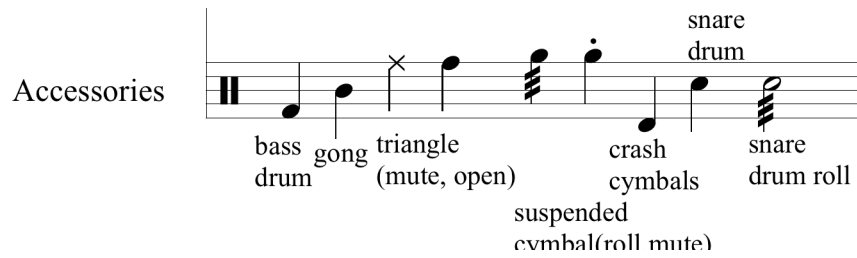


Figure 11. Accessories

Appendix C

Curriculum Stages

The curriculum will have three primary stages. The actual lessons needed to facilitate this depends on several factors, such as the number of students in the classroom, frequency of meeting times, instruments available, and the song choice for the final project. The following will explain the guidelines for the stages and the connections to the review of literature.

Stage 1 – Introduction to Transcription

The beginning of the unit needs to show students how to transcribe music. The advances of technology have allowed this process to be much easier than in the past. For this stage, students will learn how to use Audacity and MuseScore. In my program, all students are given access to a chrome book each year, which will allow them the opportunity to use each program in class. As students learn about the tools used to transcribe, they will be given small examples to begin developing their knowledge of the tools, active listening, and their ability to notate what is heard. Berliner (1994) reminds us that jazz masters saw the study of small segments of music were integral in the mastery of creating their own voice (Berliner, p. 102, 1994). The smaller segments will gradually grow in size expanding students' ability to listen and notate the music they listen too. Ideally, teaching students to use Audacity should not take more than one lesson. MuseScore, on the other hand will take several, as there are many components to consider. There should be about 5-7 lessons for MuseScore, in which each lesson will build the skills needed to notate music using music notation software.

Stage 2- Study of Popular Music Through Transcription

This stage will serve as the incubation period for students to begin studying about popular music through transcription. Students will use the activities here to continue the refinement of transcription skills, learn about the inherent and delineated meanings of popular music, and begin thinking about their own transcription project. Green (2005) discusses in her study that popular music is built on inherent and delineated meanings. This portion of the unit will aim to have students identify both meanings, and begin to discuss what those meanings mean to us as a society. Four examples of popular music should be used, requiring some preparation by the instructor. Each lesson during this stage will have the following format:

1. Introduction of song
 - a. Listening to song once
 - b. Ask students “What sounds do you hear?”-Generate discussion
2. Historical/Societal Significance
 - a. Brief description of the artist
 - b. Context of the song/lyrics (if applicable)
3. Second Listening
4. Transcription
 - a. Choose designated section of the song to explore. Sections like the chorus are ideal.
 - b. Have students transcribe a 4 to 8 measure phrase of the selected section of music during class.
 - c. Students will play transcriptions on designated instruments.
 - d. Students will submit transcriptions at the end of class

5. Homework

- a. Students will write journal entry after each lesson answering an essential question about the inherent and delineated meanings of the music.
- b. The following session will begin with a discussion of these journal entries.

This is a general outline, as each example will yield a slightly different format. Ultimately, the goal is to indicate that students have a basic understanding of the theory behind the examples of popular music as well as the context in which the songs were created. Journal entries seemed like the most effective way to have students make connections of the theory, context, and their own personal experience with the music they are studying.

Stage 3- Performance of Transcriptions

The final stage will permit students to choose a popular song of their choice to transcribe. The culmination of the unit will have students perform the transcription they have been working on in totality. Students will only be responsible for transcribing 1 verse and one chorus. At least 8 to 15 transcriptions will be done to facilitate the final project. Students will have complete control over the song choice and the instruments used to perform their transcription. Ideally, this will take 5 lessons to complete with each lesson being about 50 minutes each. The use of Audacity and Musescore will come to fruition as students begin this project. Assessments will be journal entries and the final performance at the last concert of the year. This idea is modeled after Green's study, which essentially "threw students into the deep end" and had students aurally transcribe with no guidance from their teacher (Green, 2006). Despite the reservations teachers

might have with being a guide rather than the teacher, Green found that students were very receptive to the process and took a sense of ownership during the project.

Appendix D**Sample Lesson Plans**

Teacher's Name: Durrell Jules

Date: March 19, 2016

Student Grade Level: Grade 9-12

Class Size: 10-15

Class Subject: Percussion Ensemble

Lesson Length: 50 minutes

Mastery Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Transcribe a four-measure phrase (rhythms only) using Audacity and MuseScore. (Cr, 2)
2. Play transcription on instruments. (Pr.4, 6)
3. Analyze and discuss musical qualities of the music. (Re, 8)

Materials:

- Audio technology to play audio examples (Smart Board, Speakers)
- Laptop/Computer with Audacity and MuseScore
- Recordings: "Uptown Funk" by Tim Akers and the Smoking Section
- Instruments- Drumset, Bongos
- Handouts notation key

Procedures:**Anticipatory Set:**

- Greet the students at the door and inform on the lesson on transcription (rhythmic)
- Students will have completed the tutorials for MuseScore the lesson before.
- Have Audacity ready for brief walkthrough how it will be used
- Have MuseScore ready for brief walkthrough
- Make sure each student has their chrome book and has Audacity and

MuseScore installed

- Make sure instruments are ready with proper implements

Instructional Strategies

- Play section of “Uptown Funk”
- Have students input the section into Audacity
- Instruct students to listen for the drum set and bongo parts only
- Have students choose between drum set or bongo part and transcribe (allow 15-20 mins)
- Instruct students to play respective transcription on the instrument choice
- Explain and discuss transcriptions
- Play transcriptions with section of recording.
- Have students respond to peer performances of played transcriptions.
- Assign Journal entry for MNIP. Prompt: What problems did you face when you were transcribing? How did you work through those problems? What rhythm was the most interesting to you?

Closure:

- Discuss the transcription process.
 - What are some key features of the rhythms transcribed today?
 - What choices did you have to make when transcribing?
 - How does this process help you understand music?

Assessment:

- Transcriptions made in MuseScore (rubric)
- Performance of Transcriptions
- Student feedback of peers’ performances
- Journal Entries

	Needs Improvement	Developing	Meets Expectations	Exemplary
<i>Rhythm</i>	Few rhythms are correct	Rhythms are correct with many	Rhythms are correct with a few exceptions	Rhythms are free of errors

		exceptions		
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Provisions for Students with Special Needs:

- Movement disabilities: one injured student; allow variation in rhythms due to restrictive movement.
- GT: Have students do multiple phrases.

Teacher's Name: Durrell Jules

Date: March 20, 2016

Student Grade Level: Grade 9-12

Class Size: 10-15

Class Subject: Percussion Ensemble

Lesson Length: 50 minutes

Mastery Objectives:

Students will be able to:

4. Transcribe a four-measure phrase (rhythms and melody) using Audacity and MuseScore. (Cr, 2)
5. Play transcription on instruments. (Pr.4, 6)
6. Analyze and discuss musical qualities of the music. (Re, 8)

Materials:

- Audio technology to play audio examples (Smart Board, Speakers)
- Laptop/Computer with Audacity and MuseScore
- Recordings: "Uptown Funk" by Tim Akers and the Smoking Section
- Instruments- Marimba, Vibraphone, Xylophone
- Handouts for mallet ranges

Procedures:

Anticipatory Set:

- Greet the students at the door and inform on the lesson on transcription (Melodic)
- Students will have completed the tutorials for MuseScore the lesson before.
- Make sure each student has their chrome book and has Audacity and MuseScore installed
- Make sure instruments are ready with proper implements

Instructional Strategies

- Play section of "Uptown Funk"
- Have students input the section into Audacity

- Instruct students to listen for the vocal lines and the horn lines.
- Discuss key signature.
- Have students choose between Vocal or horn line and transcribe (allow 15-20 mins)
- Instruct students to play respective transcription on the instrument chosen.
- Explain and discuss transcriptions
- Play transcriptions with section of recording.
- Have students respond to peer performances of played transcriptions.
- Assign Journal entry for MNIP. Prompt: What problems did you face when you were transcribing? How did you work through those problems? Which part was the most interesting to you?

Closure:

- Discuss the transcription process.
 - What are some key features of the section transcribed today?
 - What choices did you have to make when transcribing?
 - How does this process help you understand music?

Assessment:

- Transcriptions made in MuseScore (rubric)
- Performance of Transcriptions
- Student feedback of peers' performances
- Journal Entries

	Needs Improvement	Developing	Meets Expectations	Exemplary
<i>Rhythm</i>	Few rhythms are correct	Rhythms are correct with many exceptions	Rhythms are correct with a few exceptions	Rhythms are free of errors
<i>Melody</i>	Few of the pitches in the melody are correct	Pitches are correct with many exceptions	Pitches are correct with a few exceptions	Pitches are free of errors

Provisions for Students with Special Needs:

- Movement disabilities: one injured student; allow variation in rhythms due to restrictive movement.

- GT: Have students do multiple phrases.

Teacher's Name: Durrell Jules

Date: March 28, 2016

Student Grade Level: Grade 9-12

Class Size: 10-15

Class Subject: Percussion Ensemble

Lesson Length: 50 minutes

Mastery Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Transcribe a verse and chorus of a popular song(Cr, 2)
2. Play transcription on instruments. (Pr.4, 6)
3. Analyze and discuss musical qualities of the music. (Re, 8)

Materials:

- a. Audio technology to play audio examples (Smart Board, Speakers)
- b. Laptop/Computer with Audacity and MuseScore
- c. Recordings: Student directed choice
- d. Instruments- Marimba, Vibraphone, Xylophone, Drumset, Bass Guitar, Bongos, Shaker, Accessorices
- e. Handouts for mallet ranges, Instrument notation Guide

Procedures:

Anticipatory Set:

- Greet the students at the door and inform on the lesson on self-directed transcription project
- In the prior lesson, students were directed to bring in recordings (CDs, mp3s) of their choosing. Make sure each student brought in some recordings.
- Make sure each student has their chrome book and has Audacity and MuseScore installed
- Make sure instruments are ready with proper implements

Instructional Strategies

- Have students get into groups
- Allow students to choose which song they would like to transcribe.

- Allow one to two sessions for transcription and arrangement
- Have students play transcriptions for class/ end of year concert.
- Assign Journal entry for MNIP. Prompt: What problems did you face when you were transcribing? How did you work through those problems? Which part was the most interesting to you?

Closure:

- Discuss the transcription process.
 - What are some key features of the section transcribed today?
 - What choices did you have to make when transcribing?
 - How does this process help you understand music?

Assessment:

- Transcriptions made in MuseScore (rubric)
- Performance of Transcriptions
- Student feedback of peers' performances
- Journal Entries

	Needs Improvement	Developing	Meets Expectations	Exemplary
<i>Rhythm</i>	Few rhythms are correct	Rhythms are correct with many exceptions	Rhythms are correct with a few exceptions	Rhythms are free of errors
<i>Melody</i>	Few of the pitches in the melody are correct	Pitches are correct with many exceptions	Pitches are correct with a few exceptions	Pitches are free of errors

Provisions for Students with Special Needs:

- Movement disabilities: one injured student; allow variation in rhythms due to restrictive movement.
- GT: Have students do multiple phrases.