

Creative Group Piano Activities to Reinforce Repertoire

Jenna Klein, PhD
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Activity #1 Score Assembly

Purpose: Deepen students' understanding of form, key signatures, phrases, and mental recall.

Instructions:

- In pairs or small groups, students are given a copy of the score that is cut up into pieces (e.g., by phrase, sections, groups of measures).
- Students work together to arrange the pieces in the correct order. Once students are finished, they tape their final arrangement together.
- Students then answer prompts about the piece they have arranged (e.g., key signature, form, apparent patterns, rhythms, harmony).
- Students play the piece over headset using their taped reconstructions.

Activity # 2 Pass the Melody

Purpose: Deepen students' understanding of rhythmic and tempo stability, musicality, and ability to work as a team.

Instructions:

- Students are assigned a portion of the melody to play (4–8 measures).
- As a class, students play the “supportive” material (e.g., the left hand) along with the teacher.
- Each student takes a turn playing their assigned portion of the melody.
- Students must listen to play their assigned portion at the correct time, with a steady tempo, and to pass the melody seamlessly to one another.

Activity #3 Map Making

Purpose: Deepen students' understanding of phrasing, form, patterns, and memorization.

Instructions:

- In small groups students create a visual representation or “map” of the repertoire piece.
- On their maps, students can use cue words, dynamic markings, notes, arrows, note values, lyrics, etc. to represent components of the piece.
- Once completed, groups take turns sharing their map with the rest of the class.
- As a follow up assignment, each student plays the piece using their group's map in a video submission.

Activity #4 Tutorial Videos

Purpose: Deepen students' ability to provide concise explanations, use technology in teaching, and plan and teach segments of curriculum material.

Instructions:

- Students choose a topic to create a tutorial video about (typically a skill being learned in a current repertoire piece).
- Students write and rehearse a 3–5 minute script that introduces and practices their chosen topic/skill.
- Students record their tutorial video.
- Students watch one another's videos and provide feedback.

Activity #5 Fill in the Blank

Purpose: Deepen students' understanding of mental recall, structure, phrases, and patterns.

Instructions:

- The teacher plays a portion of the repertoire piece and then pauses
- Students must decide from choices on a PowerPoint slide what portion of the piece comes next.
- This can be done as a class or in groups/teams and best serves as review before an exam.

Activity #6 Call and Response

Purpose: Deepen students' ability to feel confident playing the piano, listen while playing, improvise at the piano, and play with stable rhythms and tempos.

Instructions:

- Before playing, students are assigned an excerpt (e.g., a phrase or portion of a phrase).
- Students mark their scores to ensure they know their assigned portion.
- Together, the class plays the first phrase or segment of the piece.
- In tempo, one student improvises a melody to complete the phrase or play the next phrase.
- The process continues until each student has had a turn.

References

- Álvarez-Huerta, P., Muela, A., & Larrea, I. (2021). Student engagement and creative confidence beliefs in higher education. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 40; 1 00821.
- Gardiner, P. (2017). Playwriting and flow: The interconnection between creativity, engagement, and skill development. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, 18(6).
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