

GROUP WORKSHOPS & ACTIVITIES

While the experiences below might read as one-size-fits-all and pre-planned, they are all flexible! I always collaborate with teachers to serve the needs and interests of their students. Put differently, “fiddling workshops” for an elementary school, a high school, and a private studio are each going to look very different. Teachers can also pick-and-choose topics from below (e.g., fiddling, improvisation, performance) for a tailored workshop experience.

MUSICAL WORKSHOPS

FIDDLING | *60-90 minutes*

Students learn a fiddle tune, chords, and the chop, all by ear. At the end of the workshop, they explore what it feels like to “jam,” with students choosing what they want to play, when they want to play it. Most commonly, I teach *all* of a program’s students at the same time (regardless of ability), so everyone in the program can share one tune in common. Depending on the structure of event/program, there can be multiple workshops divided by ability level (with different tunes for each ability level). Tunes can be taught at a variety of levels, beginner through advanced, focusing on various musical skills, techniques, and concepts within the art of fiddling. One variation of this workshop includes teaching a folk tune with an accompanying folk dance. Schools and groups often end up performing these tunes on concerts!

POP | *60 minutes*

This workshop covers the same types of skills as a fiddling workshop (melody, chords, and accompaniment all by ear), but with a pop tune instead!

IMPROVISATION | *60-90 minutes*

Students explore improvisation, the musical act of making spontaneous choices, through fun games and exercises that build creative confidence. All of the games and activities are rooted in the students themselves creating their own music – no backing tracks or sound equipment required. Notably, all of the improvisation is rooted in basic understanding of scales, reinforcing music theory and fingerboard awareness. Additionally, the content for exploring improvisation can be wide-ranging, depending on the age, length, and goals of the workshop: non-musical theatre games; vocal improvisation exercises; musical exercises in a variety of formats; improvising “on” tunes. [Note: while some activities are more “exposed” than other games, students are never forced to stand up and “take solos” in front of their peers. Safety first!]

ARRANGING | *60-90 minutes*

Students play with musical building blocks to create their own arrangements, either in small groups or in full classes. Arranging requires learning a melody by ear, understanding basic chord structure, and rhythmic awareness. These workshops typically include learning accompaniment techniques like shuffling and chopping. Students have explored arranging with pop tunes, fiddle tunes, and even nursery rhymes!

PERFORMANCE & INTERPRETATION | *30-60 minutes*

This is a flexible workshop concept where students explore ideas about interpreting and performing music through various theatre games and imagination exercises. Throughout the class, students connect their emotions and interpretations with technique on their instruments, discovering that it’s not enough to just “think” something will sound a certain way (e.g., exploring questions like, *what should I do if I want this spot to sound sad/happy/angry?*). The musical content in this workshop can be flexible: it works equally well with Twinkle as it does with repertoire that students are developing in class.

MOVEMENT | 30-60 minutes

Moving while playing is not often physically intuitive for students, but it is important for developing and enhancing musicianship. In this class, students gain practical tips and ideas for engaging their bodies more physically in their playing, to result in freer and more expressive music-making. While not required, it is often helpful for students to have repertoire at hand.

MASTERCLASS | Flexible time

A traditional masterclass where students (or groups) perform in front of their peers for feedback. Classical or folk repertoire, beginning through advanced.

CLINIC | Flexible time

A traditional clinic for an ensemble (elementary through high school), with feedback on their playing.

PERFORMANCE + Q&A | Flexible time

A solo performance, including a diverse set of repertoire in an interactive, educational format. I include music from a variety of genres (e.g., classical, fiddling, pop, improvised, etc.), to help students see the wide-ranging potential of playing an instrument. Questions from students are highly encouraged!

**NOTE: Unless discussed in advance, I always teach by ear. Upon request, I am happy to provide notation and reference recordings for students after a visit!*

COMMUNITY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Facilitating community-building activities is an educational passion, both in classrooms and on student retreats. Each facilitation experience is built around group's needs. I work directly with teachers as a collaborative consultant, helping them to design and develop their retreat experiences. Below are a few examples of longer/larger group activities I have enjoyed leading.

BALANCING THE PLANE | 45-60 minutes

A full group activity that helps students develop awareness about how they relate to and interact with each other. Requires a large room/space around which students can easily move (e.g., orchestra classroom).

THINGS I THINK | 45-60 minutes

A full group activity that encourages students to show appreciation for and acknowledgment of each other in an anonymous way. Requires a large room/space around which students can easily move (e.g., orchestra classroom).

BOUNDARY BREAKING | 60-180 minutes

A small group activity (4-7/group), for students to get to know each other better. I work with the teacher in advance to discuss group dynamics, as the teacher must thoughtfully break-up students into groups; requires enough spaces for each student group to have relative privacy.