

# The Importance of Creativity and Active Engagement in the Music Classroom

While there are many ways in which the technological explosion of the past hundred years has enriched and expanded our lives, ***Creative Sequence*** is based on the premise that music, dance, drama, art, and physical activity are still essential human activities that *every child should learn to DO*, not just watch. Children inherently love to move, drum on things, make noise, and explore their environment. As teachers, it is our duty to engage this natural tendency, and to lead them to discover the joys of an active lifestyle.



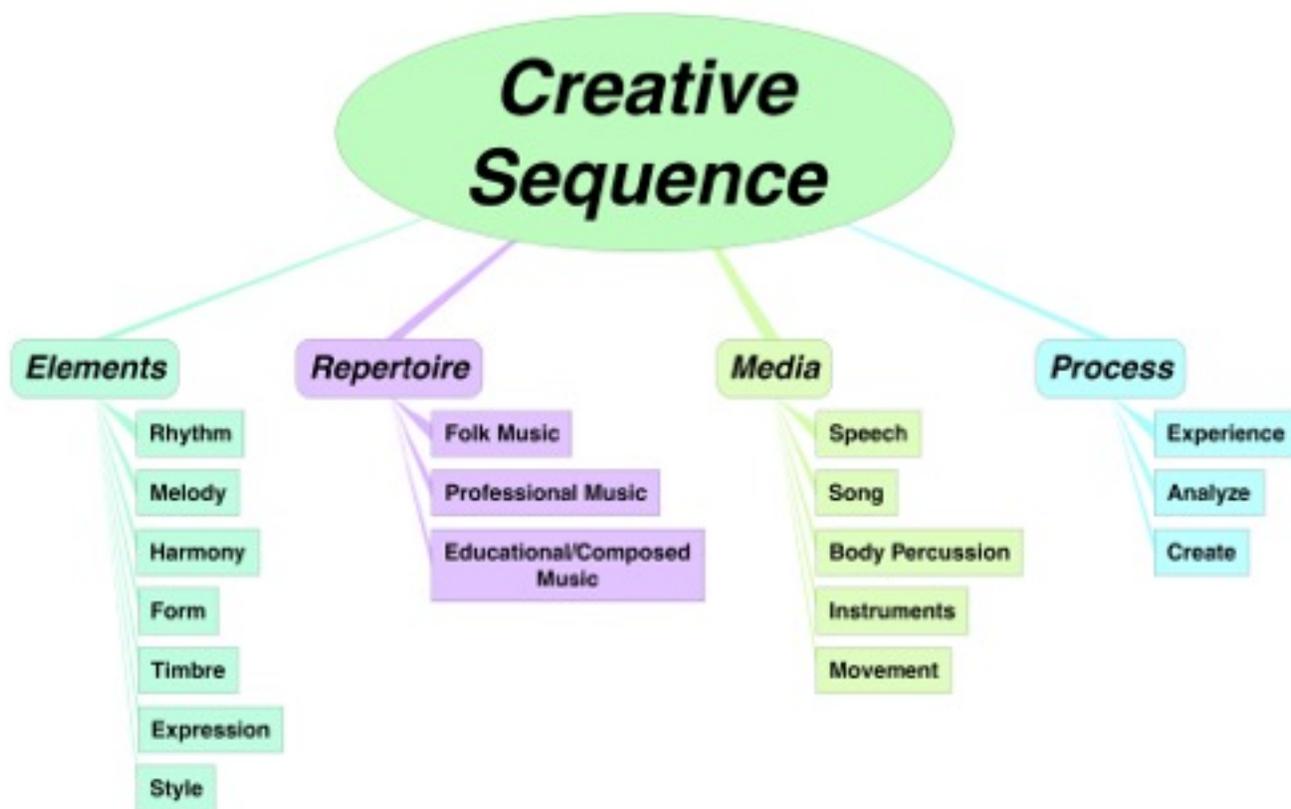
## Designing a Creative Sequence

Most music textbook publishers create their own curricula with every objective listed in precise order, accompanied by a complete lesson, often made so "user friendly" (singalong CD, step-by-step directions, copyable worksheets) as to nearly eliminate the need for a music specialist at all!

The problem with all such curricula is that they were not written by you, for your

students, your schedule, or your school. While they provide an excellent starting point for the beginning teacher, it does not take long to realize that adaptability and creativity are not only desired in teaching music, but essential to meeting the needs of your students. A particular class might not be ready for a particular lesson, or an upcoming concert means putting the curriculum "on hold" until after the performance. Textbooks can also be constraining, as a new lesson or song picked up at a workshop needs to be "fit" into the existing curriculum. By the end of the year, it is very likely that a whole year's goals have not been accomplished. Depending on how the book is laid out and followed, this can lead to missing the same parts of the curriculum at the end of every year.

More importantly, following a textbook means missing out on opportunities to create cross-curricular connections with reading, math, science, social studies, art, physical education, or any other subject.



## *The Four Components of the Creative Sequence* *Elements, Repertoire, Media & Process*

**Creative Sequence** begins with an awareness of different types of skills and knowledge. **Elements**, such as rhythm and melody, make up pieces of music, known as the **Repertoire**. This repertoire is created, learned, performed, and analyzed through a **Process**, using various **Media**, including singing and playing instruments. By focusing on these four, easy to remember components, **CS** provides a clear template for facilitating exceptional learning.

<i>Creative Sequence Lesson Plan with Repertoire</i>	
<b>Grade/Class</b>	Fourth-Fifth Grade
<b>Date</b>	February 2013
<b>Primary Elemental Objective</b>	<b>Style:</b> Sing an Anglo-American folk song, and trace it's origins and variations.
<b>Secondary Elemental Objectives</b>	<b>Melody:</b> Identify, sing, and play in so Pentatonic. <b>Rhythm:</b> Read and perform a song in cut time.
<b>National/ State Standard</b>	NSME #1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9 P21 - Communication, Collaboration, Creativity

Creative Sequence Lesson Plan with Repertoire

Repertoire

## The Golden Willow Tree

Anglo-American Folk Song

Arranged by Tim Purdum

V/SR  
There was a lit-tle ship in South A-mer-i-lee, 'Twas known by the name of the

AG/SG  
Sail-ing high, sail-ing low, ...

BX  
Sail on, Wil - low Tree. ...

V/SR  
Gol - den Wil - low Tree. And she sailed on the Low - land, lone - some

AG/SG

BX

V/SR  
low, And she sailed on the Low - land Sea.

AG/SG

BX

Arrangement Copyright 2009 by Tim Purdum.  
All rights Reserved.

Media

Singing  
Body Percussion  
Barred Percussion  
Recorder  
Speech (Dramatic)

### Creative Sequence Lesson Plan with Repertoire

<p><b>Process</b> - Explore - Analyze - Create</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Sing the entire song, with verses, for the class, or play a recording. Ask the class to discuss the story.</li><li>2. Teach the shifting bass part by rote with text: "Sail on Willow Tree". Transfer to body percussion, then to barred percussion. Sing the song again over this soft accompaniment. Students should be able to pick up on the refrain "As she sailed on the Lowland..." and sing along.</li><li>3. Place the song notation on the board, or pass out song sheets. Using solfege, sight-read the melody together as a class. Identify the <i>so pentatonic</i> mode and vague <i>abba</i> phrase form (based on pitch ranges).</li><li>4. Identify letter names of notes in the song, and transfer to recorders. Give students plenty of time to practice, and review by phrases.</li><li>5. Create original phrases using small pitch sets (DEG, GAB, GAD) on recorder or barred percussion. Combine to make <i>abba</i> compositions/improvisations.</li><li>6. Return to mallet percussion and add melodic ostinato "Sailing high, sailing low". As a class, have students create a final form using song, recorders, mallet percussion, original tunes, and storytelling/acting.</li><li>7. Discuss the history behind the song. This song is an excellent example of the European/American folk tradition. The names of the ships have changed dozens of times. It may have started out as a song about Sir Walter Raleigh's ship "The Sweet Trinity", with the Lowland Sea referring to a shallow sea in Europe (Mediterranean, Irish Sea, Netherlands North Sea). The version here is an American variation, and talks about a ship sailing in South America!</li><li>8. Play recordings of the arrangements by Aaron Copland and Benjamin Britten. Discuss how a folk song is transformed into a performance piece by professional composers.</li></ol>
<p><b>Assessments</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Have the class write a short reflection while listening to Copland or Britten at the end of the lesson.</li><li>2. Assess improvisations based on phrase form, use of pitch sets, and rhythmic consistency.</li></ol>

