



Band 10 Curriculum Support Resources

What's the difference between a tuna fish and a band?

You can't tuna fish...

Outcomes and indicators focused upon in this resource:

CP10.3

Describe and apply, with guidance, aural skills related to sectional, ensemble and personal playing.

- (a) Hear and match pitch.
- (d) Discern pitch variances (e.g., tuning, pitch accuracy, intonation) and make appropriate adjustments.

“The best way to be able to play intervals in tune is to be able to sing intervals in tune. The more practice we have at singing intervals the better able we will be in the audiation process before actually sounding the note.” – Jagow (p. 84)

Dr. Denise Grant acknowledges adapting the vocal warmup used in this resource from: “Developing Aural Skills Through Vocal Warmups” by Peggy Dettwiler, Choral Journal, 1989, vol. 30, p. 13-19.

Anticipatory Set:

As a novel way of introducing or reinforcing the solfège system, consider having students view the following online video: "Do-Re-Mi" from THE SOUND OF MUSIC (1965): <https://youtu.be/drnBMAEA3AM>

Procedure:

Each teacher will have a sense of whether to begin by having students play the exercise or sing it, (this being dependent on the level of comfort/amount of singing students have done within their band class to date). Note that if the teacher chooses to have students sing initially, they may wish to do so using a non-transposed part (oboe, mallets, etc.) on a smart board or data projector, rather than distributing paper copies to each student.

Print and distribute the individual transposed instrumental parts included with this resource.

As a further intermediary step, the teacher may decide to have every second student sing the exercise while their neighbours play it, (reversing roles immediately following this). The goal would be to move to one or both of the following over a series of rehearsals:

- i. Play – sing – play
- ii. (Given starting pitch): Sing – play – sing

If students are to “make appropriate adjustments” to play in tune, it is imperative that the teacher provide the guidance necessary to ensure student success, equipping students with the skills and awareness needed to improve intonation.

Amongst the Factors Affecting Pitch presented in Table 18 (p. 74-75), Dr. Shelley Jagow includes:

- air
- posture
- embouchure
- amount, angle and lay of mouthpiece
- barrel and bocal length
- horn hand position
- reed condition
- equipment
- dynamics
- pitch concept
- balance
- timpani pitch
- temperature

Note that Jagow presents specific remedies for problems associated with each of the above.

Assessment:

As learning to play an instrument in tune involves an ongoing process of refining awareness and skill building, it is recommended that assessment involve evidence of individual improvement based on pre / post-assessment. Once students have initially played and sung the warmup exercise, have them record and submit the exercise individually over the accompanying drone tone backing track. At the teacher’s discretion this would involve both playing and singing.

The teacher then follows this up with formative feedback to the student, (see *Extending the Learning* below for a suggested resource). Where appropriate, the feedback/remedies may be presented in class to a section or an entire ensemble, whereas in other cases more specific/individualized feedback may be required, (whether in the form of a one-on-one meeting, video comment/demonstration of remedy or a written comment). A second



Band 10 Curriculum Support Resources

video performance would then be submitted by students, in which they state and demonstrate the technique they are applying, making the appropriate adjustments to improve intonation.

Caution must be exercised regarding the use of feedback. It is suggested that the teacher focus on the most obvious concerns regarding each student's intonation. For example, as Jagow reminds us, intonation "cannot become a performance skill until a student has achieved a consistent characteristic tone quality on his or her instrument" (p. 67). There may be one or more individuals in the band for whom this becomes the focus. Avoid the temptation to provide too much information or too many areas on which to focus. Limit feedback to the top two (or three at most) concerns. It is imperative that every student receive some direction or "next step" toward improvement.

The mark or grade for this assignment would be based on the degree to which the student successfully describes and applies the guidance provided by the teacher.

About this resource contributor:

Dr. Denise Grant, now retired, has held teaching positions at the University Regina (2000-2001), University of Toronto (2001-2004), Portland State University (2004-2005), Wilfred Laurier University (2007-2008), Memorial University of Newfoundland (2008-2010), and most recently, Acadia University (2010-2013). During her tenure at the University of Regina, she served on the board of the Saskatchewan Band Association.

The individual transposed band parts were realized by the Saskatchewan Band Association using Muse Score. The accompaniment track using just intonation was produced for the SBA by Silas Friesen.

Extending the learning:

While formative feedback is invaluable for student growth, the challenge becomes individualizing that feedback within a heterogeneous group of instruments, with each student having differing needs. One possible timesaver for the teacher which places the responsibility for growth on the student would have the teacher simply indicate the "top three" notes needing attention [or bottom three, I suppose!] which the student would then search out guidance within a resource such as: *Tuning for Wind Instruments: A Roadmap to Successful Intonation* published by Meredith Music Publications. Among many other things, "this resource includes intonation charts for tracking personal progress, along with extensively researched color-coded fingering charts for every instrument providing pitch tendencies and suggestions for alternate fingerings. The tuning charts may also be downloaded as a PDF at <https://www.sheetmusicdirect.us> (search "Jagow")." (Jagow, p. 86)



Band 10 Curriculum Support Resources

These instrument-specific color charts could either be copied and distributed to students or a set of these could be laminated and placed in a binder or held together with rings. (Note that permission is granted to copy these for students within a single school when they are purchased.) The student would then be required to identify (written or verbal in the subsequent video) the top/bottom three notes and explain and apply the remedy for each in the second video, which would demonstrate student growth. This is not an example of teachers shirking their responsibility, rather an example of placing the responsibility for tuning where it belongs: on the student musician. The teacher offers guidance.

In effect, this lesson would then serve as an introductory first step to the *Tuning for Wind Instruments* resource, which students could keep in their folder for ongoing use.

Resource Supports:

[Aural Skills Warmup backing track](#)

[Aural Skills Warmup Set](#)

References:

Jagow, Shelley (2020). *Developing the Complete Band Program*, Second Edition. Meredith Music Publications.