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# Kaleidoscope Music Framework

## *Example Activities*

Created by Lauren Best for PCM Hub, 2023

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## **Creating and Collaborating**

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### Examples of Creating and Collaborating activities:

- Musical Conversations: two people, unmuted, use their instruments or voices to have a musical “conversation” by taking turns improvising in short phrases that resemble sentences (approx, 2-8 seconds, although sometimes the phrases get extended by students with “lots to say” musically and it becomes a longer form “debate”).  
Variations: try throwing a third person into the conversation, with or without designating the order that turns will be taking. Try deciding in advance an emotional tone or subject for the conversation. Ask students if it feels different to be the person starting the conversation or “responding”, try in both roles.
- Ribbon/Bead composition: students take turns each playing/singing one note to make a melody together. Tip: write the order they are going to perform in using the whiteboard or chat, it makes it easier. Try changing the order of performers or length of composition, try getting smoother transitions between players. Try two notes each, three notes each, etc. Try continuing to number of notes or make it time or beat/pulse based rather than number of notes). This can be done with voice sound effects, textures, harmonies, body percussion rhythms, found object improvisation. This can also be repeated with words to create a poem, or generate a story that is then used for creating sound effects or musical accompaniment.
- Improvising to a drone or ostinato: teacher plays a drone or ostinato (recorded or performed live with voice/instrument), and students (muted) improvise their own melodies or rhythms to go with the ostinato (tip: try designating certain limitations, like black keys or white keys). This can be done with free-form exploration, and students can be invited to share their favourite parts of their exploration. Another option is to try asking students to come up with a repeatable ostinato part that fits in with the ostinato/drone played by the teacher, and take turns teaching the class these new ostinatos. Students can be given the job of being the unmuted ostinato drone player while the other students improvise muted, or take turns unmuted to play together. This could be attempted with everyone unmuted depending on the size of the group, choices of sounds, sound quality, etc.
- Piggyback songwriting: creating new lyrics to a familiar melody together (ie. Frère Jacques). Example of how this could be developed: we created lyrics together and then collaboratively produced a class recording of a piggyback song using a traditional melody, with some students singing parts of the melody and some students contributing to creating and recording the musical accompaniment. We then shared our recorded song with friends and family, including an instrumental version for further creation or improvisation.
- Create a landscape scene together on the whiteboard with various parts of nature included with simple drawings, then improvise soundscapes or themes based on the setting, elements and characters that emerge from creating the landscape on the whiteboard.
- Create musical patterns on the whiteboard, using emojis or other symbols/colours as non-traditional notation to represent elements of music being explored (ie. loud/soft

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sounds, short/long sounds, types of body percussion, different techniques for playing, tiny “loops” of short themes or sound effects).

- Loop Builder: ask each student to come up with a short musical phrase as their “loop”. Represent their loop with their initials or a symbol on the whiteboard. Create a song together by creating patterns with these loops as building blocks, or combine them together into new loops. This can also be done by recording loops using Muzie clips (which allows for students to simultaneously record along to a teacher recording and then be played back) or other digital music making tools.
- Backing track improvisation: teacher (or participant volunteer) plays a simple “backing track” (accompaniment to a real song, or improvised accompaniment, or simply an element of a song such as bass line or drum beat) while all students explore improvising (muted). Take turns unmuting to be the “soloist” sharing a “solo” during a section of the song- this could be self-selected, or with an order decided upon in advance. Try one soloist for the whole duration of the “backing track”.
- Silent film: play a short film clip with no audio, while students improvise a soundtrack to go along with the images (muted or unmuted, simultaneous or taking turns). Try with different visuals such as a slideshow, or verbal cues such as a poem or story.
- Beginning/Middle/End: put a bunch of images on the whiteboard or a Miro board. Ask students to pick an image, brainstorm sounds or musical themes to go with that image (individually or as a group). Pair the images into beginning/middle/end stories and play the “soundtracks” for those stories based on the sounds/themes the students have created for the images.
- Student led collaborative creation: ask the students questions to help guide them through planning and facilitating a short activity either through consensus, or with a leader designated. It helps to start with a familiar activity (ie. an echo game) and then have the students create variations but this can be quite open-ended and still be successful with time and guidance. Questions could include: *Who will go first? Are the players joining in all together or at different times? Are the players playing something pre-determined or improvised? Do players echo or copy certain musical elements, or follow along in a particular way? How long will it be? How will the players know when to start and end? Is there a tempo designated and how do the players know the tempo or tempo changes? Are there creative limitations that could be added such as note choice, volume/dynamics, mood, etc? Are the players watching a conductor for cues, and what are the cues?*