TASK 2: INSTRUCTION COMMENTARY

Respond to the prompts below (no more than 6 single-spaced pages, including prompts) by typing your responses within the brackets following each prompt. Do not delete or alter the prompts. Commentary pages exceeding the maximum will not be scored. You may insert no more than 2 additional pages of supporting documentation at the end of this file. These pages may include graphics, texts, or images that are not clearly visible in the video or a transcript for occasionally inaudible portions. These pages do not count toward your page total.

1. Which lesson or lessons are shown in the video clips? Identify the lesson(s) by lesson plan number.

[The first clip is from the lesson #1 and the second clip is from lesson #3.]

2. Promoting a Positive Learning Environment

Refer to scenes in the video clips where you provided a positive learning environment.

a. How did you demonstrate mutual respect for, rapport with, and responsiveness to students with varied needs and backgrounds, and challenge students to engage in learning?

[In lesson #1 at 1:57, I ask the class “what are some adjectives that describe the character of the beginning of Movement II”. This is a question that students from any background or learning need can answer. Each student who participated in this class discussion have varied needs and different backgrounds. This activity also challenged students to think about the music in a more abstract way. This activity also is cross curricular with the subject of English since the students are discussing various adjectives to describe the character of the music.

I assisted students who did not answer correctly so that their answer would relate to an adjective that connects to the music. This established a positive student rapport because I was not turning down answers, just elaborating on them. For example, at 2:18 when a student answers “speed” for an adjective, I ask him if that is an adjective to describe the character. He said no and I suggested since he meant to discuss tempo that we could use slow as an adjective, which many students agreed with. Students have mutual respect for me and other students in this clip as we engage in the class discussion. I write the adjectives on the board so that the hard of hearing student can have a visual of the adjectives since she is a stronger visual learner.]

3. Engaging Students in Learning

Refer to examples from the video clips in your responses to the prompts.

a. Explain how your instruction engaged students in developing

- artistic skills (e.g., self-expression, creativity, exploration/improvisation)
- knowledge (e.g., tools/instruments, technical proficiencies, processes, elements, organizational principles)
- contextual understandings (e.g., social, cultural, historical, global, personal reflection)
[At 3:29 in lesson #1, I ask the class to raise their hand if they have the melody at the very beginning of Movement II. The alto flute and 1st trumpets raised their hand and now are aware that their melodies will have to vertically align. This demonstrates students developing musical knowledge by assessing if they are aware they have the melody while listening to others who have the melody with them. I had those students play together to make sure they were achieving vertical alignment across the ensemble, which develops their musical knowledge matching with unlike instruments. After I listen, I notice that they can develop more of their artistic skills. I give them advice to add more style to the melody by playing it more legato and smooth. I had them play again after giving them that advice and the students made the melody sound much smoother, which demonstrates their abilities to show their artistic skills.

From the beginning of lesson #3, I talk to the students about folk songs. I have the percussion answer the question “What is a folk song?” which tells me if they remember learning about folk songs from their last concert when they played Irish Folk Song Suite by Frank Erickson. Next, I ask the ensemble what they think the story is behind the first folk song Seventeen Come Sunday in Ralph Vaughan Williams Folk Song Suite. This question engages students in contextual understandings of the piece. The first student said that it was going to be a girl’s seventeenth birthday and the second student said there would be seventeen people coming on Sunday. I reveal the real story behind the folk song. It is about a soldier at a market that meets a girl and he asks her age and she says, “I’m seventeen come Sunday” and they soon start dating. There are more details in the lyrics to the folk song but I thought this was the easiest way to explain it to high school students in a way that relates to them best. The class had a reaction about the contextual background of the folk song where they quickly discussed the contextual background of the song with students next to them. I asked the ensemble “How does the music relate to that story of a soldier walking around a market?” A student answered that it is a slow march tempo, so it would be a good tempo for someone to be walking around in a market. This connection of the tempo to the story of the song relates to the artistic skills and technical knowledge the students need to have to achieve the ideal tempo to best depict the contextual background story. I do a similar contextual background activity at 7:35 where I ask the students what the think the folk song at measure 65 is based on. I support their answers and how they relate to the musical concepts of that section. After the class discussion, I reveal the real story behind the folk song. Overall, this class discussion on the contextual background of various folk songs in Movement I in Folk Song Suite gives students a deeper understanding of the piece so they can relate the story to the music while finding a personal connection within the folk songs they perform.]

b. Describe how your instruction linked students’ prior academic learning and personal, cultural, and community assets with new learning.

[In the very beginning of lesson #3, I ask the percussion section “What is a folk song?” This ensemble learned about folk songs during their last concert cycle when they played Irish Folk Song Suite by Frank Erickson, so the question is a good review of prior academic knowledge. One percussionist recalled the answer that folk songs tell stories. I also reminded the students in previous lessons that information about folk songs from the last concert cycle carry over to Ralph Vaughan Williams Folk Song Suite.

Later in this lesson, I explain the contextual background to the first folk song in Folk Song Suite and relate it to the students’ high school culture at 1:55 by telling them it’s a story about 17 year olds and that most students in this band are around the age of 17; therefore it relates to their teenage culture. After the contextual background discussion, I have the ensemble play through
this discussed section of *Folk Song Suite* to reinforce their new knowledge of the contextual background information while teaching them a new perspective on performing the piece.

Later in lesson #3, I explain another folk song used in *Folk Song Suite* called *Dives and Lazarus* at 7:35. I ask the students what they think the folk song at measure 65 is about and to use their past musical experiences to determine the story of the folk song. A student answers that it sounds dark, so it would be a dark story. A couple other students related this folk song to the previous folk song about the soldier and said that the tension in the music represents the family being worried about the soldier’s safety. I support the students’ answers and explain the original folk song behind the music at measure 65. Some students have heard of the story or of similar stories to *Dives and Lazarus*, which connects some students to their prior academic knowledge. The students who have not heard of *Dives and Lazarus* engage in new learning and have a new perspective on that section of the music.]

4. Deepening Student Learning during Instruction

Refer to examples from the video clips in your explanations.

a. Explain how you evoked student performances and/or responses to support students’ development and application of artistic skills, knowledge, and/or contextual understandings.

[In lesson #3, I asked students what they thought certain folk songs in Movement I were about based on their musical elements. This evoked students to be creative and relate the musical elements to a story. I did this at 1:55 and 7:35 in lesson #3. I had the band play after teaching them the contextual background of the folk songs so they could play the music with the original folk song story in mind, which reinforces artistic skills.

In lesson #1 at 1:24 after playing through the beginning of Movement II, I ask the students what they think they need to improve. This evoked the students to evaluate their own performance, which will lead to improving their artistic skills. They will need musical knowledge prior to answering the question to know what to listen for evaluating their own performance. Multiple students had correct answers, such as being confident on entrances and to stagger breath within their sections.

In lesson #1 at 1:53 I ask the class “What are some adjectives that describe the character of the beginning part of Movement II?” Many students participated and I wrote the adjectives on the board for reinforcement. This activity engaged students’ artistic and conceptual skills by describing the character of the piece based on the musical elements. By listing and explaining these adjectives, student will focus on depicting these adjectives through the music so that the character will be clear to the audience.

In lesson #1 at 3:29, I ask the class to raise their hand if they have the melody at the beginning of Movement II. The alto flute and 1st trumpet raised their hands and I had them play the melody together. I saw a need for improvement in the smoothness of their performance, so I evoked the students to play more legato. The students responded well and continued to improve smoothness in playing the lyrical melody.]
b. Explain how you used modeling, demonstrations, and/or content examples to develop students’ artistic skills, knowledge, and/or contextual understandings for creating, performing, or responding to music/dance/theater.

[I attempted to have the band listen to original choral recordings of the folk songs in Movement I in lesson #3 but the computer would not load them properly during my lesson. In the future, I will download the recordings to a more reliable device. The idea of this was to use these recordings as a model of the character of the folk songs so the band could depict that style in their performance. However, I did relate content examples to the music by engaging the class in a discussion about the stories behind the folk songs and how they connect to the music.

At 9:15 in lesson #1, I explain how the 2nd trumpet part matches with the trombone and French horns. The 2nd trumpet part may sound independent in the trumpet section, but it actually matches with other sections in the ensemble. I rehearse these measures so the varieties of instruments know whom to listen for when they play that part of the piece. This is an example of demonstrating to the trumpets who they should be listening for so they can achieve vertical alignment.

In lesson #1 at 3:29, I work with the alto flute and trumpet melody by advising them to play the melody smooth and for it to flow over the band. This is a content-related example assists with their development of their artistic skills to make the melody flow.]

5. Analyzing Teaching

Refer to examples from the video clips in your responses to the prompts.

a. What changes would you make to your instruction—for whole class and/or for students who need greater support or challenge—to better support student learning of the central focus (e.g., missed opportunities)?

Consider the variety of learners in your class who may require different strategies/support (e.g., students with IEPs or 504 plans, English language learners, struggling readers, underperforming students or those with gaps in academic knowledge, and/or gifted students).

[In lesson #3 at 2:05 I attempted to play an original choral recording of one of the folk songs in Movement I. I waited for it to load but it never loaded. I learned from this not to rely on the Internet during future lessons. I also learned that I should download the song ahead of time and play it from a reliable device. Listening to this recording would have given a different cultural and musical perspective for the students to use as a model for depicting the folk songs through performance.

If I had access to a Smart Board or PowerPoint, I would be able to enhance lesson #3 by telling the story of the folk songs through pictures with music in the background. This would have been a good visualization of the story instead of me telling them the story aurally. This idea would also be good for our hearing impaired student because she learns better visually.

Overall, I would have incorporated more activities that would engage everyone. I would have engaged the students in collaborative learning by having them answer my questions in small groups then sharing their ideas with the class. I also will incorporate more modeling in the future because students will have a better understanding of what the conductor wants if they model it for them.]
b. Why do you think these changes would improve student learning? Support your explanation with evidence of student learning AND principles from theory and/or research.

[The recording would have served as a model for the students on how the style of the folk song should be played, which will also add to my goals of adding more modeling in my future lessons. If the students have this as a model, they will have a deeper understanding of the style of the folk songs and the energy that is needed to make the piece tell a story.

More use of technology would also enhance student learning. Technology gives more opportunities to teach with differentiated instruction. According to Carol Ann Tomlinson, differentiated instruction is when you use different modes of teaching that best reach the specific needs of your students. I think that the high school students would have focused better if there were visuals to my contextual explanation of the folk songs in Movement I. Visuals would have also helped the student hard of hearing learn in a different and better way since she relies more on visual learning.

Collaborative learning would have also helped my students focus more during my lessons. According to theorist Vygotsky and his theory of zone of proximal development, there is a social nature in learning where students and teachers can benefit educationally from each other. In the future, I will have small groups discuss musical questions and share the answer as a group with the rest of the class. This will let students be engaged more while discussing musical knowledge, artistic skills, and contextual understandings while using musical discourse.]