

Interactive Technology in General Music Education

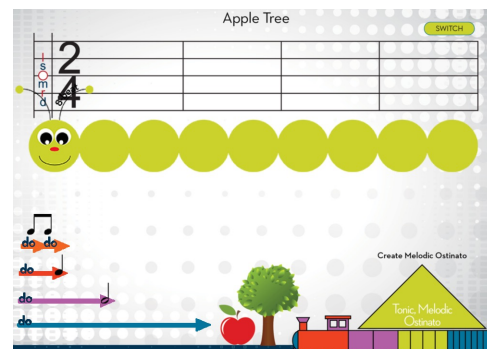
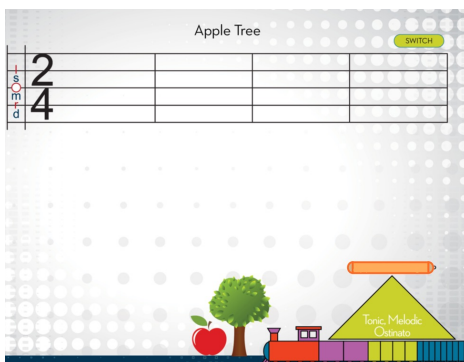
Manju Durairaj

Interactive technology can be an effective aid to facilitate learning and teaching without compromising active music making that is the core of music education. Music students can sing, move, dance, play instruments, explore, create, improvise, and notate in their music classes, even as the teacher uses technology-based medium to optimize and enrich student learning. This session aims to provide teachers with ideas to create and customize their own interactive visuals, activities, and assessments on Interactive whiteboards and tablets.

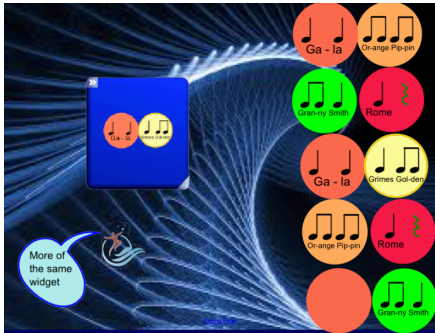
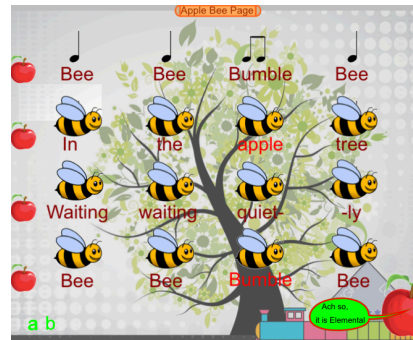
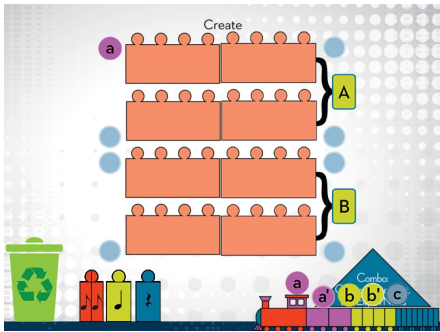
Teachers will learn to create digital student portfolios to store and retrieve audio, video, screencast, pdf formats of student work.

Session activities may include the following:

- Introduction of tools, animations and widgets in SMART Notebook
- Assessments
- Creating Digital Student Portfolios
- ipad apps – Showbie, Educreations, Explain Everything, Google Drive, Dropbox
- **InterActive Whiteboards**



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Ipads/Tablets

If an ipad/tablet cart is available, it may be expedient to create one account for the class set. It is easier to load apps at one go. If the class set is on one account, an app loaded onto one ipad is instantly downloaded to the rest. A VGA adapter or the Reflector app may be used to project one to four ipads simultaneously on the screen.

Three ipad apps discussed here are Showbie, Educreations (free version) and Explain Everything (paid). Educreations is a simple, basic whiteboard app with colored pen tools, eraser and text tools, access to photo folder and camera, and recording. The finished product is like a screencast that may be stored on the ipad, in Dropbox, Google Drive, student folder, or emailed to the teacher.

The app Explain Everything has considerably more tools, and can be visually over stimulating for younger children but a simpler interface is an option in the Settings. It is easier to begin with Educreations especially with younger students,

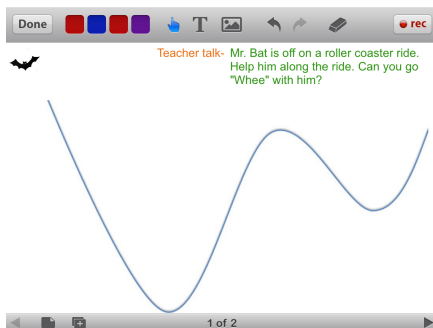
and moving over to Explain Everything when students are comfortable with the basic tools and icons. The other significant difference is that in Educreations one has to record before saving while Explain Everything offers the option of saving with or without recording.

1. Vocal Exploration Example

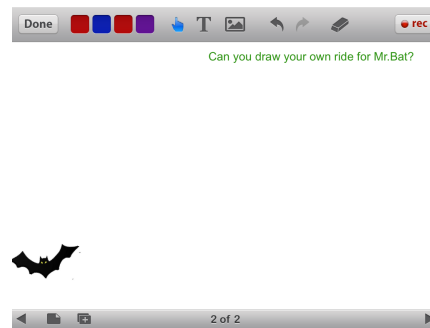
Using Powerpoint, Smart Notebook application for Smartboard, or Activeinspire for Promethean, images and pathways may be created for vocal exploration. Using the animation features in Powerpoint, students may vocally track a witch on a broomstick flying around a bonfire, or a pumpkin patch, or in search of her cauldron of witch's brew.

Images of objects and pathways may be sent via Dropbox, email, or QR codes to the ipads. Images may be accessed in the photo browser. Students can access Educreations on their ipads. The class model may be demonstrated on the Smartboard. Students can initially be walked through accessing the primary object (bat, owl, or witch), inserting and resizing the image into the app, and placing it on the top, middle or bottom left of the screen. They can do the same for the pre-selected pathway. They can then drag the object along the pathway while vocalizing. They can record their voice and their action on screen, and play it back for themselves or each other.

Later they can draw their own pathways across the screen. They can do this activity in pairs or in small groups, with students creating pathways for each other, performing, recording, assessing, and providing constructive feedback. This activity can take from 5 -10 minutes depending on the lesson objective.



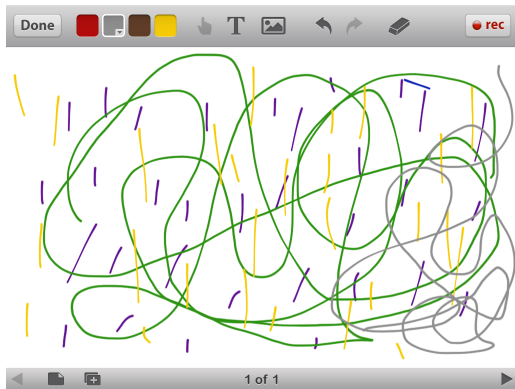
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2. Graphic Notation

After kindergarten students have experienced internal and external steady beat activities, they may enjoy the following graphic notation activity on the iPad. In Educreations, students may select two colors, one to indicate sounds with a beat and another for sounds that do not. The music selection for this activity may be a pre recorded sample with snippets of classical or pop music with recorded in pauses. However, a hand drum and a wind chime maybe used too. Students tap the steady beat on the ipads in accompaniment to the drumming. On a pause, they choose another color and create a swirl to the wind chimes. If it is an assessment we may press record for the activity. Students may then play back their work, and see if their strokes kept time with the music. The teacher can also review their work at anytime then or later.



3. Tracing. Worksheets, and Digital Flash Cards

Using the Shapes tools and the dotted line options one can create note heads, stems, flags and beams. Students may trace these on the IWB or on their ipads to draw notes. One can also create worksheets that may be completed on ipads. These are great activities for subs.

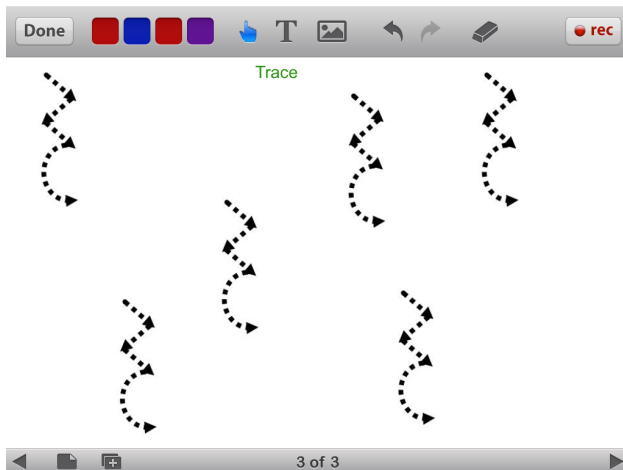


Figure 1: Tracing Quarter Rests

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Templates are excellent time savers. A few examples for rhythmic and melodic dictation are illustrated below.

Using Powerpoint or Notebook applications or Music Education font one can create two, four, and three beat rhythmic (stick and regular notation) and melodic flash cards. Students can access these on their ipads to create rhythmic and melodic compositions that can be extended to movement, Orff instruments, and recorders. Working in small groups they can use these to create, record, and assess their compositions.

The teacher can now have digital portfolios for each student that are easily retrievable for review during parent conferences and for grading purposes.

