



Lesson:

Listen, Reflect, and Respond to *Paper Cut*

OVERVIEW

In this lesson students will use a Reflective Protocol to respond to *Paper Cut* before they begin rehearsing the music.

Reflective Protocols such as Descriptive Review and Critical Response engage students in collaborative critical thinking. Such tools engage learners in making meaning as they describe, analyze, and interpret music through a group inquiry process. Rooted in constructivist thinking, these processes acknowledge that there are many ways to create meaning and that it is more important for students to know “how to learn” than to memorize lists of facts, figures, and information. Collaborative thinking mines the prior knowledge and wisdom of all participants which, collectively, is always greater than that of any one individual.

LEARNING GOALS

- Students will develop a collaborative description of the work using a reflective inquiry process
- Students will develop skill analyzing and interpreting the music and make connections between the music and their prior knowledge, experiences, and other music

RESOURCES & MATERIALS

- [Recording of *Paper Cut*](#) (click link for download or email bandquest@composersforum.org for a free Catalog CD)
- Chart paper, markers
- Protocol questions (listed in Process Part One)
- Student copies of the [Jotting Sheet](#) (optional)
- Student copies of the [Music Timeline](#) (optional)

PROCESS

It is important that you **do not reveal the title** or anything else about the music at this point. However, do explain the process. Your role is to facilitate the students’ conversation about the music, but the students do the work without your input. NOTE: This can be really hard to do!

Critical Response with verbal and written responses is a comprehensive approach for responding to a musical work through collaborative responses captured in words.

PART ONE

Here are the questions used in Critical Response protocol:

- *Describe the music. What do you notice? What's going on in the music?* (Describe without judgment.)
 - *What does the music remind you of?*
 - *Do you have any questions about the music?* (I wonder...?)
 - *What meaning or understanding is being conveyed by the composer? What is he/she expressing by this music?* (**Speculate** about what the composer wants you to understand or feel. For what use or purpose is the music written?)
1. Write the first question at the top of a sheet of chart paper. Tell students that they will listen, think, and then describe the music. Remind them that there are no wrong answers in the brainstorming process. And, they are to respond without judging the music's merits. Distribute the Jotting Worksheet if you are using it.
 2. Play the recording of *Paper Cut* without any comment.
 - Repeat the question out loud, then start taking responses. As students share, write their responses on the chart. Do not explain the music, but do ask clarifying questions.
 - You may need to remind students that at this stage, they are describing the sound of the music and not finding stories or images within the music.
 - If you rephrase when writing a response, check with the responder. Asking follow up questions to elicit more descriptive information from a student is a good practice. ("What did you hear that made you say that?")
 - **Do not add your own ideas or opinions** to the students' description. Do ask them "What else did you notice?"
 3. Write the second question on the top of a new sheet of paper and read it out loud. Play the recording then ask for their questions. Write them on the second chart.
 4. Repeat with the third question.
 5. Move to the fourth question without playing the piece again. The process of speculating can launch an avalanche of ideas about what the music is all about, both its purpose and function.

This tool engages and empowers all participants by setting them up for success. THERE ARE NO WRONG ANSWERS when people begin by describing or stating what they hear and notice. Each participant has room to think about, connect, question, and draw meaningful insights from the work. Collectively, everyone benefits from the whole, with meaning-making occurring through the sharing of all participants' insights. And, from a practical perspective, they have already formed thoughts and insights into music they will play and about which they might also write. You can stop here or move on to Part Two.

PART TWO: EXPANDING SPECULATION

1. Divide into small groups and use a prompt or question to continue and deepen the process of speculating about the music's meaning and purpose. Tell students that they will listen once more, discuss their insights and ideas, then write a summary to share with other groups.
2. Choose your prompt from this list or create your own.
 - Write a blog entry describing this music. Use key words from the brainstorming charts.
 - Imagine that this music was written for a new movie. What is the story line? Who are the main characters? What's happening? Write a summary of the story.
 - If this were music for a new TV reality show, what is the set up for the show? In what real life adventure will contestants participate? Write a summary.
 - This music could be used for... (give as many responses as you can).
3. Take some time to share what groups have written. They can share, pair up with another group, or you can reconvene the whole ensemble and listen to all the speculative summaries.
4. Congratulate them on their deep listening and thinking. Now is the time to reveal the title, composer and start learning to play *Paper Cut*. You may also choose to listen to the recording of *Paper Cut* once more, guided this time by the [Music Timeline](#) provided below.

EXTENSIONS

- Learn more about Reflective Protocols for responding to the arts at Artful Online, a site sponsored jointly by Perpich Center for Arts Education and Minneapolis Public Schools, <http://opd.mpls.k12.mn.us/ArtfulTools.html>
- Save the charts and their speculative writing. The words and ideas can be used as resources for writing original program notes.

**JOT DOWN YOUR
THOUGHTS WHILE THE
MUSIC PLAYS.**



**What did I notice?
What did I hear in the music?**

This music reminds me of...

I have a question. I wonder...

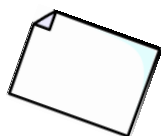
**I'm speculating about the composer's reasons for writing this music.
I think he/she...**















































Music Timeline: *Paper Cut* by Alex Shapiro

There are THREE key tonal components in the music:

- pre-recorded track (**PRT**)
- “found sound” paper
- band instruments



Time	Sound Elements	Description
0:00	  & 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRT opens with soft, long, <i>legato</i> bell-like tones • Crumpled paper ball tapped by fingers – then a tearing sound of a full sheet of paper • Sounds mysterious – waiting for something that is going to happen soon...
0:38	  & 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRT “slurp” goes into a syncopated ostinato • Long tones continue • <i>Legato</i> long tones move into an ascending Theme 1
0:49	 & 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRT with long notes
1:01		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syncopated ostinato rhythm tapped on paper 4X
1:11	  & 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft, <i>legato</i> descending melody • Low drum plays a rhythmic cue to set up...
1:23	 & 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper playing a new syncopated ostinato pattern 4X. Pattern is in two parts ala call and response. Call made by snapping paper. Response by two firm taps on the paper.
1:33	 & 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRT plays a 16th notes in alternating Major 2nd • Paper slowly crumpled – drawn out sound – then slowly and quietly torn • Crescendo takes listener to a new theme – paper ripped quickly; ascending 8th notes in PRT
1:46	 & 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRT plays Theme 2 with strong downbeats • Paper plays rhythmic ostinato by ripping paper in short segments • Tension increases with a <i>crescendo</i> and long, crumpled paper sounds
2:16	 & 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While PRT continues, paper plays with new sound – the crumpled balls are rubbed on the floor in a 16th note pattern. • Paper STOPS
2:23		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRT swells with 8th note patterns moving upwards

2:33	 & 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over strong downbeats in PRT, bassoon, saxophones, trombones, baritones, vibraphone and snare drums begin playing strong ostinato patterns on repeated pitches. Other band instruments play the theme in half notes. Theme moves mainly upwards. The music in this section swells and ebbs between <i>mezzo forte</i> and <i>forte</i> dynamics. The rolling dynamics keep the energy moving forward in the key middle section. Near the end of the section, more instruments change over to playing the ostinato. Section end <i>fortissimo</i>.
3:00	 & 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PRT continues Same ostinato continues. Snare drum rim shots move to even 8th notes “like a ticking time bomb.” Dynamic level softer for a moment, then swells back to <i>forte</i>.
3:19	 & 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ostinato continues. Some instruments change notes in this section (saxophones, trumpets create a new harmonic sound.) Dynamics continue to build to <i>fortissimo</i> again.
3:30	 & 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ostinato disappears and dynamic level back to <i>mezzo forte</i>. Upper winds play whole note ascending Theme Vibraphone plays even 16th notes
3:40	  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper returns with dotted eighth – 16th note pattern. Upper winds and most of the brass continue the melody PRT holds steady with long tones.
3:52	 &    	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tied whole notes in upper winds and brass; vibraphone back to 16th notes; PRT with whole notes Then dotted 8th 16th note ostinato returns on paper while half note Theme is played with most of the instruments.
4:14	  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A familiar ostinato returns played on paper  Whole note theme in upper instruments and PRT
4:45	 & 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Texture and volume draw back one more time Paper torn in strips to make long tied whole notes for 7 measures PRT continues; at end of 7 measures, the “slurp” signals the start of the closing section
5:01	 & 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PRT with long, tied whole notes Electric bass and snare drum build energy with the ostinato More instruments join – suddenly ALL INSTRUMENTS burst forth with two fortissimo measures of the ostinato.

