



Lesson Plan: Learning About Hawks

OVERVIEW

Because raptors have touched Susan Botti's life many times over the years, they have become a significant and memorable presence for her. Though she grew up in Ohio, her family spent their summers in the mountains of Vermont, specifically at Great Hawk Mountain. She lives in the Hudson River Valley with her family where the great birds also live. In 2008, her family rescued a kestrel, another raptor that lives in the valley. When asked what she might be doing if she were not a composer and musician, Botti thought that perhaps she would have become a falconer (a person who trains and cares for raptors such as hawks and falcons).

Her love of hawks informed her commission for a new work for young bands. In her program notes for *Eye of the Hawk*, Botti said the hawk became the "spirit animal, and represented...many of the qualities that are inherent in a young person of that age – bold, instinctive, elegant- a fierce creature who 'owns the sky'."

After reading her comments, one concludes that the hawk is the subject of the piece and that the hawk's natural behaviors and qualities are being expressed through the music.

This lesson provides options for learning about raptors and the hawk with two options for responding to readings and other resources. Activity #1 is more complex, providing a way for students to respond through a mode that matches their interests. Activity #2 is a streamlined response to the readings and website visit. Review both options and select the one which you can support in your band program.

Reading, viewing, and completing the assignment for this lesson should occur outside of band rehearsals. Rehearsal time can be used for the presentations of what was learned.

LEARNING GOAL

After completing the reading and web assignment, student will create something new in a discipline they select that demonstrates their thinking and learning about hawks.

RESOURCES & MATERIALS

- "About Hawks & Other Raptors" article posted on band website or paper copies for students
- Further readings and images and video about raptor from the University of Minnesota Raptor Center, <http://www.raptor.umn.edu/>
- Copies of one of the Assignment Organizers

PROCESS

Activity #1

1. Post the two essential questions from the FACETS Model and read them out loud.
 - What is the subject of *Eye of the Hawk*?
 - What is being expressed?
2. They can already answer the first question; it is part of the title. But in order to answer the second, they will complete a short independent study of hawks and raptors. They will:
 - Read an article, "About Hawks & Other Raptor" posted on the band website
 - Search the University of Minnesota Raptor Center to view images and learn more
 - Summarize three ideas from their reading and viewing that seem significant to them, and write them in the three boxes on the Assignment Organizer
 - Choose one of the three and create project in a discipline or medium of their choice that expresses something they found significant. Some examples are included on the organizer.
3. Distribute the organizer, read through the directions, and check for clarity. Answer any questions students might have about the assignment.
4. **Announce the date** for when the completed organizer is due. Collect the organizers at that time. Some students are so self-motivated, they will figure out what to do and how to do it. Others will need some coaching to complete the project.
5. **Set the date** for when the students' original creations are due and determine how their work will be shared.
6. Solicit a group of student volunteers to collect the projects in the various media (audio, video, photography, etc.) and create a way to display the work in the band room or school hallway.

Activity #2

This activity also opens with a response to the two essential questions about *Eye of the Hawk*. Students will read the article and visit the Raptor Center site, but the work assignment is to complete the One-Pager Response included with this curriculum.

EXTENSIONS

- Student work in various media can also be displayed at the band concert which features *Eye of the Hawk* on the program. This would help audience members understand the goal of working towards a deeper study of a musical work by learning more about its many facets.
- If your school encourages teacher collaboration, connect with other teachers and let them know what band students have been asked to do. Solicit their support in providing materials and some coaching for students who plan to work in the teachers' disciplines. Language Arts, Visual Arts, Movement/Dance/Physical Education, Science, and Social Studies teachers all might be of help to your students.