LESSON PLAN: Chord Tic-Tac-Toe

Objective:

Students will play through multiple semi-random combinations of chords, compare their sound, and pick a favorite. They may then use this chord progression as a basis for a song.

Resources:
Chord Tic-Tac-Toe Worksheet for guitars, keyboards, basses, etc.

Procedures:

1 Demonstrate the different ways you can play through the progressions. (Each row bottom to top, diagonal bottom to top, each row left to right, each row top to bottom, each row right to left, diagonal top to bottom).

2 Avoid playing all of the combinations so that students can explore on their own as well as make their own valued judgments without influence from the entire class.

3 Ask students to decide, of the sample progressions you play, which they like the best. Play through them a few times and have them vote.

4 After it is decided, ask them to turn and talk to their neighbor and explain why they like one better than the other. How does each feel? What does it make you think of? What is the mood?

5 Have students select either keyboard or guitar, and with a partner, play through ALL of the chord progressions.

6 After about 20 minutes, have volunteer students play through their favorite progression for the class.

Extensions:
1 Ear Training: Have students look away while volunteers play their chosen progression. Give other students 2 minutes to play though the progressions and see if they can guess the one that was played.

2 Advanced Ear Training: Have student look away while volunteers play their chosen progression. Ask other students which progression was played but don't allow them to play as they formulate their response.

3 Combine 2 different lines to make an 8 measure chord progression!

National Core Arts Standards (Music):
Anchor Standard #9: Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work. Example: MU:Re9.1.5a – Evaluate musical works and performances, applying established criteria, and explain appropriateness to the context, citing evidence from the elements of music. Anchor Standard #5: Develop and refine artistic work for presentation. Example: MU:Pr5.1.3b – Rehearse to refine technical accuracy, expressive qualities and identified performance challenges.

COMPOSITION