



SOUND ARTS

MUSIC

YEARS 5-10

lessons at the click of a mouse

ADVENTURES IN SOUND

PROJECT THREE: WOOD/SHAKING SOUNDS

Music Strands:

- Developing Practical Knowledge in Music
- Developing Ideas in Music
- Communicating and Interpreting through Music

Achievement Objectives

- Exploring how sound is made using a variety of conventional and unconventional musical instruments
- Expressing and arranging original ideas in sound
- Developing, refining and sharing performance skills.

Curriculum Levels:

Levels 3-4 (easily adapted to lower levels)

TEACHER INTRODUCTION

As with projects one and two, the intention is to allow the students to explore the sound possibilities of the instruments, perform the discovered sounds, and then refine these sounds into a more polished composition for performance.

MATERIALS

WOOD

- Claves – different lengths if possible
- Tone Blocks
- Two Tone Blocks
- Tulip Blocks
- Hand Castanets
- Guiro (Scraper)
- Maracas
- Tambourines
- Vibra Slap
- Cabassa (Latin percussion instruments)
- Chocola (Thin tube containing metal media for shaking)
- Jet Stick (Combo of clave, guiro, tambourine)

GETTING STARTED

Divide the class into groups and distribute the full range of instruments around the group. Set each group the task of finding as many different sounds as possible from the selection of instruments they were given. Remind students that there are many different ways of playing the instruments, in both conventional and unconventional ways.

ACTIVITY ONE – INITIAL CHALLENGES

Allow time for individual and group experimentation. Suggest that sounds could be made individually or in combination with several other instruments.

Have each group play their discovered sounds to the class. Set each group the task of arranging 'like' instruments in ascending order from lowest to highest sounding. Please note that this may prove very difficult or impossible to do but the exercise in itself develops keen listening and certainly stimulates discussion. When groups complete this task, have them play their sequence to the rest of the class to see if they agree with the classification. Make any changes necessary and replay the sequence.

HINTS FOR TEACHERS

- Claves will make a dull sound if held tightly in the hand and hit with another clave.
- Claves will make a resonant sound if one is laid across a cupped hand acting as a resonating chamber. The clave rests on the wrist and is held lightly with the fingers.
- When attempting to classify two tone blocks from lowest to highest, try hitting them in different places to make different sounds.
- Tulip blocks are not very robust but will make a pleasing sound if they do not have any splits in the wood. Plastic wood can be used to repair them. Point out to students that they are delicate and must be treated with respect.
- Classification of wooden sounds such as tone blocks and claves is difficult as there is no definite note. All students may get a general impression of higher or lower pitch.
- Tambourines and maracas also have no definite pitch but a general impression of pitch is easier to get than from claves and tone blocks.

ACTIVITY TWO – ELEMENTS OF MUSIC

Have students think back to their metal and drum music. Ask them why certain performances were more exciting and interesting than others. Try and isolate the individual musical elements that made this so. Emphasise the elements of:

- *high through to low sounds (contrast in pitch)*
- *contrast in volume during the performance (loud to soft)*
- *contrast in length of sounds (long through to short)*
- *contrast in rhythms – regular and irregular rhythms – many rhythms playing at the same time*
- *silence as a deliberate device – differing lengths of silence throughout the performance*
- *feature contrast (contrast between all the above musical elements will make the music interesting and exciting).*

Through discussion, have students try to list the elements of music that feature in their composition and performance. Refine sounds and have groups create a composition for wood and shaking sounds.



ACTIVITY THREE – CAN WE READ IT?

Have each group write down their compositions using any form of graphic notation (representing the sounds in any graphic form).

Have groups swap their graphic notation and try to play the composition of another group.

- *do they have any difficulties interpreting the music?*
- *discuss and find reasons why they may be having difficulties in interpreting (reading) the graphic score.*

As a class, view all the graphic scores and reach agreement on the most successful and easy to understand solutions used by the groups to write down their musical ideas.

ACTIVITY FOUR – SOME STANDARDISATION

Introduce the idea that it would be very helpful for all class members and groups to have one particular (standard) way of indicating certain simple musical elements. Tell students that this will allow other people to play their compositions.

As a group and class activity, challenge students to develop a standard way of writing down some musical elements and sounds in graphic form.

Questions for consideration could be:

- *how will we indicate pitch (high to low sounds)?*
- *how will we indicate volume (loud to soft)?*
- *how will we indicate how long sounds should be made (short to long)?*
- *how can we indicate silence and the length of silence?*

Get a class consensus of the ways and symbols we will use to indicate these musical elements. Make and display a master chart of graphic symbols that we will all use as a class. Tell students that this standardisation will make interpretation and playing of everyone's new scores a lot easier.

EXTRA ACTIVITIES

- Have groups make up musical compositions using metal, drum, wood and shaking sounds. Perform to class for constructive comment.
- Add voice sounds to the composition.
- Add melodic sounds using xylophones
- Experiment with different types and lengths of wood to make sounds. How does the length affect the sound? Do hard or soft woods make the best sounds?
- Invent a wood and/or shaking instrument.
- Design a wooden mobile that makes sounds when hung outside in the wind.