



SOUND ARTS

MUSIC

YEARS 5-10

lessons at the click of a mouse

ADVENTURES IN SOUND

PROJECT FIVE: CREATE A SOUND ROOM

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

This project is a combined group and class project with all groups combining their efforts to create an exciting room of sound possibilities which can be explored in many ways by all class members, other classes, and parents.

MATERIALS

CONVENTIONAL INSTRUMENTS

- Anything you can lay your hands on – both percussion and melodic percussion, string instruments.

NON-CONVENTIONAL INSTRUMENTS

- Absolutely anything that sounds.

ACTIVITY ONE – GETTING STARTED

Involve the students in making an extensive collection of conventional and non-conventional instruments. Students may be able to bring instruments from home. A sound hunt around the school is a good way to start. The sound hunt is for bringing back to the classroom, anything that makes an unusual or interesting sound. Also point out that conventional instruments can make interesting and unusual sounds if played in different ways (no damage must be done to the instrument!).

Discuss and list how sounds can be made, **eg**

- by striking
- by dropping
- by rubbing
- by scraping
- by plucking
- by stroking ...
- by strumming
- by hitting
- by crumpling
- by blowing
- by flicking

- *this applies to both conventional and non conventional.*

Allow time for students to make an extensive collection of sound makers and challenge them to demonstrate interesting sounds from their instruments and play them to the class.

ACTIVITY TWO – INSTRUMENT SOUND STATIONS

Clear back all the desks or use a corridor or the hall. Plan a path that explorers in sound would follow. Around the path will be placed stations of instruments that the sound explorers will experiment with as they move around the sound path from sound station to sound station.

Provide an area (in the centre if possible) where listeners will be able to sit and listen to the results of the sound explorations as they take place.

EXAMPLES OF SOUND STATIONS

- Walls of newspaper taped to back-to-back chairs that sound explorers can crawl through.
- Gravel boxes for scrunching through.
- Buckets and jars of water to pour from one to another and swished with the hand.
- Nails, metal bars (off glockenspiels) hung that can be rattled and shaken like a windsong.
- Stones that can be clicked together.
- Flowerpots and tins which can be stuck with beaters.
- Strings suspended from a beam with instruments hanging from them which can be struck, plucked, strummed, plucked ...
- Conventional instruments placed on desks for playing.
- *the imagination is the only restriction!*

ACTIVITY THREE: USING THE SOUND STATIONS

Have small groups or individuals follow the path around the room, each starting at a different station while the listeners are seated with eyes closed in the middle of the room. Have the listeners try and count the number of different sounds they hear and try and identify what made the sound and how it was made. Discuss the density of the sounds and how a journey around the sound path could be arranged so that the softer more delicate sounds are not overwhelmed by the louder more intense sounds.

Plan group journeys around the sound path to highlight only:

- Long Sounds
- Low Sounds
- High Sounds
- Short Sounds
- Medium Sounds
- Contrasting sounds in terms of pitch, density and volume.
- Unconventional and unusual sounds.

EXTRA ACTIVITIES

Invite other classes to experience listening to the sound journeys with their eyes closed.

Invite students from other classes to explore the sound path in their own way.

Set up a permanent sound path or area in a corridor or the hall for other classes and school visitors to explore.

Make wind songs from metal and wood and construct an outside wind song sound area.



PROJECT FIVE: CREATING A SOUND ROOM

Challenge the students to write music for the sound path. Perform this music for listeners and discuss why some of the music is more exciting to listen to than others. Help students identify the elements of music that make certain compositions more exciting.

- Invite parents to listen to and explore the sound path.
- Have the students carry other sound makers with them as they move around the sound path. Use these sound makers when they are moving between sound stations to make it a moving sound path, rather than a fixed path as before.
- Change directions at random when moving around the path.

FOCUS ON SILENCE

It is the breaking of silence that gives music its excitement and contrast as 'anything' can happen to break it. John Cage, an American composer stated that 'silence does not exist', for if all outside sounds were excluded, we would tune in and hear our own natural body sounds.

SILENCE ACTIVITIES

Using tuned and untuned percussion instruments, set the students the task of composing music that will focus on silence. The element of silence combined with other musical elements will be used to surprise the listeners, **eg**

- Vary the lengths of silence between the sounds.
- Vary the volume of sound used to break the silence.
- Vary the pitch of the sounds used to break the silence.
- Vary the density of the sounds used to break the silence.
- With the listeners seated (eyes closed) in the centre, vary the position in the room from which the silence is broken.
- Vary the types and combinations of instruments used to break the silence.
- Use only unconventional instruments to break the silence
- Vary the lengths of sounds between the silences.
- Encourage students to use graphic notation to write down their compositions and swap around groups for others to perform. Discuss the results. Which compositions 'worked'? Why did they work?