

You Already Teach More Than Music: Interdisciplinary Approaches For All Brief Presentation Outline – Amy Novick, December 2005

INTRODUCTION

Music INHERENTLY includes many concepts and techniques that are cross-curricular. The easiest way to show relationships to other subjects is by using **vocabulary**, **analogies** and teaching **skills** used in other subjects. These music lessons show you how to easily incorporate these elements to explain music. Using these concepts or techniques takes little to no class-time, but they explain music much more vividly, making learning more meaningful for students.

SECTION ONE: Activities

I. Rhythms (Authentic Group Learning Experience)

Students echo teacher first by listening, then reading and listening, then saying, reading and listening. Starting with an Authentic Experience is essential because it is mentally, physically and emotionally engaging and uses skills from many areas.

II. Note Names & Durations (Math)

Measuring Time (Fractions): *Measures* and *Notes* are ways of measuring musical *Time* horizontally, like on a *Timeline* or a *Ruler*. A *Whole Note* fills the whole measure (one inch), while one *Half Note* fills only half of the measure (half an inch). One quarter note fills one quarter of the measure, etc. In this way, *Note Names* represent the fraction of a $\frac{4}{4}$ *Measure* that the note equals.

Time Signatures (Fractions): Think of the bottom number of the *Time Signature* as the *Denominator* of a *Fraction*, where the top number is always “1.” If you say the fraction, you will always say the type of note that gets one beat. Ex. In $\frac{3}{2}$ think “1 over 2” and say “half note.”

Note Value/Duration (Ratio) A *Half Note* is half the length or duration of a *Whole Note*. This is always true, just as a *Whole Note* it always four times as long as a *Quarter Note*. These are called *Ratios*. No matter what *Time Signature* we are in, and which type of note gets one beat, these *Ratios* will ALWAYS be the same. Once we figure out which note gets one beat, we can calculate *Proportionally* all of the other values.

III. Pitch & Contour (Movement, Art & Math)

Correlate melodic contour with height by singing melodies while moving hand up and down to match. Have students draw contours and sing or move to those contours. Overlay a staff onto the contours and draw pitches in a melody to match. This shows how pitch correlates to the vertical axis of a graph. We can measure vertical distances between pitches using our graph/staff.

IV. Score Study (Reading Maps)

A musical score, not only is a graph of pitches, but is a map of sound – a visual representation. Everything on it has a meaning that we have to learn. Learning to read music means memorizing the “Legend” that should come with the map but doesn’t. Notes represent sound; Systems, measures and beats are like coordinates on a map; and Title Information tells us when, where and by whom it was created. Be sure to assess students not only on the performance of the music, but also on their understanding of musical notation and the context of the piece.

V. Patterns (Art, Math, H.O.T.S.)

Patterns and their variations are everywhere. Take the time to notice them in your surroundings, in fashion, and in music – by looking and listening. Finding patterns and their variations and describing them are Higher Order Thinking Skills that are necessary for everyone in every field of work. “Chunking” information into patterns allows us to remember more and for longer.

VI. Reading Fluency

Reading music IS reading!! It requires one to *Follow* along with your eyes, *Know* what the symbols mean, and *Perform* the music accurately in time. These are the skills necessary for Fluency in any type of reading. Assess your students to figure out which area they are having trouble.

SECTION TWO: Personal Growth & Group Development

The Stages of Group Development should be in every class in order to create a successful learning community.

The Stages of Group Development (Schmuck & Schmuck in 2001) states that for a group to be successful,

- Everyone must **feel included**.
- Everyone must **contribute**.
- We must **work toward our goals together**.
- We must constantly **evaluate ourselves individually and as a group** to assess our progress.

Ensembles already include the four stages:

- Joining an ensemble means automatic **membership** in an exclusive group.
- Everybody is expected to **contribute** to the sound of the group with their unique and necessary part.
- An ensemble’s **group goal** is a **performance of what we have learned** – combining an *Authentic Musical Experience* with the academic goal of **Knowledge**.
- **Individual practice, group rehearsals and audience reaction** are ongoing examples of **self and group evaluation and assessment**.

Social Skills are also embedded in ensembles:

- Personal Organization and Responsibility
- Appropriate and Respectful Communication
- Trust, Compromise and Cooperation
- Individual and Group Assessment, Goal Setting, and Leadership

CONCLUSION

- Music is inherently an **interdisciplinary, Authentic Group Experience**.
- Use **vocabulary, analogies, and skills** from other subjects to make music more tangible, vivid, and useful throughout life.
- Take the opportunity to teach **personal, group and life skills** THROUGH music.