

SCHEME OF WORK 6: How can technology be used to enhance creative thinking skills through composing?

LESSON 1

TOPIC AND PURPOSE

Lesson one exploring how can technology be used to enhance creative thinking skills through composing?

OBJECTIVE

Engaging learners' sonic sensibilities.

ENGAGEMENT

Sharing ideas and developing a trusting environment through peer to peer discussion.

STICK-ABILITY

The learners will be able to share ideas and personal reflections with others.

DIFFERENTIATION

Embedding:

Learners will listen to others and build collaborative relations. They will share personal responses and positively share their and others' ideas.

Enhancing: Some will go further than this and confidently discuss their musical choices use some musical terminology. They will share ideas and listen to others.

Extending: A few may go well beyond this and use musical terminology to explain their musical choices and describe their sonic sensibilities.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To develop learners' listening skills.

To build a trusting environment of shared practice.

STARTER

Favourite Sounds (1)

Use the starter activity as outlined in the additional resource sheet:

ASSESSMENT

Assessment for learning based on teacher observation, shared pupil reflection, listening and reflections skills.

ACTIVITY ONE

Favourite Sounds (2)

Play this recording:

<https://soundcloud.com/dchapmanhoot/my-favourite-sound-is-the-sea>

Commentary on Activity One:

Questions to ask:

1. What do you notice about their voices?
2. How many of the sounds are the same as the ones you chose?
3. Can you tell what kind of an environment they live in by their chosen sounds?

ACTIVITY TWO

Listening inside and outside

Gong listening

Take a resonant instrument that has a long decay (a gong, suspended cymbal, triangle)
Ask the group to close their eyes and listen to how long the sound lasts when you play it and when they hear the sound stop to open their eyes (putting your hand up as well is sometimes useful to indicate when you can't hear it anymore).

Ask the class

Q: Is it clear when the gong sound ends?

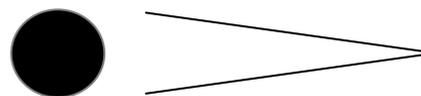
Do this several times now asking the group to remember what sounds they heard just before they opened their eyes.

Some additional questions you might ask:

Q: Which sound is the furthest, which is the nearest? Plot the sounds on the board based on their distance. For example
breath - table creak - pencil drop
- door shutting in corridor - car outside - bird - aeroplane

Commentary on Activity Two:

The gong sound could be drawn like this:



Gong - starts loud - and - gradually- fades -away -to - nothing

The question is intended to get the learners to think about what they hear, you will find that as you do this several times they become more aware of the point where the sound cannot be heard anymore.

These questions are to help the learners develop an awareness of subtle sonic differences and details (see also the things in the "Minute of Listening" project in the Links section)

ACTIVITY TWO CONTINUED

Q: Which sounds were made by people, machines, natural phenomena? Put them in three lists

Q: Which is the quietest, which is the loudest? Order from loud to quiet - is this the same order as the as the nearest to furthest?

Now do the same activity but this time take everyone outside asking the same questions as above.

Commentary on Activity Two:

Noticing sounds in the environment: some supplementary questions:

Q: What details do the class notice when doing focussed listening in this way that would otherwise be missed? For example, can the children tell whether it has recently been raining by the sounds that cars make?

Q: Are there everyday sounds that the children now hear that they don't usually because they are accustomed to them? For example, projector fans, fluorescent lights, computer hard drives...

Q: Ask the children where is the quietest place in their school?

ACTIVITY THREE

Instrumental signatures

Each member of the group has an instrument that they play. These can be acoustic, electronic, home made or even computer based.

Give the group a short amount of time for each person to make a short fragment of music that best expresses what they like about playing their particular instrument.

For example, if I really like playing long high-sustained notes on the horn I will make something of my own that consists of only these.

Each fragment should be original, not a quote from a favourite piece (though that might be something you would like to do in another session) and last no longer than 10 seconds.

Commentary on Activity Three:

The aim is for the group to explore the familiar world of their instruments and to find some vocabulary that they feel closely connected to.

1. Players make phrases
2. Common material (make with everyone)
3. Conversational playing (in pairs, see also models in Soundplant2)
4. Manipulate phrases (repeat, stretch, loop etc)
5. Group piece, make whole class piece using a mixture of these phrases.

ACTIVITY FOUR

5 note tonality version of Instrumental Signatures

Choose a set of 5 pitches to work with. Do this by asking the group for favourite notes and add one at a time listening to them as you go.

Try and avoid obvious tonalities (black note pentatonic etc).

Write them down in a circle so none have precedence.

You might need to make transposed versions for Bb, Eb, F instruments etc.

Commentary on Activity Four:

Play these in a variety of ways:

As chords

As melodies

As riffs

Backwards/forwards, serial manipulations (R, RI, etc.)

Play signature phrases using only these notes.

Things to think about:

What gives your phase it's character?

Is it significantly changed by having only one of the 5 chosen pitches?

Compositional strategies / shapes / forms.

Questions:

How are motifs used in other musics?

How transformed can they be without losing their character?

HOMEWORK

ACTIVITY FIVE

Group Piece.

Using the materials from activity 3 and 4, students to make a piece for the whole group to play.

Commentary on Activity Five:

Thinking about:

Openings, Texture, Melodic content, Shared (common) material, Structuring, Solo parts (individual phrases).

This to be done in small groups (4/5) and then played by whole group.

RESOURCES

Lesson resources: instructions for Favourite Sounds warm-up activity;

Classroom instruments;

Recording and listening device.