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

LESSON 2

TOPIC AND PURPOSE	OBJECTIVE	ENGAGEMENT	STICK-ABILITY
Second lesson exploring how technology can be used to enhance creative thinking skills through composition with a focus on echoes.	Introduce learners to music technology and allow them to explore and experiment with music technology, developing creative responses.	Learners will develop an understanding of collaboration through working with others and reflecting on learning both individually and collaboratively.	Learners will develop knowledge and understanding of how to observe and reflect on their practice, informing future work.

LISTEN IMAGINE COMPOSE

DIFFERENTIATION

Embedding:
Learners will collect sounds and begin to create rhythmic pieces. They will work in groups developing these sounds.

Enhancing: Some will go further than this and critically reflect on the rhythmic sounds they have created and be able to creatively explore and adapt their ideas.

Extending: A few may go well beyond this and creatively expand their rhythmic sounds through using unexpected objects. They will reflect on their work using musical terminology.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Introducing learners to music technology and how it can be used to mix sounds.

ACTIVITY ONE

Stage 1: Record random vocal sounds. Listen back. What do you notice?

Stage 2: Noticing that short sounds (less than 2 secs) make rhythmic sounds and sounds longer than 2 seconds join together to make continuous sounds called drones or loops.

Stage 3: Take the long sound, try to make a single group sound without any sense of rhythm.

Stage 4: Passing several times with a chosen order. For example 1st time Short, 2nd time pitched, 3rd time whispered, 4th time long.

Stage 5: Find an object that makes an interesting sound and make a group piece with this.

You will need to have one person acting as a 'microphonist' collecting the sounds from the group.

Stage 6: Using your instruments to make a piece

STARTER

Recap on last lesson's objectives via class discussion.

Commentary on Activity One:

Live VS recorded which is the most appropriate in this case?

Structure: The intrinsic structure of the echo. 'Breaking' the intrinsic structure, surprise endings?

Precision, compositional identity (how do the individual pieces have an identity outside the 'novelty' of echo?)

Relationship between looped and non-looped elements

Questions about using the technology to make a kind of music that isn't melody or accompaniment.

Performing issues, balance between acoustic and amplified elements.

ASSESSMENT

Learners will evaluate their own learning and others' progression through peer to peer discussion.

They will refine and evaluate their progression of using music technology and set personal and group goals.

RESOURCES

A single microphone (SM58 is perfect) on a long lead.

A means of creating a 2 second echo such as
  Delay pedal (BOSS DD-3 for example)
  Software (Audiomulch, Ableton)
  Free software (Love Music Looper)

A means of mixing the sound. Something to play the sound through, powered speaker/s, guitar amp or PA. A means of recording, either using a self contained recording device or a computer. If you are using software then it's possible to record the sound on the computer there are many online guides to help you do this. If you are using Audiomulch or Ableton Live then you can do it from within the program. If using the Love Music Looper you can do it with free software such as Audacity via Soundflower (for Mac) or simply by selecting the .wav or 'what you hear' option in the Windows mixer.

It is beyond the scope of this plan to give precise details on specific equipment so you will need to experiment with the resources you have available to be able to do this. It is a good idea to spend time experimenting with these things without the group so that you are reasonably fluent with the equipment before attempting to do this in the classroom!

Love Music Looper (free MAC / WIN) with some guide videos:

http://www.lovemusicfestival.com/your-festival-day/electric-loops/resources/looper/

Before starting, make sure you can control the sound going into the looping device, the number of times it repeats (sometimes referred to as 'feedback') and the volume of the sound coming out. Set the looping device to create a 2 second (2000 ms) echo. After many experiments with groups of different types I have found that this is the best to start with, shorter than 2 seconds sounds too much like a quick echo, longer is too long to feel like a phrase if you are building riffs or textures up in layers.

Passing the microphone round the group. You might need to pass it round once without any echo to check that the lead is long enough and everyone understands that they are going to make a VOCAL sound into it and pass it on to the next person.

HOMEWORK

If possible, offer learners the opportunity to practise using the software and/or equipment before the next lesson.