

Taking the “General” Out of Middle School General Music!

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Music at Gower Middle School

* ALL students in grades 5-7 take General Music, regardless of participation in Band and/or Chorus

* We work on a quarter rotation system

* Every day for 9 weeks

* 42 minute class periods

* 8th Grade students choose their own electives from a VERY extensive list

* There are 3 music offerings: Music & the Media, Advanced Music Composition, & Guitar 2

* Yes, I have students who take all 3 classes, so they are with me 3 out of 4 quarters!

What has worked for me!

* Focus on creating and experiencing music

* Students are CONSTANTLY creating, performing, or experiencing music in some way

* I have found activities and lessons that engage them at THEIR level (not too young, but not too difficult)

* I teach Unit-Based classes: every week or two we have a new unit of study...keeps them focused and engaged without it becoming too stale or monotonous

Some things I do across ALL grade levels

* Music Journaling

* 5 minutes of class, 2-3x per week

* Sometimes answering a specific question (what did you think of today's lesson, music sample)

* Other times just having them write about a recent music experience, favorite song and why

* I want them thinking beyond the 4 walls of my classroom...they surround themselves with music constantly, want them to be thinking and reflecting on it!

* Music CD review

* Students choose the CD/Artist and write a review, answering a series of questions (GREAT for Common Core)

* I got the idea HERE: www.sitesalive.com/bl/tg/private/bltgreview.pdf

* We utilize GarageBand in ALL grade levels

* Music Listening Logs (both in class and at home - challenge them to see how much different music they listen to)

5th Grade Music

Some of the Focuses in 5th Grade

- * Recorders
- * Rhythm (boomwhackers, drumming)
- * Classical Composers
- * Instruments of the Orchestra
- * American Folk and Patriotic Music
- * Music Composition
- * Elements of Music
- * Music Vocabulary
- * Jazz Music

Activity: Harry Potter Puppet Pals: The Mysterious Ticking Noise into OSTINATO Project

- * Got the idea when a friend shared a “hysterical” YouTube video with me (INSTANTLY began to think of how I could use it with my kids)
- * Original Video: Harry Potter Puppet Pals: The Mysterious Ticking Noise
 - * There are MANY versions...some go faster, slower, multiple times
- * <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v+Tx1Xlm6q4r4>
- * Be cautious with the ending!
- * I don't show any other Harry Potter Puppet Pals videos due to language concerns
- * Students choose a theme to center around their project (ideas include superheroes, cartoon characters, movie stars, etc...the possibilities are endless!)
- * Optional introduction (most do it)
- * They model the idea after HPPP: TMTN, with one person coming in at a time
- * Once all are in, they do an interlude, then all parts come in together
- * Should plan some kind of ending
- * There will always be ONE group who tries to use the same rhythms as the original - remind them to come up with their own!

Activity: Group Raps

- * Students work in small groups to create rap lyrics based on a specific topic
 - * Have had everything from naming types of cereals or basketball stars to classical composers, to teachers in the building, to favorite lunchline options, and EVERYTHING else in between!
- * They have to follow some kind of rhyming scheme (I give them some samples, they can create their own, but some rhyming pattern must be evident)
- * Students perform with a rap track in the background (CD: Rap Rap Rhapsody)
- * Students are encouraged to incorporate some kind of acting/drama/dance/props into the performance

Recorder in 5th Grade Music

- * We use Recorder Express Method Book and SmartMusic
 - * Recorder Express is currently the only recorder method book supported with SmartMusic, which we use in our district
- * We have used the Recorder Karate model using songs from Recorder Express and other supplemental books in the music room (especially for students who want an extra challenge)
 - * Students help choose the songs each quarter
 - * We have different levels they can choose to be in (DIFFERENTIATION)
 - * Students can work at their own level without feeling like they are lost or overwhelmed, or that the music is too easy
 - * Rarely have the issue of a student choosing a level that is too easy (will occasionally guide the students to a more appropriate level)
 - * Students also assist in creating the testing rubric & decide what musical elements are essential (tone, rhythm, note accuracy, correct dynamics, etc)
 - * It's amazing what students will do for a piece of yarn, even at the middle school level!
- * Have been using SmartMusic with recorders for the past three years
 - * Students use the program both as an entire class and as individuals
 - * Have a SmartMusic station in a practice room next door, so they can work privately if needed
 - * "Beat the Teacher" (student idea) - students choose the song (sometimes I do), we decide the tempo, and they have to try to beat my score

Composer Research Project

- * Helps with Common Core Requirements!!
- * End project of Classical Composer Unit
- * Students use a variety of technologies to create a multimedia presentation to share with the class
 - * Projects have included videos, podcasts, SMARTboard presentations COMPLETE with game/quiz at the end
- * Incorporate the music of the composer, choosing one or two "essential" pieces of music
- * Answer the question: "Why did the composer stand the test of time?"
- * Common websites used:
 - * <http://www.dsokids.com>
 - * <http://www.findagrave.com> (famous grave search - students are FASCINATED with this site)
 - * <http://www.classicsforkids.com>
 - * <http://www.makingmusicfun.net>
 - * Spotlight on Music's Website: <http://spotlightonmusic.macmillanmh.com/music/teachers/articles/composers-and-lyricists>
- * Also have a variety of informational texts in music room and in school's Learning Center

6th Grade: World Music

Focus in 6th Grade: World Music

- * Music of Many Cultures (Africa, South America, Asia, Native American, Europe)
- * World Music Drumming curriculum
- * Recorders: Native American flute music, African flute music
- * Music Composition
- * Rhythm Complements
- * Musical Elements

Introductory Rhythm Activity : Cup Game

- * Another YouTube/Pinterest find
- * Use at the beginning of the quarter to get students thinking about rhythm and working together, keeping a steady beat
- * LOTS of YouTube videos
- * I found out AFTER I introduced it at the beginning of this year that it was in the Glee Season Premiere and used in the movie Pitch Perfect (guess who was the Cool Teacher?!?)
- * Found out that students have also been teaching the cup game to others (took cups on Outdoor Ed retreat & taught the rest of the grade!)
- * Supplemental Activities:
 - * Once they have the routine, do a contest of who can maintain the beat the longest
 - * Try it at different tempos, or with different music in the background
 - * Have them come up with some kind of routine (theme and variations, ABA)
 - * YouTube Search THUD Spring 2012 cups for an example
 - * YouTube Search Cup Passing Remix for an example from middle schoolers

World Music Drumming

- * Purchased the Remo World Music Drumming Set as a foundation grant in February 2011
- * Attended the World Music Drumming Summer Workshop in Oconomowoc, WI in June 2011 (HIGHLY recommend!!!)
- * These are the main instruments that we use in 6th grade to explore and experience music in a variety of cultures (mainly African and Latin American)
- * Students complete ensembles 1-4, sometimes more, from the original World Music Drumming book
- * Rhythm Complements
 - * Rubrics and Lesson Plans available from www.worldmusicdrumming.com
 - * Students work in groups of 4-6 to create their own drumming ensembles, using a variety of percussion instruments
 - * They then perform for the class AND teach the individual parts to the class, who have to perform it back

- * Focus on creating authentic experiences for the students as much as possible (instead of listening to drumming, they get to actually do it themselves)
- * Teach proper drumming techniques as well as the proper way to hold and play auxiliary percussion instruments
- * Students are assessed on technique, ability to maintain rhythmic patterns, and how they function within the ensemble
- * Have seen a renewed interest and excitement in music from ALL students, including students who have had behavior issues in the past
- * ALL students feel they can participate regardless of prior musical experiences or knowledge
- * Students LOVE to be the leader
- * ELL - it is a GREAT way to introduce new ELL students (they have been putting new students in my class because we drum) - they feel they can be successful right away, despite language barriers

Other Drumming Activities (can see a lot of these in action on YouTube)

- * Boom Boom Share a Drum (Beatbox - Dr. Will Schmid)
- * Check My Beat (Energizers! - Susan Rozer)
- * Rumble Ball (Together in Rhythm - Kalani)
- * Let's All Play Our Drum (Together in Rhythm - Kalani)
- * What's for Dinner (World Music Drumming)
- * Call & Response (World Music Drumming)
- * Improvisation
- * Drumming Circles
- * Bucket Drumming (hoping to start that SOON)

World Music Research Project

- * Similar to 5th grade Composer Project
- * Students choose a country and focus on the folk/traditional music and how it relates/integrates with the culture
- * Students use a variety of technologies to create a multimedia presentation to share with the class
- * They also incorporate the music of the country, selecting music that, to them, best represents the style of music
- * Show native instruments, native dance
- * Another great way for ELL students to share their own cultures with the class

Recorder in 6th Grade

- * Use recorder to enhance knowledge about music of a variety of cultures
- * Main focus is with Native American Flute Music
- * Students choose a piece of music from several books we have in the classroom, and perform by themselves or with a partner - also give a bit of history about the song
- * Also utilize recorder in some South American and African music, having some play recorder while others drum

7th Grade Music: Guitar, GarageBand, & Rock & Roll

Focuses in 7th Grade Music

- * Introduction to Guitar
- * History of Rock & Roll Music
- * GarageBand
- * All THREE focuses are incorporated into each other, overlapping throughout the quarter

Guitar at Gower Middle School

- * Why Guitar?
 - * Students at this age have shown a great interest in guitar
 - * Our school owns a classroom set of full size guitars, and most students at this age are able to hold them comfortably
 - * Also own 5 three-quarter sized guitars for smaller students,
 - * Own 5 electric guitars & amps
 - * Engages and excites students at an age where they are losing interest in the traditional “general music” class
 - * A number of students have gone on to take private lessons, play guitar with the jazz band, or become involved with the school’s Guitar Club
- * Explore It! Guitar & Style
 - * Chose this method book because it was written/designed specifically with middle school and high school class guitar in mind, either a the semester or quarter in length
 - * Pacing is appropriate for students
 - * Starts with em and am chords, gradually adding chords while simultaneously teaching individual notes
 - * Covers a variety of musical styles and songs
- * What we use
 - * Yamaha C40 Classical Acoustic Guitar
 - * 5 Amigo 3/4 Size Guitars
 - * 5 Squier Stratocaster Electric Guitars
 - * 5 Roland Cube 20x
 - * Students get the opportunity to try electric guitar if they choose (have to wear earphones when all 5 are being used)

Rock & Roll History

- * Created lessons from scratch, based on teacher research and a handful of rock & roll books in the music classroom (haven’t found a book appropriate for middle school...if you have one, please let me know!!)
- * Incorporate videos and song samples with the guitar lessons
- * Students see authentic performances by Elvis Presley, the Beatles, and more

- * We also incorporate with what they are learning in social studies (each quarter has a different focus/emphasis depending on what decade they are in)
- * Students analyze and explain how the music changed and WHY
- * Also look at how music of a particular artist evolved over time

Rock & Roll Podcast

- * Students select a musician or band from Rock & Roll
- * Research using books in LRC, web resources, classroom resources
- * Students write the script
 - * Some “interview” the artist
 - * Others give a biographical report
- * Podcast includes images of the musician/band and original music, sometimes video
- * Some students have used the green screen to superimpose themselves within a video
- * Podcasts are shared in music class

8th Grade Music Electives

There are currently THREE music electives at Gower Middle School

Some students will take all three, which means they are in music for three out of four quarters

Looking to possibly change one of the electives or remove one entirely, based on enrollment and student input this year

Music and the Media

Music and the Media

- * Students look at how music is used in movies, television, commercials, radio, the internet, and more
- * Students learn about the process in which music is created for these mediums, then create a variety of projects based on what they have learned
- * Heavy use of GarageBand and iMovie
- * This class has also teamed up with the Photography and Art classes to create a soundtrack of their work for the quarter
- * Unit on Copyright (www.musicalive.com has great resources)
- * Skype calls with people in music business

Boom De Yadda Project

- * A commercial used by the Discovery Channel to feature their television shows (can see on YouTube)
- * Students write their own lyrics about what is important to them, then record themselves singing it
- * Students also take images or find images to show their interests
- * End product is a commercial about themselves

Soundtrack of My Life

- * Students pick a variety of songs that have meaning to them OR represent an important moment or part of their life
- * Students create an album cover and insert notes, writing brief background information AND giving information as to why that song is important to them

GarageBand Projects

- * Commercial Jingles
 - * Students pick a product or create one (have also teamed up with Industrial Tech class to advertise what they are making in class)
 - * Students come up with a commercial and a jingle
 - * Commercial gets filmed and jingle is recorded, then the final product is put together in GarageBand
- * Movie Soundtrack Project
 - * Students pick a movie trailer and remove all existing sound
 - * Using Apple loops and/or MIDI keyboards, they create a brand new soundtrack to enhance the mood or emotion on the screen
 - * Students then evaluate each other's work for effectiveness

Advanced Music Composition

GarageBand

- * Students create a variety of projects using GarageBand, learning more advanced tricks and options within the program
- * Focus on musical elements such as rhythm, tempo, dynamics, balance and blend, style
- * Utilize both GarageBand loops and own musical compositions recorded with a MIDI keyboard
- * Burn a CD of all student work at the end of the quarter, create album artwork
- * Share projects on Edmodo, comment on each other's work
- *

Advanced Guitar Class

8th Grade Advanced Guitar

- * Continue to work to develop skills and knowledge from 7th grade
- * Focus is on individual growth, very much an independent study (students can request to focus on particular skills)
- * Students also participate in Guitar Ensembles
- * Compose original music for guitar, utilizing chords, melody line, bass line, sometimes adding vocals and percussion

Websites I Like to Use a LOT

www.clubcreate.com

www.musicshake.com

www.themusicinteractive.com

www.isleoftune.com

www.playauditorium.com

www.musictheory.net

www.edmodo.com

www.youtube.com

CONCLUSION

- * Try to find activities/lessons that engage students at this level
- * Focus on **CREATING** and **PERFORMING** music...middle school students spend so much of their day sitting and listening to someone talk to them...they need to be able to engage their creative side!
- * Don't be afraid to try something new...it shows the students that you take chances and risks! When in doubt, ask! Get their input!
- * Use contemporary music when possible (and when school appropriate)
- * Make your room a **SAFE** place where students can feel comfortable sharing their work!!!