

Explore Music 9: Introductory Module

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The instructional hours indicated for each unit provide guidelines for planning, rather than strict requirements. The sequence of skill and concept development is to be the focus of concern. Teachers are encouraged to adapt these suggested timelines to meet the needs of their students.

To be effective in teaching this module, it is important to use the material contained in *Explore Music Curriculum Framework* and *Explore Music: Appendices*. Therefore, it is recommended that these two components be frequently referenced to support the suggestions for teaching, learning, and assessment in this module.

Icons Used in this Module



Formative
Assessment



Summative
Assessment



Listening



Key Point



Extension



Cross
Curricular

Explore Music 9: Introductory Module

(13 Instructional Hours)

Overview

Rationale

The Introductory Module is designed to develop positive interpersonal and intrapersonal relations, and to provide opportunities for students to “play” in a variety of musical settings in a non-threatening and relaxed atmosphere. Unlike the modules in Grade 7 and Grade 8, which focused on four areas of music making – theory, guitar, drumming, and popular music of the 50s and 60s – the *Explore Music 9* modules will offer students experiences in a wide range of music making activities including movement, song writing, musical theatre, choral singing, and music in film.

For many students, this will be a first introduction to these aspects of music making and, considering their age and stage of personal development, they may feel inhibited in trying some of the activities. The Introductory Module is intended to “free” them in a safe and relaxed environment. Additionally, you as teacher will gain insight into the learning needs, background knowledge, and interests of students as they reflect on the meaning of music in their lives.

Glossary

- verse and chorus
- songwriting duo
- novelty dances

Outcomes Addressed

CREATING, MAKING AND PRESENTING

Students will be expected to

- 1.1 using appropriate terminology, demonstrate an understanding of rhythm by creating and performing rhythmic compositions in a variety of meters
- 1.2 by performing a repertoire in group music making, demonstrate an understanding of melody (i.e., melodic direction, tonal centre, contour)
- 1.3 use the elements of music to express and communicate meaning
- 1.4 interpret non-verbal gestures making connections to notation and musical expression
- 2.1 maintain a part within a variety of textures and harmonies using a range of musical structures and styles
- 2.2 use a variety of notational systems to represent musical thoughts and ideas
- 2.3 apply skills and attitudes appropriate to a range of group music making activities demonstrating audience etiquette, performance skills, and responsibility to the group
- 2.4 perform, alone and with others, music expressing a broad range of thoughts and feelings

UNDERSTANDING AND CONNECTING CONTEXTS OF TIME, PLACE AND COMMUNITY

Students will be expected to

- 4.1 examine ways in which music enhances and expresses life's experiences
- 4.2 choose music for a variety of purposes and justify their choices
- 4.3 reflect on ways in which music expresses the history and cultural diversity of local, national and international communities
- 5.1 define relationships among music, other arts, and other subjects
- 5.2 examine the roles that music plays in local and global communities

PERCEIVING AND RESPONDING

Students will be expected to

- 6.1 examine and explore a range of possible solutions to musical challenges
- 6.2 use processes of description, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation to make and support informed responses to their own and others' music and musical performances
- 6.3 critically reflect on ideas and feelings in works of music, and identify patterns, trends, and generalizations
- 7.1 identify and describe instruments common to cultures and countries included in the social studies curriculum
- 7.2 explore technology applications to creating, making, and presenting their own and other's music
- 8.1 evaluate choices of the elements of expression in musical compositions based on the composer's intent
- 8.2 use feedback from others to examine their own musical works in light of the original intent
- 8.3 analyse performances and provide critical commentary on aspects of musical presentation in light of the performers' intent

Tips for Teaching Success

To be effective, assessment must be part of the teaching and learning process. Teaching, learning and assessment work best when informed decisions are made based on how well students are progressing. If left to the end of a unit or at the end of the module, teachers will find themselves making subjective decisions, and students will treat the actual assessment as meaningless. Therefore, to be able to arrive at a final evaluation, teachers must include an assessment activity every day. For examples of assessment instruments, see Appendix D, *Explore Music 7–9: Appendices*.

Tips for Teaching Success

Refer to the “Big Ideas” in *Talk About Assessment* to get a sense of how you will be assessing student progress in this module. In your introduction to the module, tell students about the eight big ideas and explain that this is the process you will be using in assessing them. It will be necessary for each student to maintain a portfolio of their progress, and this can be a binder in which they can insert assignments, extra practice, journal notes, reflections, etc.

Unit 1: Making Connections (3 hours)

Introduction

A new school year has begun, or maybe you are starting a new semester. In any case, a new group of Grade 9 students is ready to explore music. Before we ask students to create, write and perform, it is important for you as teacher to learn more about these students. The first few lessons will provide an opportunity to get to know them and for them to get to know you and each other.

Key Concepts

- music has personal significance

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Process

PART A: GETTING READY TO MOVE

Name Game



Begin the first class with an exercise designed to get to know the students. Have the class stand in a circle and ask them to state their name and to think of an action that they feel represents them. This can be as outlandish as they like, and to demonstrate, you should think of a few examples of actions that describe you (e.g., zumba dancing, swimming, etc.).

You will start by jumping into the circle, stating your name while doing the action to describe you. As you step back to the circle, class members will repeat your name and action. The person next to you jumps into the circle, states their name while performing the action that is most representative of her/him. The class repeats. Go around the circle until each student has contributed.

Above all, it is very important to create a “fun” atmosphere that is safe and relaxed is established.

Tips for Teaching Success

The following activity can be used as a warmup for classes after they have learned it well. When introducing it to the students, teach the 8-measure pattern to them without partners. When they know it, put the students in pairs and put it to the music.

Jambo

Jambo is a “greeting” word in Swahili for hello or welcome. Teach students a simple 8-measure pattern that will allow them to introduce themselves to each other. This will be accompanied by a hand drum, djembe, or found sounds like the bottom of a garbage can – whatever you like to use for keeping a beat.

8-measure pattern

- 4 counts (1 measure): 4 handshakes in time
- 4 counts (1 measure): right elbows touch (2 beats) left elbows touch (2 beats)
- 8 counts (2 measures): 4 two count pivots to make a full turn
- 8 counts (2 measures): each person slides to the right (2 counts)
slide forward (2 counts)
slide left (2 counts)
slide back (2 counts – takes you back to original place facing partner)
- 4 counts (1 measure): right foot crosses over left as body turns 360 degrees
- 4 counts (1 measure): high five in the air (2 counts)
low five down by their hips (2 counts)

Practice this without any accompaniment until students have it memorized, and then add a drum. After they are comfortable with the pattern, have them take a partner and perform the pattern with that person. Repeat the pattern with a new partner and continue until they have partnered with everyone in the class. This activity also works well when accompanied by a popular piece of music.



This can now be extended by putting students in groups of 4 and having them develop a new pattern that will last 16 counts (4 measures). After they know that pattern well, combine the groups to form a group of 8. Have them perform their 4-measure pattern for each other and tell them that they now must combine the 2 sets of 4 measures to make an 8-measure pattern. They can decide how they would like to combine the patterns, e.g., one group follows the other, or they mix the movements from both groups to create a different pattern.

Now turn this activity into a Rondo. The original pattern will become A (8 measures), and is performed by the entire class, followed by a group of 8 performing the B section (8 measures). Then have the full class perform A and another group of 8 performs the C section (8 measures). Repeat until all groups have had an opportunity to perform a contrasting section to A in the Rondo.

PART B: THE MUSIC IN ME

It is important for you to share with students your passion for music. Let them know the types of music you like, and the significance of music that represents milestones in your life. This will serve as a model for what you expect from them in the coming lessons.

Once they see your passion, ignite theirs by tapping into what they know, love and have experienced. Begin by finding out as much as you can about them: the instruments they play; if there are any musicians in their family; their experiences performing publicly; concerts they have attended or what their ultimate concert would be; their favourite songs or artists, etc.

Tips for Teaching Success

This type of inquiry can be used throughout the year and can be related to specific lessons. It is also a great opening activity to motivate students. For example, before starting a specific lesson in the Singer/Songwriter Module, you may consider asking if they or someone in their family or school has written a song.

This process is a safe way for students to make connections with their peers. As students are getting to know each other, their musical interests and experiences become associations and reminders to help them to see each other as real people and not just someone sitting in the back row.

Ask students to think about important moments in their lives. Have each student select three moments in time that illustrate a diverse range of emotions: happiness or joy, anger, hurt, betrayal, triumph, etc. Students should select a piece of music that is connected to each moment in time. Ask students to bring these music samples to class next day.

Highlight the fact that music is a means of self-expression and a way to communicate. Many of our favourite songs were written by musicians and writers who were experiencing similar emotions and wanted a means to express them. Music provides that outlet for us, and it is not necessary to be a professional musician or performer to express our thoughts and feelings through music.

During the next class ask students to select one of their three moments to share with the class. The music that is connected to that moment can be played before, during, or after the student shares their story. Encourage students limit their stories to a few minutes, to allow ample time to hear from everyone in the class.



During the day of the presentations, remind students of the importance of respectful and attentive listening during both the sharing of the moment in time and the playing of the accompanying musical selection. Encourage students to try to see connections between the stories of others and their own moments in time. This activity is a great way to establish a supportive and collaborative learning environment that serves as a foundation for future group and paired activities.



This represents a wonderful opportunity for students to think about the ways music impacts their lives. Invite students to share thoughts in their journals. Teachers can offer guiding questions to support and inspire students' writing.

Teacher Notes

Unit 2: Calling Up Our Songs from Within (4 hours)

Introduction

This unit is an extension of the previous one and should only be completed following those activities. In this unit, students will reinforce their composition skills and apply them as they create a song.

Key Concepts

- chorus/verse
- songs emerge from personal experiences
- songwriting duos

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Process

Now that students have shared important moments and described the connections to favourite songs, guide them through a self-reflection writing process designed to eventually generate lyrical lines and song ideas. Introduce or revisit the concept of themes. Ask students to write down the themes that were explored in the “stories” they shared during their Unit 1 presentations. Next, have them write down three appropriate titles that capture the essence of what they felt and experienced. Remind students that their titles and written responses do not need to make sense to others; nor do they need to serve as a summary. Rather, it is just a creative opportunity to explore this important past experience in a new way.

Continue to guide students in thinking about something that really touched them or changed their lives, i.e., a special someone; a bully; a break-up in a relationship. Have them reflect on it and describe it in their journals. How did they feel? Because this process is for self-development and personal growth, students may wish to select the other moments in time that they didn’t share with the class in the previous unit. The benefit here is that students who weren’t comfortable taking the initial risk of sharing a more difficult moment in time can explore this significant experience and their feelings about it in a creative, personal way through writing.

At this point students will have generated a significant amount of written material, and now it is time to explore what song writers do by putting these thoughts, feelings, and ideas into the structure of a song.

Review “The Power of Song” in *Learn to Speak Music* (page 32). Ask students to start with either an idea for a chorus or a verse. At this point students are selecting parts of what they have written in their journals to create lyrics and melodies. Some students find this process much easier than others. Teachers can circulate and help students who are experiencing difficulty, or it may be helpful to put them in pairs. It is important to model this activity for students because they are familiar with your ‘moments in time’ that you shared in an earlier class.



Demonstrate the process first by creating lyrics and melodies using something that was significant in your own life.

To provide background for students to create their melodies, once again refer to *Learn to Speak Music* (pages 10 – 11). Ask them to practice taking written lines from their self-reflective writing and experiment with singing or humming melodies that “emerge” from them. This is an experimental time, and students should not feel pressured to produce a tune just yet. They are mainly exploring their writing and trying to find a melody to express it.

Have them combine ideas to create a chorus for a new song. Show and play examples of songs that have verses and a chorus. Have them describe the chorus in relation to the verses. Key descriptors they may use are that it is not very long, it expresses an overall emotion that we are reminded of every time we hear it in the songs, that sometimes it can be a group singing as opposed to individuals singing the verses, etc.

Now the fun begins, as students use their cell phones or other recording devices to record their melodic explorations. Many songwriters are accustomed to using mini recorders to record lyrics or melodic ideas when inspiration comes or when they hear something that could be used as a song idea. Spontaneity is crucial, and students should realize the capability of their cell phones for when a tune comes to them at an unexpected time.

Tips for Teaching Success

This process of experimentation is less threatening because students are scattered about the room experimenting all at the same time so each student at this stage should not feel exposed or feel as if others are watching. One real benefit of this exercise is that students can experiment as much as they like, listen to what they have created and erase their initial efforts until they find what they like.



Teachers are encouraged to circulate and listen to the recordings, giving feedback and assistance, and offering suggestions to maximize student success with this song writing process. Anecdotal notes should be taken, and these can be followed up with one-on-one conferencing with individual students, if time permits.

Students can also be directed to use instruments to help with the creation of their simple melodies. At this stage it is helpful to pair or group students and ask them to combine ideas. This can lead to the creation of an entire song. One student may have experimented with a melody that can be used for a verse and the other may have a great idea for the chorus. Many famous song-writing duos brought parts of songs that they were working on to a writing partner and the two combined two different ideas into one song. For example, listen to Pink Floyd’s *Comfortably Numb*, or The Beatles’ *A Day in The Life*. You may wish to have students research the idea of co-composing and see how many current hits are written by more than one songwriter.

Tips for Teaching Success

The grouping or pairing of students can be accomplished in any number of ways, and you will need to judge the “readiness” of the students to determine how this will be done. You may also wish to allow some students who are actively engaged to continue to work on their own.

These tunes will need to be notated, so you may consider pairing students who have greater proficiency with music writing software and those who may be weaker.

Allow students sufficient time to work on the chorus for their songs. This is meant to be an introduction to the Singer/Songwriter module, so if students have difficulty with the melodies or rhythm, these tunes can always be revisited later if they do that module.

At the end of the time allotted for writing the songs, invite students to share their work with the class.

Tips for Teaching Success

To add variety to the time spent on this unit, you may wish to intersperse the song-writing portion with fun activities such as the energizers found in *Rhythmic Activities and Dance*, or any others that you are familiar with, including those in the first unit of this module.



Prior to beginning the song writing process, co-construct with students, the criteria for which their work will be evaluated. Students can refer to this co-constructed evaluation tool throughout the process, to guide them in successfully meeting the goals of the project.

Unit 3: The Music Moves Me (3 hours)

Introduction

With the popularity of dance shows, many students are becoming familiar with popular styles of dance and the diverse styles of music that inspire the dance moves. There is a clear connection between movement and music and this connection is explored in depth in the *Music and Movement Module*. This unit is meant to give students a sampling of movement experiences, and at the same time have fun getting to know each other.

Key Concepts

- novelty dances
- song-inspired set movement patterns

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Process

PART A: MOVIN' AND GROOVIN'

Dancing is as popular as ever and, while it may seem a daunting task for some students, if it is explored in a fun and supportive manner, it will prove to be a wonderful team builder. It is also an opportunity for teachers to teach or review basic rhythms, counting, and time signatures. These are skills that have already been taught in the elementary curriculum and reinforced in modules in *Explore Music 7* and *Explore Music 8*.

Discuss with students some “natural” moves people make to show excitement. Have them think about a sport or game they like to play, such as basketball, soccer, hockey, Red Rover, etc. List natural moves that the players make. Have them create a sequence of these moves and select music that might accompany them. Have students explore elements of dance such as space, time, levels, and energy. How might they incorporate spins, leaps, slow movements, changes in direction, etc.?

Macarena is an example of a song that was inspired by a piece of music and that has specific movements that have become popular around the world. It is a “party song” and one that finds participants laughing and having fun while they do the dance.

Before teaching the dance moves of the Macarena, review its origins and background (found on the internet) and discuss the Afro-Cuban approach to the music. In particular, note the beat and rhythm, instruments used, and the similarities to jazz.

Play the song *Macarena* as recorded by the Bay Side Boys (see YouTube). Ask students if they have ever heard the song and inform them it may have been played at a wedding, sports event, or other celebration

gathering. You may wish to use the internet to research the origins of the Macarena so you can provide more information on the cultural aspect, the instrumentation used to accompany the dance, and how it has remained a party favourite through the years.

Teach students the basic moves of the dance as they learn to count this 4-bar repeating pattern. There are several versions of the Macarena on YouTube, and these could be helpful when teaching the basic steps.

PART B: NOVELTY DANCES

The Macarena dance moves are danced only to the song, *Macarena*. Similarly, the YMCA dance moves are danced only during the playing of the *YMCA* song by the Village People. However, some dance moves are used or danced during the playing of many different songs, e.g., the Watusi, the Monkey, the Swim, etc. These are sometimes called “Novelty Dances” because they include quirky and unusual steps or have an unusual name. These may also have been fad dances that have remained popular over the years.

Compile a list of novelty/popular dances. In pairs, students should select one of the dances and research the dance and the music that inspired that dance. Pairs will present their findings in their own ways (posters, videotapes of themselves dancing, etc.) and will include playing the music, discussing aspects of the song’s rhythm and structure, and other unique features of their dance. They will then teach the dance to their classmates.

Examples of more popular dances that they may wish to research are:

- Bird Dance
- Mashed Potato
- Twist
- YMCA
- Watusi
- Swim
- Hokey Pokey
- Monkey
- Bomba
- Carioca
- Chicken dance
- Electric Slide
- The Freddy
- Limbo
- Loco-Motion
- Monkey
- Pony
- Shimmy
- Hustle



For this part of the unit, co-construct with students, the criteria that will be assessed to determine a successful presentation of the researched dance. By this point they should have had many experiences in co-creating rubrics and check lists. As always, the criteria should be set before the research is started and be developed by the class as a whole.

After each group has completed their presentations, debrief the activity with the entire class. Encourage students to see connections to style of music, time when it would have been most popular, similarities between dance steps of other dances they know, and possible connections to movements they may have in their own dance style.

Teacher Notes

Unit 4: Flash Mob (3 hours)

Introduction

A trend across North America and beyond is a “flash mob” whereby a large group of people assemble in a public place – often spontaneously – to perform in a unified way. The first flash mob took place in New York in 2003, and since that time vocal and dance performances by hundreds of unified participants have taken place in shopping malls, department stores, city squares, subway stations, etc., as a playful social experiment.

Schools have also copied the idea and elementary and secondary school students have been making a statement with school-wide flash mobs to mark a milestone or celebration. In this case, they are often carefully thought out and rehearsed, and the element that often characterizes more public flash mobs – spontaneity – is not as evident.

The final unit of the *Introductory Module* is devoted to creating a flash mob for a school event or celebration. This is an excellent opportunity to not only involve the full student body, but also to have the public participate as spectators. Examples of these events might include:

- Winter Carnival
- sports tournament
- Education Week
- end of term
- school holidays
- retirement of a staff member

Before beginning, it will be necessary to discuss the flash mob with your principal to ensure that all staff support the idea, as it will eventually require time for the entire student body to rehearse. Impress upon the administration that this will not only create a positive atmosphere in the school but will also allow possibilities for the community to experience something positive in the school. Moreover, it will raise the profile of the music programme, and in particular provide an opportunity for the students registered in this course to develop their self-esteem.

Key Concepts

- flash mob as a social experiment
- production

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Process

PART A: PLANNING

As a class, brainstorm an event that they would like to mark with a flash mob. This can be done in small groups, and then discussed as a class once sufficient time has been given for the group discussions. List the ideas, and based on the rationale of each group, decide on an event for the flash mob. Another consideration will be availability of a suitable performance space, and once an event and space are identified, the planning continues.

Now the process of selecting music and dance moves begins. When each group has some ideas to share, have them present these to the class for their consideration. In leading the debriefing of this activity, you may want to ask guiding questions such as:

- Is the music upbeat, lending itself to simple moves that can be done in unison?
- Is the space conducive to the moves suggested?
- Is the song too long / short for the best effect?
- Are there any dangers involved, such as those that may be caused by students not having enough space to move freely?
- Could there be an opportunity for a group of students to “lead” the student body in the moves?

After the discussion, give each group time to discuss once again the feedback and suggest that they think more on the overall assignment before the next class.

PART B: DEVELOPING THE CHOREOGRAPHY

Begin with a review of the previous discussions, and as a class, decide on the next step in planning the choreography. Maybe there is one group that is well on the way to creating an effective movement sequence to accompany the flash mob. Perhaps there are two or more groups that are similar in the presentation and so it will be easy to reach consensus on the movements for the flash mob. There could even be one or more students with dance training who may be able to take a leadership role in bringing the entire process together. You know your students and you will quickly be able to set a course for the best plan of action. The remainder of the class time should be devoted to planning and developing the movement sequence as a class, and at the same time begin the rehearsing process.



During this aspect of the unit, it is important to make observations about the involvement of the students, and this is an opportunity to take note of those who appear to emerge as “leaders.” The overall assessment will not only include these observations, but also a self-assessment rubric whereby each student reflects on his / her own contribution and understanding of the process. You may wish to use a sample rubric from Appendix D, *Explore Music 7–9: Appendices* for a guide, and this can be modified to suit your needs.

PART C: CREATING A PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FLASH MOB

Time should now be spent rehearsing the moves of the flash mob ensuring that the elements of music in the accompanying song are evident (rhythm, phrasing, unison movements, dynamics).

Since the flash mob will most likely take place at a later date yet to be determined, there is a need to create a plan for teaching the moves to the student body. This can be done as a class, and should take into consideration:

- amount of time required
- involvement of the entire student body
- space needed to rehearse
- “leaders” from the class who will actually instruct
- availability of sound equipment to play the music
- assignment of specific tasks to each member of the class for the process to be successful



The flash mob will most likely take place at a specific point in time after the *Introductory Module* is completed, and therefore cannot be viewed as a summative assessment for the unit or module. Therefore, it is suggested that a personal reflection on the student’s overall impressions and reactions to the activities throughout the module would be appropriate. Above all, this module is meant to introduce the students to the subsequent modules, and at the same time they will get to know each other better and experience a number of diverse activities for the first time. These should all be considered in the reflection and become part of the overall assessment.

References

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