Music Theory

Content Area: **Vocal Music**
Course(s): **Generic District Course**
Time Period: **Generic Time Period**
Length: **36 Weeks (Ongoing)**
Status: **Published**

Unit Overview

Music theory is the study of the theoretical elements of music. In this unit, students will learn about the elements of pitch, rhythm, meter, form, and texture through listening, performing, dictation, composing, and improvising. Students will study how music is mapped out and why understanding these elements helps achieve a more effective performance. Along with understanding the written side of notation, students will also participate in various aural skills activities that will help synthesize their knowledge with note-reading skills.

Standards

VPA.1.3.8.B.2	Perform independently and in groups with expressive qualities appropriately aligned with the stylistic characteristics of the genre.
VPA.1.3.8.B.3	Apply theoretical understanding of expressive and dynamic music terminology to the performance of written scores in the grand staff.
VPA.1.3.8.B.CS3	Understanding of discipline-specific arts terminology (e.g., crescendo, diminuendo, pianissimo, forte, etc.) is a component of music literacy.
VPA.1.4.8.B.2	Differentiate among basic formal structures and technical proficiency of artists in works of dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

Essential Questions

- In what ways is understanding theory necessary to understanding music? What couldn't we do if we didn't understand music theory?
- How does music work?
- How is music like reading a map with an x and y axis?
- What techniques and resources can I use to practice and perform music expressively without relying on a teacher?
- What elements and techniques can I use to compose and arrange my own music?

Application of Knowledge: Students will know that...

- Chords and chord progressions are the foundation of tonal music.
- Everyone can perform, create, and respond to music in meaningful ways.
- Music is organized sound. Written music has recognizable patterns within a tonal system.

- Solfege and rhythm form a bridge between vocal performance and notation.
- The knowledge of the structure of music contributes to a higher level of musicianship.
- The main idea of most music compositions is expressed through melody.

Application of Skills: Students will be able to...

- create compositions utilizing rhythms and solfege.
- demonstrate understanding of intervals, scales, and triads.
- identify treble and bass clef pitches on and off staff.
- keep a steady beat while performing rhythms; will read and notate rhythms.
- recognize measures, bar lines, time signatures, and perform in simple and complex meters.
- recognize multiple key signatures.
- recognize staccato, slur, tie, Coda/D.S/D.C and other music symbols and terms.

Assessments

Formative:

- Whiteboard responses
- “Koosh” ball game
- Listening Activities
- 4-measure compositions
- Sight-reading
- Marking scores

Summative:

- A unit test in which students apply their understanding of music theory by building major and minor scales, identifying intervals, and performing advanced rhythmic examples.

Suggested Activities

- Activities to aurally differentiate between beat and rhythm. Practice/drill Hal Leonard rhythm flashcards. Play specific patterns as ostinati on classroom percussion to accompany rounds. Use rhythms in games such as Music Baseball, Rhythm Bingo, or Forbidden Rhythm. Make rhythmic dictation a routine classroom activity.
- Practice/drill using activities such as "50 in 5," Pitch Bingo, worksheets, Music Concentration, Music Baseball, Music Jeopardy, etc. Identify pitches in current pieces on specific vocal lines.
- Identifying specific measures in current repertoire, worksheets, conducting practice.
- Direct instruction, highlighting scale-wise motion in repertoire, singing major and minor scales, worksheets, aural drill, SMART board activities.
- Direct instruction, worksheet, applying skills to current repertoire.

- Score search to find symbols and markings in repertoire.
- Highlight similarities between writing a paragraph and writing in music. Practice improvising to build confidence in creating music on the spot. Assign composition projects that incorporate specific patterns.

Activities to Differentiate Instruction

- Use of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles
- peer scaffolding to support learning
- adjusting questions
- peer and teacher modeling for demonstration
- acceleration/deceleration
- hands-on tools (tongue depressors, mirrors, books on abdomen) for reinforcement, rubrics.

Integrated/Cross-Disciplinary Instruction

ELA: Visual literacy, discipline specific vocabulary

Math: attend to precision, make sense of problems and persevere in solving them, model with mathematics, look for and make use of structure

Technology: Exposure to/use of multimedia approaches to learning

Resources

- *Essentials of Music Theory Complete* by Surnami, Surnami, and Manus. Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., 1998.
- *One Minute Theory* by Ronald Slabbinck and Holly Shaw-Slabbinck. Neil Kjos Music Company.
- *Thirty Days to Melody* by Betsy Henderson. Hal Leonard Corporation, 2003.
- *Thirty Days to Rhythm* by Betsey Henderson. Hal Leonard Corporation, 2002.
- Music Theory.net http://www.musictheory.net/