



JUNIOR CYCLE MUSIC

Rationale:

Learning about and through the arts is fundamental to an education that aspires to nurture and support the development of the whole person. Awareness of, involvement in, and appreciation of the arts enables students to encounter a rich world of creativity, imagination, and innovation (Arts in Education Charter, 2012). The UN Declaration of Human Rights (Article 27) affirms the rights of everyone to 'participate in the cultural life of the community and to enjoy the arts'.

Through engaging with music, students are offered opportunities to develop new skills, while drawing on their previous experiences. These previous experiences are often central to our existence as music is everywhere. From the moment we are born we are in a musical world. Music is a natural early connection between infant and caregivers. International research shows that from the very early months of a child's life there is a human propensity to respond and engage with music. With music, students can immerse themselves intellectually, emotionally, physically and kinaesthetically in the learning experience. Music performance and composition are collaborative and interpersonal activities, where social skills are developed through the sharing of ideas, skills, or instruments.

Music can provide an environment for the student where they are safe to explore, experiment and be allowed to take creative risks. The subject can engage students in learning that engages, inspires, challenges, provokes, exhilarates, and liberates. Students are encouraged to collaborate in the formation of ideas and the presentation of these ideas and to critically reflect on their work and the work of others. Through listening to the music of others, and assimilating this into their own ideas, students learn how musical works are created. Through understanding how to evaluate and critique the works of others, students learn to be self-reflective and improve on their own musical creations.

As a creative endeavour, music can facilitate the development of imaginative and exploratory experiences, where individuality and personality are provided with the opportunity to grow and be given a voice. The study of music offers lifelong opportunities to develop the imagination in unique ways, through listening to familiar and unfamiliar works, coming to know and understand sounds internally, creating sound pictures or stories and expressing feelings and emotions in sound.

Learning music is an intrinsically motivating, meaningful and rewarding activity for young people because it is hands-on; fully engaging the students in activities that relate to, and have a connection with the world experienced by them outside the classroom. Music fosters both the specific skills related to the subject and a range of transferable skills that may apply to other individual and collaborative endeavours. Through movement, sound, symbol and image, engaging with music can transform people's creative ideas into expressive works that communicate feelings, meanings and interpretations to a wider audience.

Music is important as a catalyst for building cultural capital within the individual student and the class collective. Through encountering and engaging with an array of music activities, we can ensure that we continue to develop future citizens that are culturally engaged, culturally aware, and culturally connected. Being culturally aware heightens student understanding of both national and international cultural identities. With an increasingly diverse and pluralist population, this understanding of others through a cultural lens will encourage students to develop as responsible and ethical citizens.

Music is a source of understanding history, reflecting the social and cultural context and the era of its creation. Music can portray the cultural identity of a country, the mood of the people, or the thoughts of the individuals who live there. Music education brings the young person to an awareness and appreciation of their own unique cultural environment and ethos. In engaging students with the rich background of their native musical traditions as well as other musical genres, music education contributes to the students' knowledge and understanding of others, their times, their cultures, and traditions.

Aim

The music specification aims to contribute to the development of artistic awareness and understanding, self-expression, self-esteem, imagination and multicultural sensitivity, and therefore, to the development of the whole person. Students will develop the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to produce and engage with authentic and original music, that is both theirs and the music of others. In doing so, they will develop the music literacy, critical skills and language necessary to engage with today's musical world.

Structure

Learning outcomes in the junior cycle Music specification are organized into three strands, each with its own strand elements.

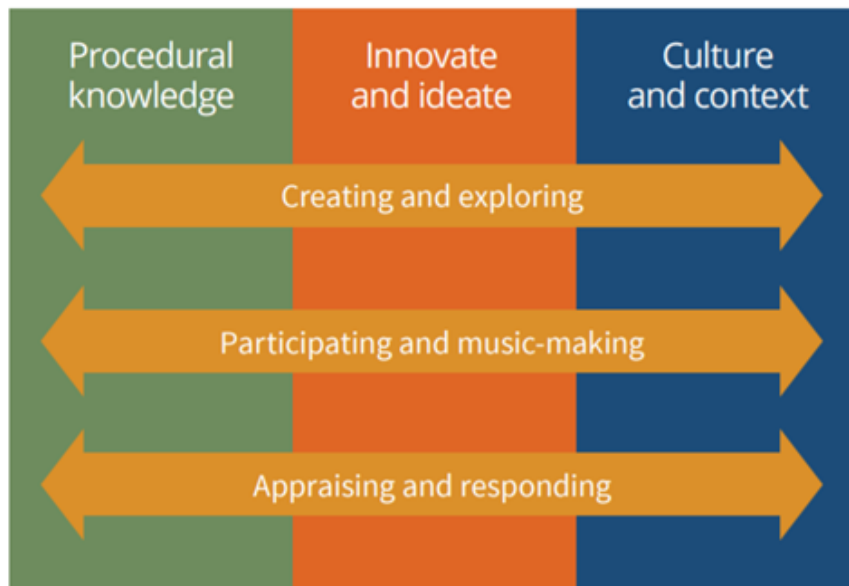


Figure 1: The three strands in junior cycle Music

There is potential for teachers to include LGBTI+ content and perspectives into their teaching **and** assessment of learning outcomes in junior cycle Music. Sample learning outcomes with scope for inclusion of LGBTI+ content and perspectives include:

Strand One: Procedural Knowledge

ELEMENT: Creating and exploring

- 1.2 create and present a short piece, using instruments and/or other sounds in response to a stimulus (1)

ELEMENT: Appraising and responding

- 1.14 compare pieces of music that are similar in period and style by different composers from different countries

(1) Stimulus could be for example an existing piece of music, a visual, a graphic, a work of art, an object, a texture or a word.

Strand two: Innovate and ideate

ELEMENT: Creating and exploring

- 2.2 create a musical statement (such as a rap or an advertising jingle) about a topical issue or current event and share with others the statement's purpose and development

ELEMENT: Participating and music-making

- 2.7 create and present some musical ideas using instruments and/or found sounds to illustrate moods or feelings expressed in a poem, story or newspaper article

ELEMENT: Appraising and responding

- 2.8 analyse the chordal structure of excerpts from a range of songs and compile a list of songs with similar chord structures and progressions
- 2.10 develop a set of criteria for evaluating a live or recorded performance; use these criteria to complete an in-depth review of a performance

Strand three: Culture and context

ELEMENT: Creating and exploring

- 3.1 collaborate with fellow students and peers to produce a playlist and a set of recordings to accompany a local historical event or community celebration

ELEMENT: Appraising and responding

- 3.6 associate/match music excerpts to a variety of texts (words, film, language) and justify the reasons as to why this piece of music was chosen to match the text

Ideas for Teaching and Learning:

Facilitate your students to:

- study the lives and music of LGBTI+ composers and musicians from different eras and parts of the world. For example, Tchaikovsky, Ivor Novello, Ethel Smyth, Benjamin Britten, Brian Molko, Laura Jane Grace, Frank Ocean, Ani DiFranco, Kele Okereke, Olly Alexander, Sam Smith, George Michael, Elton John, Freddy Mercury etc.
- listen to soundtracks from films and musical theatre that explore LGBTI+ issues and talk about the role of music in bringing people together and helping them express themselves and their emotions.
- explore how different genres of music have been informed by culture and tradition, particularly in relation to gender and sexual orientation.

- compare and contrast the effectiveness and impact of original and later musical performances by people of different genders.
- discuss musicians and performers who fulfil or challenge stereotypes about what it is to be 'male' or 'female'.
- sing, play or write music with specific LGBTI+ content, such as Same Love by Macklemore. See: <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-lists/25-essential-lgbtq-pride-songs-199348/melissa-etheridge-come-to-my-window-1993-112124/>
For example, ask students to write another verse for Same Love, one which must fit with the chorus and be focused on promoting equality.
- examine how music has been used to generate social change, including LGBTI+ equality, and discuss whether musicians have a responsibility to be role models and create positive change.
- produce their own PRIDE or Stand-Up Awareness week playlist.