

MUSIC

TEACHING AND LEARNING SYLLABUS

Primary & Lower Secondary

Implementation starting from
2015 Primary One and Two Cohorts



Ministry of Education
SINGAPORE

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Introduction

The syllabus is developed on the premise that all children are musical¹ and have the innate ability to listen, sing, dance, play and express themselves musically. When learning experiences are tailored to develop children's musical abilities, the complete musicians inside them begin to emerge². In addition, music has the potential to develop extra-musical skills, including critical thinking skills, psychomotor skills, social awareness, and moral and cultural values, all of which contribute to the holistic development of a child.

Aims

The 3 U L P D U \ D Q G / R Z is offered to all students in primary and secondary schools. It is a key part of the curriculum which every child is provided a basic music education, giving them opportunities to develop a connection to music. This contributes to the future development and preservation of Singapore's cultural heritage. Music, being an integral part of many cultures, also provides a means to raise global awareness amongst students. The processes involved in music performing and creating develop skills such as listening skills, fine motor skills, creative thinking skills and social skills. Music enables students to express their thoughts and ideas.

The aims of the 3 U L P D U \ D Q G / R Z Music Syllabus are as follows: H F R Q G D U \

- a. Develop awareness and appreciation of music in local and global cultures
- b. Develop ability for creative expression and communication through music
- c. Provide the basis to develop an informed and life-long involvement in music

¹ Campbell, P. S & Scott-Kassner, C. (2013). Music in Children, Boston, MA: Schirmer, Cengage Learning, p8:

The author quoted studies by anthropologist John Blacking as well as psychologist Howard Gardner that suggested children possess musical abilities that could be nurtured.

² Ibid., p8-9:

The author suggests that the development of children's musical skills and understanding (e.g. listening, singing, playing instruments, musical inventions) are inter-connected, and is best acquired through instruction.

Syllabus Structure

The syllabus spans across four key stages from Primary One to Secondary Two. Each stage comprises two levels. The expected knowledge and skills that students should acquire over the two years of each stage are detailed in the learning outcomes. Each stage builds upon the competencies from the previous stage(s).

STAGE	LEVEL			
4				S1-2
3			P5-6	
2		P3-4		
1	P1-2			

Table 1: Stages of the Primary and Lower Secondary Music Syllabus

The learning outcomes are organised around five overarching Learning Objectives (LOs). All learning outcomes should be addressed and learned in an integrative manner, where elements and concepts are learned through active musical experiences, such as music creation and performance as well as movement in music; and where the display of musical skills (listening, creating, performing), draw on students' learning and understanding of musical elements and concepts. The following diagram summarises the approach in which the five LOs can be achieved.

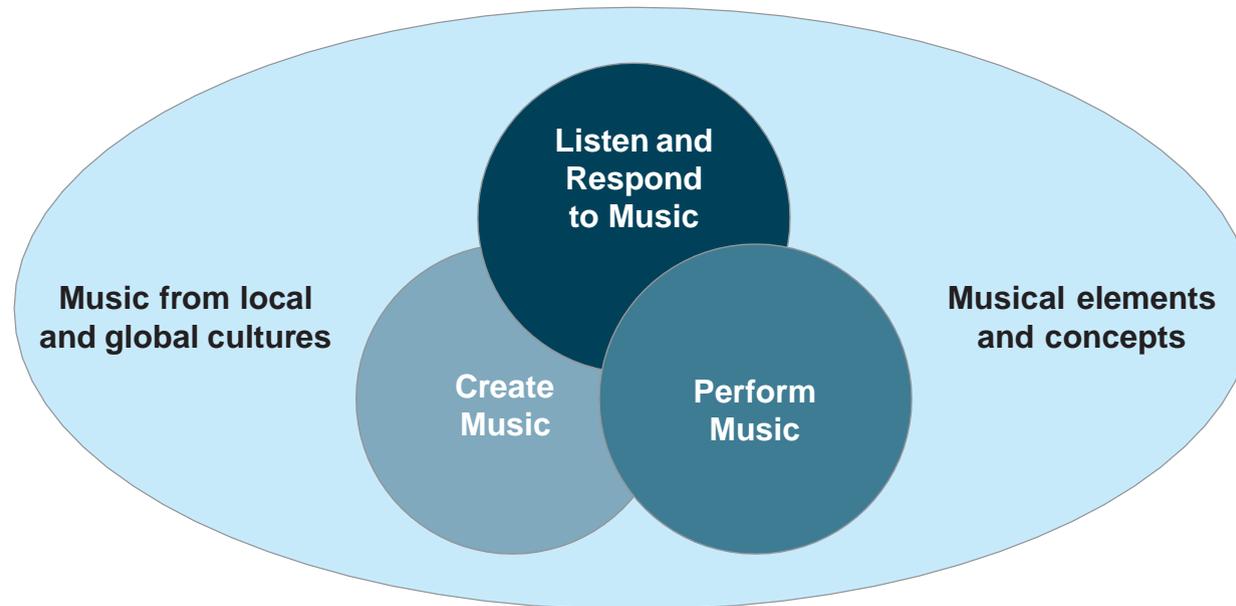


Figure 1: Framework for teaching and learning in the Primary and Lower Secondary Music Syllabus

LO1: Perform Music in both instrumental and vocal settings, individually and in groups

Through performing music, students will be equipped with the musical capacities to express themselves. They will be exposed to an array of music repertoire to expand their musical experiences.

By the end of Stage Three (Primary Six), students will have played a range of classroom music instruments and can perform on a main melodic instrument (e.g. recorder, guitar) with good tone and expression.

By the end of Stage Four (Secondary Two), students will have performance experience with an array of instruments of their choice, such as the guitar, keyboards and drums.

TYPE OF INSTRUMENTS	SUGGESTED LIST (PRIMARY)	SUGGESTED LIST (SECONDARY)
Classroom instruments	Tambourine, triangle, castanet, shaker, wooden agogo, 2-tone block, claves, maracas, tambourine, sleigh bells, finger cymbals, Orff xylophones and metallophones, hand bells, guiro, hand drum, bongo, conga, etc. (Teachers should ensure that instruments are played with the appropriate techniques.)	
Main melodic instrument (of school's choice)	At Stages 2 – 3, one main instrument will be offered to students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recorder • Keyboard • Guitar • Ukulele • Xylophone³ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keyboard • Guitar • Ukulele • Melodic instruments learnt at Primary level or through participation in Music CCAs

Table 2: Suggested list of instruments for schools

LO2: Create Music in both instrumental and vocal settings, individually and in groups

Music creating processes harness and develop students' innate creativity within the context of music. Through musical activities such as improvisation and music composition, students will apply the musical skills and concepts that they have acquired through listening and performing, thus drawing a connection and relevance to all that they are learning.

By the end of Stage Three, students will be able to compose a simple melody and be adept at rhythmic and melodic improvisation within a given structure.

By the end of Stage Four, students will be more adept at exploring music materials freely both as a group and an individual. Students will also be able to communicate their ideas through music.

³ Schools who opt to introduce pitched percussion as the main instruments should ensure that students are taught proper mallet holding techniques as well as percussion techniques.

LO5: Understand musical elements and concepts

The learning of musical elements and concepts is synonymous to the learning of the music language. With the fundamental understanding of the building blocks and concepts that constitute music, students will be able to better understand and appreciate the music they listen to. In addition, they will have had sufficient skills to explore the subject further. Musical elements and concepts are best taught through musical experiences.

By the end of Stage Three, students will be able to describe and express the musical elements and concepts when listening, performing and creating music of various genres and cultures.

By the end of Stage Four, students will be able to demonstrate and articulate an understanding of the elements and concepts of music through listening, performing and creating music.

Suggested Pedagogies for Teaching Music

Appropriate pedagogies and teaching approaches are key to providing a meaningful learning experience for students. Teachers are encouraged to plan lessons that engage the students through a variety of musical experiences.

An effective approach to engage the students includes involving them in decision-making during the process of performing, creating and listening to music. Through techniques like effective questioning, teachers can encourage students to express their thoughts and ideas, and yet provide sufficient scaffold for them to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills. Teachers are encouraged to weave in opportunities for collaborative learning, and to also consider the musical background of the students when designing lessons and selecting music materials.

A musical music lesson refers to one where the instructional experience revolves around the music itself. The teacher should involve the students aurally and kinaesthetically in the music⁵. Principles of music specific pedagogies such as Kodaly⁶, Dalcroze⁷ and Orff⁸ should be harnessed in the teaching of music. These are three distinct approaches which could be adapted and delivered in the primary and secondary classrooms.

⁵ Campbell, P.S. (2004). *Teaching Music Globally*. (New York: Oxford University Press). p xvii

⁶ Kodaly is a pedagogy that advocates developing children's musical abilities through performing, creating, listening, critical thinking and musical literacy (reading and writing). Singing is the most direct means to music learning, while movement (e.g. singing games) is critical for children's musical development. Instrumental learning should include singing. It is needful that the repertoire is age-appropriate and of good quality.

⁷ Dalcroze Eurhythmics is a pedagogy where every musical concept is taught and experienced through movement of all parts of the body. This is viewed as an effective way to enhance musicianship as well as improving co-ordination, concentration and other skills needed to be a good musical performer. This in turn increases confidence and the ability to feel music with the whole body, allowing development of auditory memory, communication, expression and creativity.

⁸ Orff Schulwerk is based on things children like to do: sing, chant rhymes, clap, dance, and keep a beat on anything near at hand. These are directed into learning music by hearing and making music first, then reading and writing it later. It is a total, active involvement in music making that incorporates speech, singing, movement, and instrument playing in a creative environment.

Assessment

Assessment is integral to the teaching and learning process. Assessment should be carried out regularly to provide students with information about their strengths and to help them bridge learning gaps. The information also allows teachers to review their teaching approaches and strategies. Music assessments could be carried out through a variety of ways to facilitate students' learning. These include listening activities (which could include responding through movement), music performances, improvisation or composition tasks, written assignments or reflection journals.

While it is not necessary to assess all the learning outcomes in one specific assessment task, teachers should ensure that all five Learning Objectives are addressed in the course of the year.

The use of information and Communications Technology (iCT) in the Teaching and Learning of Music

The use of ICT can enrich and support the teaching and learning of music in different ways:

- a. ICT to manage non-music specific teaching and learning
ICT tools can be used to improve the level of student engagement in class, promote self-directed learning and facilitate the gathering of information and discussions. Examples of such ICT tools include:
 - E-Learning music packages
 - The Internet and various forms of Social Media such as Internet Forums, Blogs, Podcasts, Facebook and Youtube.
- b. ICT as a tool to develop specific musicianship skills
ICT can be harnessed to reinforce musical concepts and skills such as aural and sight-reading skills. There are available software and dedicated websites which focus on music theory and aural skills. Students can be taught to use these learning resources independently.

c. ICT as a tool to develop music creating skills

ICT tools can also be used to facilitate the creative processes. ICT tools considered here include dedicated music creating software and hardware (e.g. electronic keyboards) designed to help students perform a specific music creating task such as performing, composing, arranging, recording and improvising. With appropriate teaching approaches and scaffolding, students will develop basic skills in music creating while experiencing a more authentic process of music making. This is similar to musicians in the industry who compose, arrange, perform or record a piece of music.

While acknowledging the benefits of ICT tools in the music classroom, it is important to highlight that in order for students to fully benefit from such tools, they should first gain adequate experience in music making (performing and creating) with actual musical instruments, whether on an individual basis or in a group setting. This prior hands-on experience in music making will then provide a good foundation and valuable reference for further development.

21st Century Competencies in the Music Classroom

The music classroom is a natural platform to nurture core values, develop social and emotional competencies, as well as many of the 21st Century Competencies, which will better prepare our students to thrive in a fast-changing and highly-connected world.

Values shape a person's character, beliefs, attitudes and actions. One's knowledge and skills must be underpinned by values. Hence values form the core of the framework of 21st Century Competencies. The Social and Emotional Competencies in the middle ring represent the skills necessary for children to effectively manage their emotions and relationships, make responsible decisions and handle challenging situations. The outer ring indicates the different competencies our children need to thrive in the globalised world.

Together, these competencies will enable our students to tap into the opportunities of the digital age while staying committed to Singapore. The desired outcomes are attributes for Singaporeans upon completion of their formal education in Singapore. The diagram below illustrates the framework for the 21st Century Competencies and student outcomes⁹.

⁹ Ministry of Education, Singapore. *Nurturing Our Young for the Future: Competencies for the 21st Century*.

LO4 Appreciate Music from local and global cultures

Students should be able to:

(i) Understand the role of music in society

- discuss the different roles that people take in a music performance (e.g. conductor, audience, musician).
- understand and demonstrate appropriate behaviour in different performance contexts.

(ii) Appreciate music from the Singapore culture

- discuss the role of National and Community Songs in Singapore.
- recognise some of the cultural music and instruments in the Singaporean context, e.g. Chinese opera, Malay kompong, Indian classical music.
- identify and sing the different kinds of folksongs and community songs that can be heard in the Singaporean context, including the following from the

Indicative Repertoire:

- Count on Me, Singapore; Sing Your Way Home; Make Courtesy Our Way of Life; Munnaeru Vaalibaa (Song of Youth); Dayung Sampan; Rasa Sayang Eh!; Burung Kakak Tua; Xiang Xin Wo Ba Xin Jia Po (相信我吧·新加坡)

(iii) Appreciate music from global cultures

- recognise, aurally, the music and instruments from:
 - at least 2 cultures in South East Asia: Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, the Philippines
 - the Western classical tradition: Programme music and their composers, e.g. Peter and the Wolf by Prokofiev; The Four Seasons by Vivaldi; and various ballet music.

Notes

Handwriting practice area consisting of 10 sets of horizontal lines. Each set includes a top line, a middle line, and a bottom line, providing a guide for letter height and placement.

Notes

Handwriting practice area consisting of 12 sets of horizontal lines. Each set includes a solid top line, a dashed midline, and a solid bottom line, providing a guide for letter height and placement.

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Handwriting practice area consisting of 10 sets of horizontal lines. Each set includes a solid top line, a dashed midline, and a solid bottom line, providing a guide for letter height and placement.