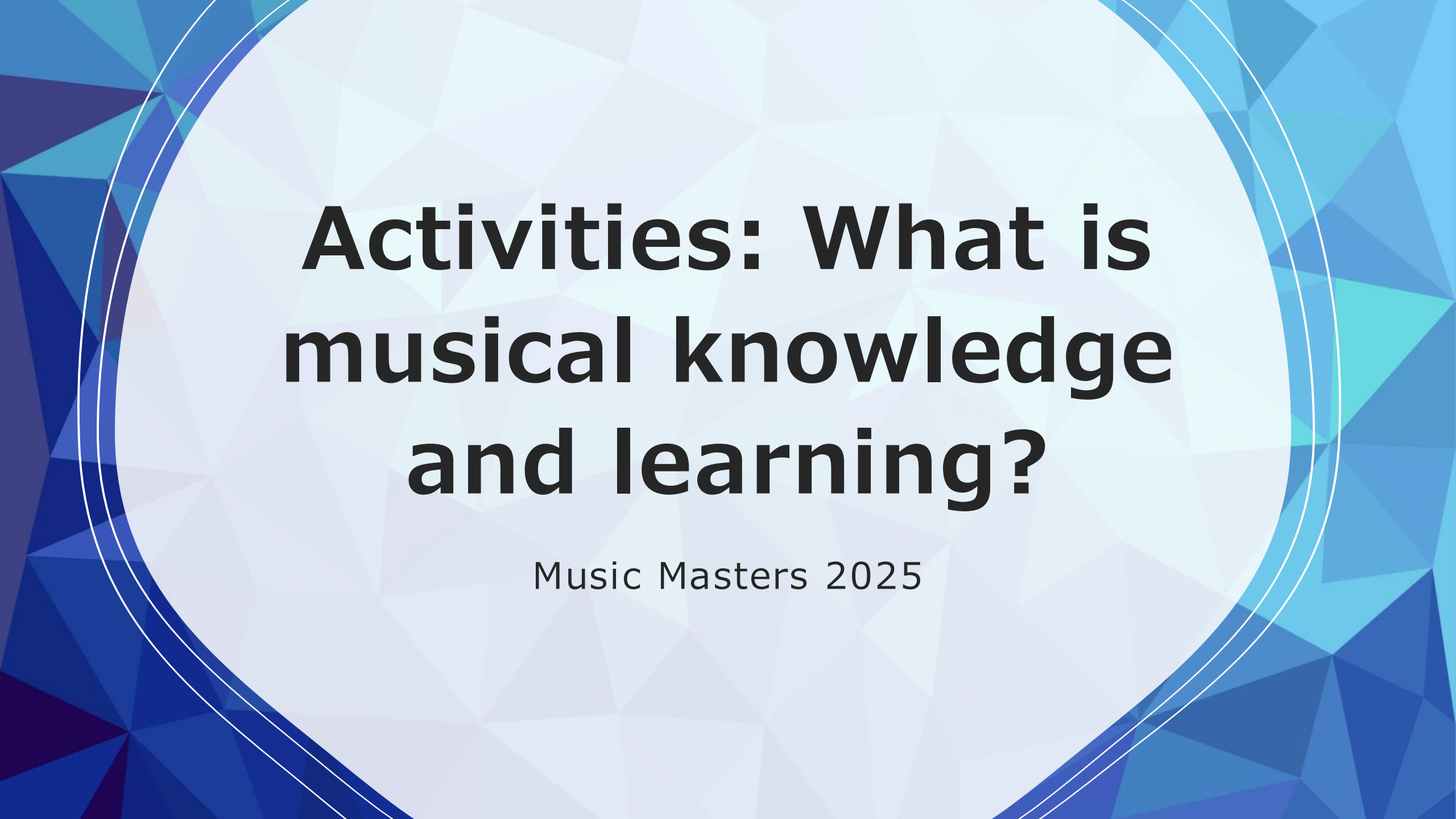




Activities: What is musical knowledge and learning?

Music Masters 2025

Activity 1 (15 minutes)

Drawing on your own experiences as musical learners and teachers, what are the characteristics of a *musical* music lesson?

- + What do you see and hear in the classroom?
- + What does the teacher do? What pedagogies (teaching approaches) does she adopt?
- + What do pupils do in musical music lessons? What and how do they learn?
- + What are the barriers to musical teaching and musical learning (e.g. teaching approaches/assessment/curriculum content).

Develop a short statement which encapsulates for you what musical music teaching is- a music teaching 'credo'. Add to this through the first few weeks of the course adding to it and amending it.

Activity

The following quote is from Nicholas Cooke, emeritus professor of music at Cambridge University. What does he mean and what might be the implications for teaching music musically?

*'...the extraordinary illusion- for that is what it is- that there is such a **thing** as music rather than simply the **acts of making and receiving it**, might well be considered the basic premise of the Western "art" [classical] tradition.'* (Cook, 2003: 65). (my emphases).

Discuss...

Activity: Take on piece of music from your playlist that you feel could be the basis of a lesson for KS2. What knowledge 'about' and 'how' would you teach from that music? What activities would you do that would enable the children to get inside the music (Knowledge 'of:').

Knowledge 'about'	Knowledge 'how'	Knowledge 'of'
What a round is... What 4 time is.. Knowing the history and meaning of the words... Knowing what note it starts on...	How to sing and recognise a 'round'... How to breath in the right places... How to sing in an ensemble... How to conduct in 4 time.	The expressive character of the piece (in the same way a place or person has a character)... The shape or journey of the music as it reaches out and then comes home... The expressive potential of the music. What would happen if we sang is 'spiky' or 'like a lament'... Creative engagement with music. Being inside the music

Activity

The following quote is from Nicholas Cooke, emeritus professor of music at Cambridge University. What does he mean and what might be the implications for teaching music musically?

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Discuss...

Discussion/Activity What 'praxial' knowledge is this girl demonstrating non-verbally here?

How do you think she has learnt to sing this song?

How do the three types of knowledge (how/about/of) interact?



Activity 4: Embodied Musical Knowledge in Action



- What musical knowledges (how/about/of) are demonstrated in this performance? What can the 'pupil' do? What musical attributes and dispositions does he demonstrate?
- What is the role of the 'teacher' here? How does he help the child make musical progress?

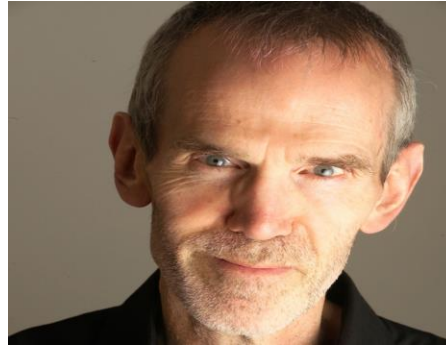
ACTIVITY

A Sort of Hinterland- Howard Skempton

Speak a poem, verse or rhyme
So quietly that the words seem
veiled;

Not quite whispered
But loud enough to make sense
To those next to you.

Play the rhythm of the words:
Not loudly;
But loudly enough to be heard
By those around you.



Reflect the rise and fall of a phrase
In the rise and fall of notes,
Within a small range;
Or in loudness and softness:
Swelling and subsiding
Always gently.

After a time
Just listen and imitate
As if in a conversation

Activity: The “Good enough” Music teacher (Swanwick 1999/2008)

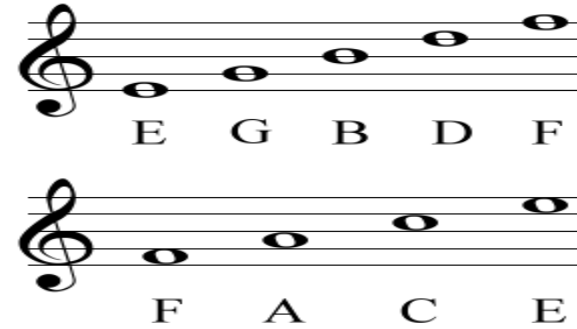
The ‘good enough’ music teacher. is governed by three principles:

- I. Care for music as **discourse**
- II. Care for the musical **discourse** of children and young people
- III. Musical **fluency** first and last.

Swanwick argues that applying these three principles in your planning and teaching will result in a musical environment where pupils learn music musically.

WHAT DO YOU THINK THESE THREE TERMS MEAN AND WHAT WOULD THEY LOOK/SOUND LIKE?

The Notation Debate:



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We have tackled that [pupils lack of preparedness for A Level] not by dumbing down A Level but by increasing the challenge of GCSE. At GCSE, students now have to read and write notation. (Nick Gibb, 2016)

A small primary school choir sang with reasonable accuracy and good diction. The specialist teacher sang and modelled well. But the pupils were only shown the song words and not the notation. Good opportunities for pupils to see and understand melody shape, rhythm, beat and rests were missed. (Ofsted Report: 2013)

Notation is the gateway into the world of music. Without being able to read music a child is shut out from the world and the riches it has to offer (Anon)

For the majority of the world's people, musical literacy does not involve the ability to read and write music...For many musical literacy operates as the ability to communicate with others in a practical way. [musical discourse]. (Robert Kwami, 2001)

The learning of staff notation will only be of value to specialist performers who intend to spend the greater part of their professional lives performing or studying an existing musical literature. If the National Curriculum is genuinely intended to encourage all pupils at Key Stages 1 to 4 to engage with sound, then there is no practical reason why they need to be burdened with an anachronistic notational system: technology allows students to compose directly onto a retrievable system. (Terry, 1994, p. 110)

From a psychological perspective, and if I must teach notation, then the sequence of learning is always from the music to the sign[sound before symbol]. In short, we need to be fully immersed in sounds and meaning before we code them. This is an obvious and long standing mantra but is less easily turned into a pedagogy that has musical integrity. (Philpott, 2017)

"Music must not be approached from its intellectual, rational side, nor should it be conveyed to the child as a system of algebraic symbols, or as the secret writing of a language with which he has no connection. The way should be paved for direct intuition." (Kodaly 1974. p. 120)

What are your thoughts about the role of notation in classroom music?

- What does it mean 'to read music'?
- When should notation be taught?
- How should notation be taught?
- What forms might notation take?

Activity:

List all forms of notation that you are aware of.

What is the relationship between notation and the sound of music in each case?

Devise a way of teaching a simple aspect of rhythmic notation (e.g. crotchets and quavers) as a 'good enough' music teacher. (Sound before symbol)

A framework for teaching music musically.

The three principles of the 'good enough' music teacher.

The “Good enough” Music teacher (Swanwick 1999/2008)

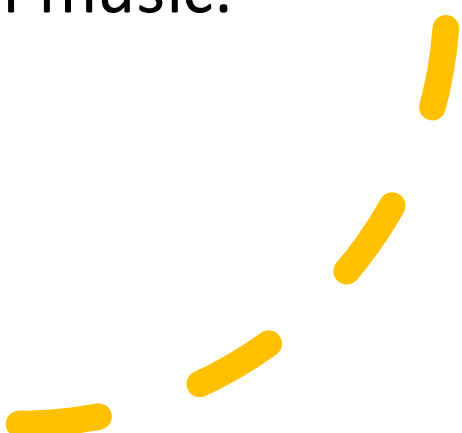
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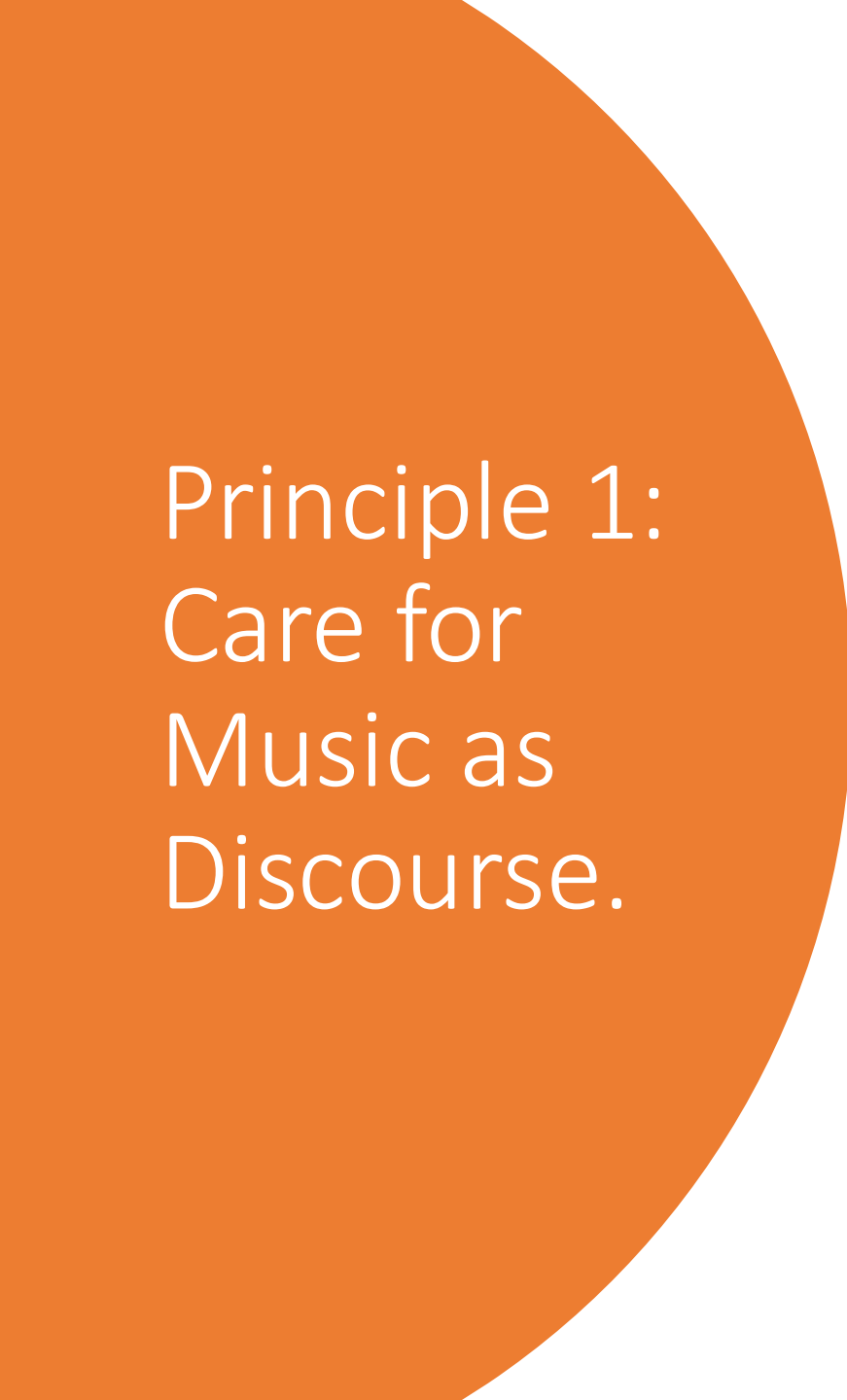
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What is music as discourse.

- Music IS central to people's lives
 - Music is used to think and communicate through musical gestures and music structures.
 - Being 'fluent' in music: being able to 'share, produce and collaborate' through music.
- 

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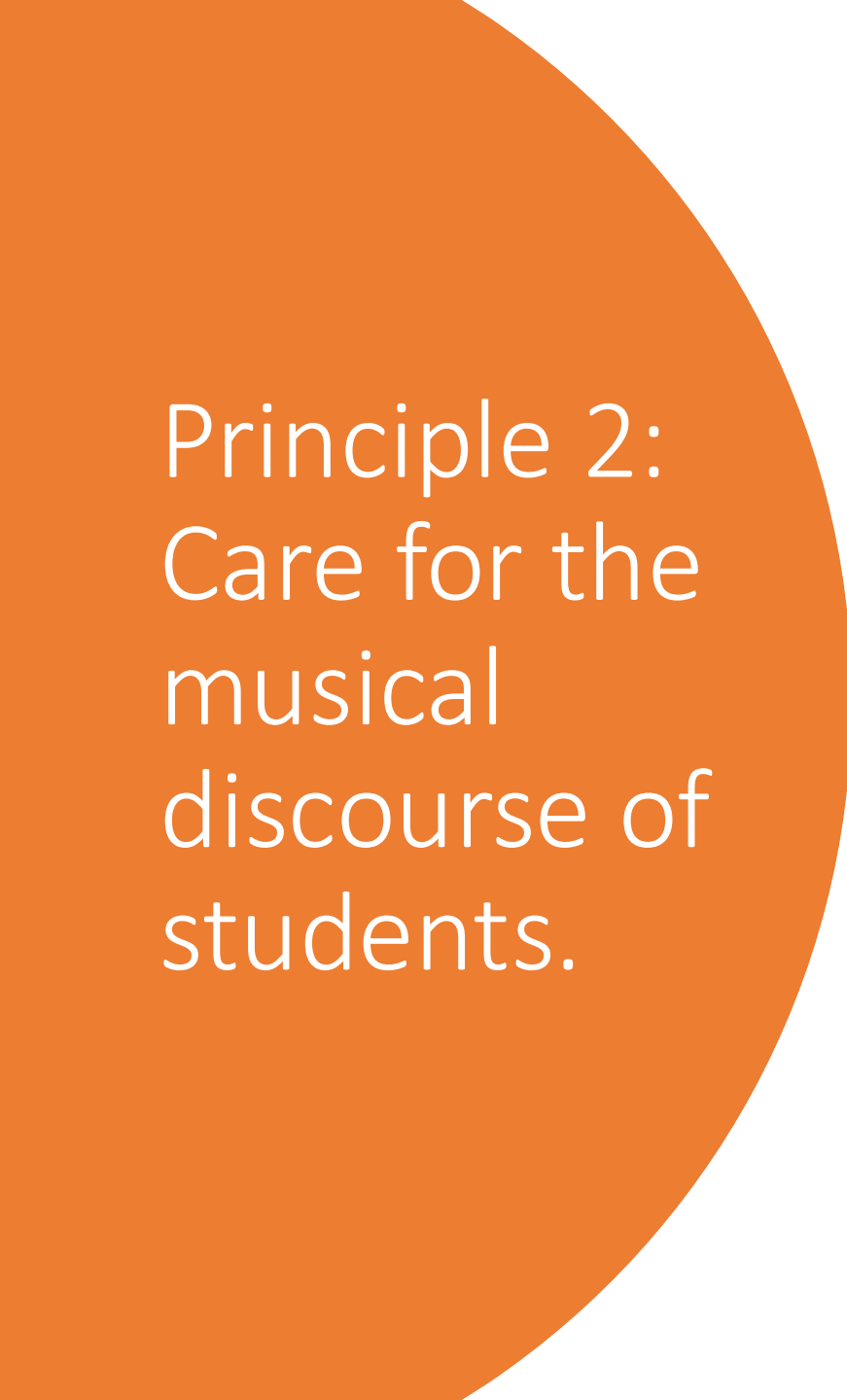
Principle 1: Care for Music as Discourse.

‘One aim of the music teacher is to bring music from the background into the foreground of awareness. Whenever music sounds, whoever makes it and however simple and complex the resources may be, the musical teacher is receptive and alert, is really listening and expects students to do the same’ (Swanwick, 1999: 44)

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Working as an effective, musical, 'good enough' music teacher.

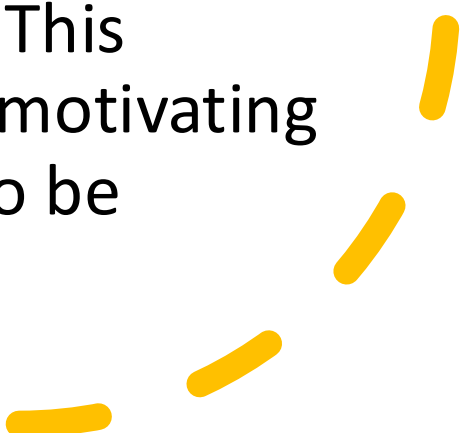
'To watch an effective music teacher at work (rather than a 'trainer' or 'instructor') is to observe this strong sense of musical intention linked to educational purposes: skills [knowledge 'How'] are used for musical ends, factual knowledge [knowledge 'About'] informs musical understanding' [Knowledge 'Of']. Music history etc...are only seen through the doors and windows of *particular musical encounters*. For it is only in these encounters that the possibilities exist to transfer tones into tunes, tunes into forms and forms into significant life events (Swanwick, 1999: 45)

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Principle 2: Care for the musical discourse of students.

‘Each student brings a realm of music understanding into [schools]. We do not introduce them to music, they are well acquainted with it, though they may not have subjected to the various forms of analysis that we may feel are important for their development’ (Swanwick, 1999: 53)

Almost all young people care for music as discourse. It is important to them. This generates a spontaneous and self-motivating desire to learn music. This needs to be nurtured and built on through...

A series of yellow dashed lines are located in the bottom right corner of the slide, forming a curved, decorative shape.

‘the natural
energies that
sustain
spontaneous
learning’
(Bruner)

These are:

Curiosity:

- Through telling them things which interest them. (Direct Instruction)
- Introducing them to music which stimulates their interest.
- Inviting them to ‘get messy’ with the musical materials
- Give them space to make musical explorations.

Question: Are pupils in your lesson interested and curious about the music they are working with and have been introduced to?

Competence

- Competence is not achieved through ad-hoc musical activity but through careful and sequenced (planned) programmes of study based on musical encounters through which are threaded the development of skills (knowledge how) and factual knowledge (knowledge about)
- Competence is different in different musical settings [praxial education]- individual and group- and in different musical traditions.
- How to negotiate one's space musically and personally when making music together is a competence. e.g. do young people know how to work in groups?
- Competence is linked to curiosity in the making of musical decisions: can pupils make appropriate musical decisions within the context of the musical tradition they are working in ('praxial' music making).

Emulating.

Lies at the foundation of musical interest and motivation:

- Musical Role models that instigated musical interest and become part of a musical identity
- The teacher as a musical role model:

‘Is the teacher a model of sensitive musical behaviour?’

Does the teacher use her own musical skills in a musical way?

- Do/can the pupils use each other as musical role models?
- Do pupils listen to good performances/compositions/improvisations
- Does the teacher frame talk about music in ways that go beyond the routinized?

Principle 3: Fluency First and Last

- Musical lessons are musical encounters which develop pupils' *musical fluency as creators of and responders to music*.
- Key to this is the ability to 'play by ear'. It is only through the development of the ear that children can develop musically
- Musical fluency takes place over musical literacy (which is not to say that children should not work with notations).

Activity: Your
own musical
skills and the
principles of
'good enough'
music teacher.

Plan the first 10 minutes of a group lesson for key stage 2 children which features your own musical/instrumental skills. This lesson might focus on:

- Composing or improvising using a picture, poem or musical idea/motif as a stimulus;
- Developing the children's understanding of a particular aspect of music e.g. pulse or dynamics;
- Children listening and responding verbally and musically to music that you play them on your instrument or via media (e.g. one of your playlist).

Be able to demonstrate/describe how it meets the three principles of Swanwick's 'good enough' music teacher:

1. Care for music as discourse
2. Care for the musical discourse of young people
3. Musical fluence first and last.

Present your ideas to the rest of the group.

Possible Stimuli



Water Lilies and Japanese Bridge.

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Snowball

Shelly Silverstein

I made myself a snowball
As perfect as could be.
I thought I'd keep it as a
pet
And let it sleep with me.
I made it some pyjamas
And a pillow for its head.
Then last night it ran away,
But first it wet the bed.

[using or not using
Skempton's directions]

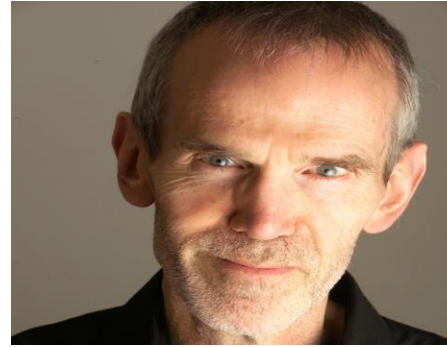
LA CUCARACHA

Musical notation for the song 'LA CUCARACHA'. The notation is written on two staves. The first staff is in treble clef and the second staff is in bass clef. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The first staff has a key signature change to two flats (B-flat and E-flat) for the first measure, then back to one flat. The second staff has a key signature change to two flats (B-flat and E-flat) for the first measure, then back to one flat. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals. Labels 'motif 1', 'exact repetition', and 'motif 2 (answer)' are placed below the first staff. Labels 'motif 1a', 'exact repetition', and 'motif 2a' are placed below the second staff. Chord symbols 'F', 'C7', and 'F' are placed above the first staff, and 'C7', 'C7', and 'F' are placed above the second staff.

A Sort of Hinterland- Howard Skempton

Speak a poem, verse or rhyme
So quietly that the words seem
veiled;
Not quite whispered
But loud enough to make sense
To those next to you.

Play the rhythm of the words:
Not loudly;
But loudly enough to be heard
By those around you.



Reflect the rise and fall of a phrase
In the rise and fall of notes,
Within a small range;
Or in loudness and softness:
Swelling and subsiding
Always gently.

**After a time
Just listen and imitate
As if in a conversation**

Activity Post Session

Engaging with music education literature:

- Read Pellegrino, K (2009) **Connections Between Performer and Teacher Identities in Music**
- Make brief notes on the points made in the article and ideas explored
- Write a short paragraph which outlines the implications of what Pellegrino writes for:
 - your own professional development and identities.
 - your approaches to teaching young people in your teaching contexts.

Activity : Applying the Principles

Applying these three principles at all times in your planning and teaching will result in a musical environment where pupils learn music musically.

Working together, outline a short activity or teaching session where these three principles of the 'good enough' music teacher are put into practice? Use your musical and instrumental skills to model musical teaching and learning.

- I. Care for music as **discourse**
- II. Care for the musical **discourse** of children and young people
- III. Musical **fluency** first and last.