

Louder and softer

This game is aimed at challenging the senses, encouraging the students to become more reliant on listening.

What you need

- an instrument of some sort that can be played loudly and softly
- an open space with safe boundaries
- a blind fold

What to do

1. Choose one student to be the seeker and to wear the blindfold.
2. Choose another student to be the musician.
3. The rest of the students spread out around the room. Once they find a spot, they need to stay still.
4. The musician has the job of playing the instrument and guiding the seeker by changing the volume of the instrument. The aim is to assist the seeker to find someone hidden in the room. The louder the music, the closer they are to someone. Once the person is found, they become the next seeker and the people in the room can move to a new spot.
5. You can extend the game by including other musical instructions such as a fast beat means to turn left while a slow beat means to turn right. If you have an instrument that can play different pitch, notes can also be instructions.

Catch me if you can

This activity encourages listening and concentration.

What you need

- two blindfolds
- two different instruments

What to do

1. Choose two students to play the instruments. One is to be the seeker, the other is to be found. The remaining students spread themselves around the room in a big circle.
2. Each student needs to make up a short rhythm with his or her instrument.
3. The students are then blindfolded and the seeker needs to find the other student by calling with their rhythm. The student being looked for responds with their rhythm while trying not to be found.
4. To extend the game, give a few more instruments to the observers who can add their own rhythm to the call and response to increase the challenge.

Sounds like...

Have you ever seen a spinning barber's pole or the drawings of Escher? Your eyes cannot quite work out what is going on, whether things are going up or down. Our ears can also play tricks on us. These are called aural illusions. Aural relates to our ears and hearing.

This activity supports the *Strike a Chord* exhibit Sounds Strange, which explores aural illusions.

Shepard effect

One type of aural illusion is the Shepard effect. When we listen to music, we can work out whether the notes are going up or down by comparing the notes with each other. By taking away that information, it becomes impossible for us to work out what is up and down. In fact, the pitch of the notes does not seem to change at all.

Visit the following websites and listen to a scale that seems to go up forever.

<http://www.cs.ubc.ca/nest/imager/contributions/flinn/Illusions/ST/st.html>

<http://www.unl.edu/secd/psychoa/experiments/shepard1.html>

Sounds like a story!

This activity encourages students to explore their own environment for “instruments” to give life to a radio play. The ideas for the sound effect tools have been taken with the author’s permission from the website below. More excellent ideas for sound effects can be found at http://home.sprynet.com/~palermo/mtr_radi.htm

What you need

- a story that lends itself to sound effects (a story with animals, space, fights or magic will be great)

What to do

1. As a class, read through the story and then decide what sounds effects need to be added. Encourage the students to be creative about what might be able to be used. There are some examples listed below.
2. Once the sound effects are organized, try taping the story with effects, then sit back and enjoy the show!

Some ideas for sound effect tools are listed here.

Crash box – used for breaking furniture, dropped plates, the thunder crack, car crashes etc. Experiment with rolling and shaking it to change the sounds.

Use a large cake tin with a lid that can be taped on. Fill the tin with broken coffee cups, a crushed aluminum can, coins, nails, pieces of wood and a few handfuls of gravel. Tape the lid on tightly and start to shake and roll!

Thunder sheet – Use a large (120 x 60 x 6cm) high impact styrene plastic. Check out your local hardware shop for off cuts. This can be rippled with two hands along the same edge for the rumble of thunder and can also provide alien music for space travel.

Egg maracas – Can be made out of plastic capsules from toys or chocolate. Filled with sand, rice, lentils, these can supply the sound track to a variety of events such as a journey through a rainforest or rain falling.

Sword fight – Some egg flips and some large metal cooking spoons for the sounds of the swords. Add a crash box and some battle cries and you have a war!

Gunshot – Clipboards can be used to produce this sound effect. You can also try using a drummer’s stick striking a cushion.

Other ideas include stiff plastic bags for fire or static, teacup saucers for plates and toy mobile phones for space and phone sounds.

Cow horn with a twist

This reed instrument will have your friends guessing until they work out the secret behind the cow call.

What you need

- a square piece of paper. Square off an A4 sheet for a good size to begin with.
- a pencil
- sticky tape
- scissors

What to do

1. Put the pencil in one corner of the paper on a diagonal and roll the paper tightly around the pencil to form a tube.
2. Use sticky tape to stop the tube from unrolling.
3. Shake the pencil out from inside the tube.
4. At one end, cut the end of the paper to form a triangular reed that can sit right across
5. the end of the tube.
6. Fold the triangle over the end of the tube.
7. Place the other end of the tube in your mouth and inhale gently.
Others will not know the secret behind the sucking horn and will be amazed that you can get such a sound out of it.
8. Make sure that you cut off the end that has been in your mouth before you change players.

What difference does shortening the tube make to the sound that comes out?

Talking music

This activity encourages students to explore the different sounds their instruments can make, using volume and pitch.

What you need

- one instrument per student (In a small group you may be able to use two students at a time)
- a copy of various soundtracks or theme music and a CD player. (This can be an extension to the main activity)

What to do

Students need to work in pairs. They need to decide on a topic of conversation or an argument. While they do not need to have a written script, they need to have a fair idea about what will be said and who will say it.

Instead of using their voices, they are to use their instruments to carry on the discussion. Perform the discussion in front of the rest of the group. Can the audience guess by the sound of the instruments what the topic of conversation is?

What to notice

How can we make angry sounds with our instruments?

What about happy sounds?

Can you think of different types of music that makes us feel a certain way?

What about happy music, scared music, brave music?

What is happening?

While it is not well understood, music can be composed to produce emotions in the listeners. The composer first experiences these emotions but they appear to be transferable to the audience.

This phenomenon is further explored at

<http://www.musiceducationonline.org/cmea/Landrypaper.pdf>

Worldwide music

This activity offers some suggestions for exploring the world of instruments.

www.exploratorium.edu/music/exhibits/take_beat_back/index.html

Another great resource providing music from around the world and instructions on how to make instruments from recycled materials is “Lets make Music” by Jessica Barton Turner and Ronny Susan Schiff, published in 1995 by Hal Lenonard.

Emotion in Music

While watching a movie video together as a class, take notes on what is being shown on the screen visually.

One group of students can use a stopwatch to time and call out every two to five minute blocks. A second group of students can write descriptions of what is shown visually in each two to five minute block, while a third group of students records what the movie’s soundtrack sounds like (is the music scary, happy, sad, are there stretches of silence or sound effects).

Students can record descriptions about the movie’s images and soundtrack during each time block in a table similar to the one drawn on the next page. Once finished, photocopy each table several times and cut up each table so the rows and columns are separated.

In groups, students can try to match description of movie images with description of movie soundtrack, then compare it with the original sheets that still list the time block next to each description.

Strike a Chord psychology activities

Time	Description of movie <i>images</i>

Time	Description of movie <i>soundtrack</i>