



Do Now Activities in the Music Classroom: How activities impact learner motivation

Introduction

Research

Conclusion

Background



This study explores how the design of do now activities in a Key Stage 3 music classroom can enhance learner motivation. The approach to this research involved designing three different styles of Do Now activities and utilizing them in the classroom across a term.

The sample involved 54 students in Year 7 and Year 8. The methodology involved student surveys and questionnaires based on their experiences.

Literature Review

According to research, students should always know what to do. A "Do Now" is a short, focused written task (Lemov, 2010). Learning is stronger when students recall information, not just receive it (Agarwal, 2020). Routines and norms regarding these practices take time to build through consistent practice (Wiliam, 2010).

Examples of Do Now Activities


Romantic Period Music
Answer questions below.

Do Now:
Listen to the following excerpt and answer the questions below:

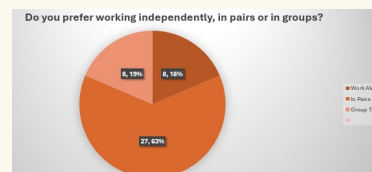
Describe:

- (i) The tempo of the music: _____
- (ii) The dynamics of the music: _____
- (iii) The mood of the music: _____
- (iv) Can you remember or identify one fact about the Romantic Period?

Task 1 Beam together the notes in these examples to make groups of 1 beat.



Analysis



Student Feedback

'Theory booklets are time consuming and boring.'

'I like identifying things when listening to music. It's cool to know stuff like that.'

'I like to write down the tempo.'

'I hate writing. Writing is what we do in English.'

'When I sing, I feel calm, refreshed and motivated before math.'

Reflection

Some students enjoy theory booklets and listening activities, and identify how they support their progress, however it can hinder motivation at the beginning of a lesson.

Conclusion

While the literature emphasizes that the most effective Do Now tasks are short, written, individual activities that promote retrieval and focus (Lemov, 2010; Agarwal, 2019), my students' responses reveal a more complex reality.

Many students do not feel motivated by traditional written tasks, even when well-designed. Instead, they express preference for interactive, musical, or collaborative starters like singing or listening which they describe as fun, calming, or engaging. Their perception of music as a subject and their expectation of a music classroom is not met when they are asked to write in silence. Although students identify the benefit of these activities in relation to their progress, these could be reframed and sequenced differently throughout lessons.

References

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- Agarwal, P. K. (2019). *Retrieval practice & Bloom's taxonomy: Do students need fact knowledge before higher order learning?* Journal of Educational Psychology
- Lemov, D. (2010). *Teach like a champion: 49 techniques that put students on the path to college* (ED516641). ERIC. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED516641>

