Music, Motion, and Imagination

This project is a novel approach to learning music and provides the students with many choices in how they can accomplish their goals.

Curriculum/State Standard
All four goals for the State of Ohio Standards in Music and the Arts are met. Also, the project is inclusive and involves all students at all levels of development including gifted, special needs, physically and mentally challenged, and normal.

Overview
Students composed an original piece of dance music using Acid Music on the computer. Then, using clay characters they created in class and following a storyboard of their own ideas, they made a claymation music video. They completed their video by editing it in iMovie and adding animated titles they had created on the computer using Swish.

Objectives
Working in small groups of 2 or 3:
• The students will compose original dance music using the “looping” software program Acid Music.
• The students will create animated titles for their original dance videos using the software program Swish.
• The students will create a storyboard depicting each of the scenes in their dance videos.
• The students will create clay figures to perform to their dance music and appear in their videos.

• The students will film claymation dance videos using the software program iStop Motion.
• The students will edit together all aspects of their videos (music, film, titles) using the software program iMovie.
• The students will publish their dance videos to VHS tape to share with their family.
• The students will share their completed claymation dance videos with their peers in the 8th grade at the end rotation of classes.

Materials
iMovie and iStop Motion Software for MAC; Swish software for Windows; Acid Music software and Loop Files; VanAken Plastalina Clay; pipe cleaners, eyes, poms; both iMac and PC computers

Readiness Activities
In 7th Grade General Music - a 7-week class - students learned how to create an original piece of music, incorporating all of the elements of music, using Acid Music. They also learned how to edit using iMovie by creating a video biography. This project began with a review of both activities to reacquaint students with Software tools that would be used in the project.

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THIS WINNING LESSON PLAN WAS SUBMITTED BY:

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“Music, Motion, and Imagination” project continued . . .

Also, a claymation Dance Video of the California Raisins was watched to give students an idea of how their video might be put together.

**Strategies/Activities**

Using the Acid Music software program, students composed an original work of music by layering and manipulating sound loops into a visual/aural timeline. The music had set parameters including style (dance), form (AB or ABA), rhythm (driving beat), melody (pitch may be changed within the program), tempo, and dynamics (fade-ins and outs on loops) and had to be at least 1 minute but no longer than 3 minutes in length. The piece had to include an introduction that was at least 15 seconds in length and a closing for final credits. Completion of the piece included converting the work to MP3 format for easy transfer from a Windows OS to a Macintosh OS computer.

After completing the music for the dance videos, the students created storyboards to define how their dance videos would begin, develop, climax, and end. The storyboard included a visualization of their clay characters and their “set designs.” All four aspects of the storyboard required that the students organize the sequential, visual development of their clay figures, as they would dance to the music in the videos.

Using the storyboard as a guide, the students created animated titles and credits for their videos using the software application Swish. The Swish files were converted to an AVI format for easy transfer from a Windows OS to a Macintosh OS computer.

After the students completed their initial work on the PC, they open transported their saved files to an iMac computer where they continued their project.

The students created clay figures using VanAken Plastalina clay, pipe cleaners, and “eyes.” They also created a simple “set” background for their performance stage.

Using iStop Motion software on the iMac, the students captured the movements of the clay figures. Before the students began their videos they had to calculate the number of “frames per second” that would be required to make their videos fit the length of their composed music. Using the calculated number, they determined the number of class periods that would be required for them to complete their filming. Having a limited number of class periods requires that the students adjust their “frames per second” to fit within their time constraints for completing their videos within a set number of days. This requirement was necessary for them to remain organized and stay on task to complete their videos on time.

Once all of the still frames had been captured the students transferred their iStop Motion videos, originally composed dance music, and animated titles into the software program iMovie. In iMovie they completed a final edit using their storyboard as a guide.

The completed videos were sent out to videotape for home and school viewing.

**Culminating Activity**

Students watched their videos together as a class.

**Evaluation**

Students were given an evaluative rubric before and after the project to assess the learning achieved. The rubric included specific questions regarding knowledge of software applications, as well as general questions regarding methods of application of various skills developed during the project. Students also critiqued their music and videos in a written summary at the conclusion of the project.