

GRAFTING NEW HARMONIES

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- Identify musical contributions of various cultural groups to American roots music;
- Recognize how diverse musical sounds can produce new harmonies in a community/culture.

SIGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: 8 - 12

TIME FRAME

Two-three 50 minute class periods

CURRICULUM STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES

I. National Council for the Social Studies

Standard 1: *Culture*

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity.

Standard 2: *Time, Continuity, & Change*

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ways human beings view themselves in and over time.

II. Mississippi Social Studies Framework: www.mde.k12.ms.us

World Geography: Competencies 2 and 4

Mississippi Studies: Competencies 3 and 6

U.S. History: Competencies 1 and 3

World History: Competency 3

Sociology: Competencies 3 and 5

Minority Studies: Competencies 1, 2 and 3

Humanities I: Competencies 3 and 6

Humanities II: Competencies 2, 3, and 6

Local Culture: Competency 3

SUPPLIES

Teacher-made list of musical types and instruments

Copies of New Harmonies script, "Other Sounds, Other Songs"

Butcher Paper; markers

Teacher-made recording of five musical types: zydeco, klezmer, tejano, Cajun, and polka

BACKGROUND FOR TEACHERS

Students will realize from this lesson the many ways music connects us, both as persons from around the world, and as members of local communities and the greater American cultural family.

SETTING THE STAGE

1. Ask students if they have any knowledge about the background of these familiar songs:

"Row, Row, Row Your Boat"	(ancient text of unknown origin, possibly African)
" Let My People Go"	(African slave spiritual)
"Amazing Grace"	(Scottish/Irish/Anglo)

2. Tell them that this lesson will help them explore the ways diverse cultural groups in this country have contributed to the development of new types of American roots music.

LESSON PROCEDURES

1. On an overhead, board, or news print, display this list:

zydeco	fiddle
rub board	tejano
accordion	Cajun
klezmer	bajo sexton
clarinet	polka

2. Tell the students their assignment is to divide the list into two categories: MUSIC TYPES and MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS. Let them check answers with a partner; lead a brief discussion to verify accuracy.

3. Divide the class into 5 groups and assign each group a type of music from the list: zydeco, klezmer, tejano, Cajun, and polka. Have available copies of the New Harmonies script, "Other Sounds, Other Songs" for students to

“diagram” on butcher paper their particular musical type. (In this case, “diagram” means to produce an illustrated graphic organizer detailing the sources of each type of music, some of the artists who perform it, and the essential instruments.) They should collect images of lyrics, artists, instruments, etc. to illustrate their graphic. This is an opportunity for students in the class from various cultural/ethnic backgrounds to add significant information to the organizer.

Helpful web sites:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_roots_music

<http://shs.starkville.k12.ms.us/mswm/MSWritersAndMusicians/music.html>

<http://www.allmusic.com>

4. After a time for presentations from the groups, lead a discussion based on these questions: “How can listening to the music of various cultural groups help us understand their histories and stories?” “What message(s) can be heard in these newer forms of roots music created, as they were, by the blending of different cultural traditions?”

5. Even though the young people may prefer to listen to rock, rap, or other forms of popular music, suggest to them that these more recent forms of roots music have a substantive place in our communities. Lead them to brainstorm a list of how music is used in their communities: church services, weddings, burials, dances, political gatherings, concerts, etc. and to make connections with the various types of *roots music*.

STUDENT PRODUCT

1. Place students in groups to plan a community/neighborhood gathering featuring some of these newer versions of *roots music*. Encourage them to contact local musicians, radio stations, etc. for assistance in planning. After each group makes a presentation to the class, determine if students are seriously interested in sponsoring such an activity for their community. If so, ask them to merge their best ideas in a “master plan,” designate committees, and begin the implementation process.

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Speakers are available from the Mississippi Arts Commission at 601-359-6030 and the Mississippi Humanities Council Speakers Bureau at 601-432-6752.

The Mississippi Musicians Hall of Fame *Music Heritage Restaurant and Museum* is located at the Jackson-Evers International Airport. Students would enjoy a visit.

