

Trance Dance

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In this project students worked in pairs to learn about a key style of music from the OCR GCSE syllabus. They explored how Trance Music has developed and created and produced their own 'trance' track using Logic Pro with the help of a MIDI Controller and samples. Students explored how Trance Music is defined as a branch of Dance Music along with its main musical features such as instrumentation and structure. Students also explored how the music industry works to sell music and created promotional material for their CD.

In the first lesson the students watched a few different Trance DJs on YouTube. After being taught about the features of the music genre and observing some photos they had to identify the different characteristics when listening to trance music of different DJs than those watched at the start of the lesson. Homework was set to research where trance parties take place. In the second lesson the students were shown how to use the A-500 MIDI keyboard with Logic Pro 9. They then started to compose a trance track in small groups, starting with a drum beat/samples and then chords. In the third lesson the students were taught about the additional parts that could feature in a trance track – bass line, arpeggiated pattern, riff, hook, ambient noise and repetitive vocals. The students then continued to compose their trance track, adding in the other parts. In the fourth lesson students were taught how trance music is structured - intro, breakdown, release and outro. They then continued to compose their trance track by structuring it into sections. Some students did not finish their pieces so they were allowed to come during lunchtime and after school to complete it. In the fifth lesson students researched how the music industry works and they produced promotional material such as posters and CD covers for their track. In the sixth lesson students were taught how to mix down their track to MP3 and burn it onto CD. Each group then performed their trance track to the rest of the class using the promotional material to tempt the other students to 'buy' their music.

The pupils benefitted as they were taught and gained experience on how to use MIDI Keyboard Controllers with Logic Pro, the technologies they will use to compose one of their pieces of GCSE coursework. They also benefitted as they learnt about one of the genres of music they may have to answer questions on in their GCSE listening exam.

As I taught the scheme of work I learnt that the students found it quite difficult to learn how to use a technology new to them while also composing. It may have been smoother if they had been taught a scheme of work about composing and using time effectively beforehand. I am going to teach the Trance Dance scheme to my Year 10 GCSE class next term; this term I am preparing them by teaching them about composing! They have already been given a basic lesson on how to use the Roland MIDI Keyboard Controllers too and some have been coming in their own time to experiment with them.

For others who would want attempt to a similar project I would suggest that the class you teach it too would firstly benefit from a background lesson on using the technologies and allow more lesson time for them to actually create their trance track.