

One + One = Half Note

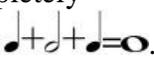
Cross Curriculum in Music

Paul D. Shoremount

Teachers are constantly trying to explain to students just how important the subject matter is that they are teaching. They also try to prove to students that what they learn in the teacher's classroom should not be forgotten the moment they walk out the door. Teachers can help students make connections that will help them learn and retain information. Concepts taught in one subject area can easily be found in one shape or form in almost any other subject.

For example, students in a math class use knowledge from their English class to solve math problems all the time. We have all heard a version of the following math problem: "A train leaves San Francisco at 6:00 pm, averaging 60 mph. Another train headed in the same direction leaves San Francisco at 10:00 pm, averaging 90 mph. How many hours after the second train leaves will it overtake the first train?" If you were able to read and understand this question, you should thank your English teacher. If you were able to solve this problem, you should thank your math teacher. Knowledge from both English and Math is involved in finding the answer to this question.

Students at Sacred Heart Academy are beginning to put one and one together and get a half note. Or should I say: Students are beginning to put a quarter note and a quarter note together to get two? Just like other subjects at Sacred Heart Academy, music and math are linked together and can be used to show students that what they learn in one subject can indeed be important somewhere else. Students have begun to do "music math" during music class. This technique not only helps to reinforce math skills, but also helps students build their music skills and requires students to use a higher level of thinking. Music math helps students learn how to read music, which translates into learning to play an instrument, which often leads to greater self-discipline. Combining music with other subjects in this way helps students gain a better understanding of the interrelatedness of all subjects. When students are able to start putting the pieces together at a younger age, they will become more successful in their education later down the road.

Students that perform music math problems must not only remember note and rest values, they must think of how the note and rest values combine to form measures. Someone who has not experienced music math before may look at the following problem and be completely confused. However, students as young as eight years old have no problem solving .

In addition to creating and solving math problems, students learned that math can be found in music when counting rhythmic patterns. Students learn that rhythmic patterns are simply another form of division. When students come to the whiteboard in the music room at Sacred Heart Academy to write in the counting of a rhythm, they first begin by recognizing each note of the rhythm. Students learn that certain notes are longer than others and therefore require more subdivision when counting.

These techniques for utilizing math in music are just one example of how cross-curriculum is being taught in schools. If students can see and use the relationships between the information they learn in different classes, they begin to gain a better understanding of both subject matters. The proof of cross-curricular study's benefit can be determined by tests and other forms of assessment. However, if you ask any teacher, they will tell you that the proof happens when

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they see new and interrelated concepts click for students, regardless of what class they are sitting in.