

Design For Course Approval

I. Rationale

Many families are connected to Hispanic culture in our community. More than 60% of our student population falls in that category. Students who are involved in a mariachi program can develop better relationships with their family through this shared musical tradition. The genre incorporates music theory through basic chord progressions and improvisation, as well as instrumental and vocal technique. Ideally, every student involved will sing and play their instrument.

II. Description

Mariachi celebrates the rich culture of the southwest and Mexico. Students will learn this and more by performing with a traditional group. Those who are enrolled in this course will develop skills on one of the traditional Mariachi instruments, trumpet, violin, vihuela, guitarron, guitar and voice. The students who continue to study this for multiple years will expand their playing experience. Professional organizations are willing to mentor the students and teach culture and instrumental technique. One major goal would be to attend the Mariachi Convention and attend workshops, concerts and possibly perform. Another wonderful goal would be to have several community performances throughout the year.

Prerequisites are not required however, prior experience on one of the instruments is an advantage.

III. Articulation

This is difficult to answer since there are no standards to address at the moment. I can however, guarantee that students will learn how to read music, play the music on their instruments and understand the cultural importance of the genre. Students will be actively engaged throughout the class.

IV. Audience

The student group we are targeting is a group of students who want to learn how to play traditional mariachi instruments instead of band/orchestra instruments and music. This genre connects the students with their Mexican culture and history. This also allows those students who are not interested in the other music programs to have a musical experience that they will enjoy.

V. Resources

Mariachi Mastery by Jeff Nevin is a method book that includes fundamental set up and technique for each instrument as well as exercises, full songs, chord charts, and fingering charts for guitar, vihuela and guitarron.

Simplemente Mariachi by Marcia Neel and Francisco Grijalva also includes fundamentals for set up, technique for each instrument, singing exercises and history. This book does not offer full songs.

I have made contact with a local professional Mariachi group that is willing to be our resource/mentor. This will ensure that we are playing stylistically correct and getting the correct history and traditions.

The class will require all the instruments that are in a traditional mariachi group. They will also eventually need trajes and sombreros. This would be the most expensive purchase and need of the group.

VI. Outcome

This course is to offer students a class where they can enrich their lives through music by connecting with the Mexican culture. Exams will be both paper (theory based) and performance based.

VII. Implementation

Mariachi has been introduced as a club this year. The goal is to gain interest and excitement on campus and get families involved through cultural celebrations. The ultimate goal would be to have it offered again as a class during the school day.

VIII. Process

In order for mariachi to make its way back into the schedule, I made students aware of its possible return last year and had a few interest meetings. On average there were approximately 30 students interested at each meeting. I then started the club at the beginning of this year. I have also made the middle schools aware that I am trying to bring it back since there is always interest from the 8th graders. All teachers and staff are supportive of the return, bringing more students into the fine arts department.