There are 5 key concepts taught in the music program: rhythm, melody, harmony, form and expression. I strive to use each one every day and have planned a 2 month focus on each concept to more fully explore and develop it. e.g. September/October's focus was rhythm. This can be seen in my Long Range Plans.

Consequently, there are 6 key skills taught in the music program: sing, play, listen, move, read/write and create.  Again, I try to use each of these skills every day, with some months having more of a focus than others. e.g December's focus was melody as well as singing and moving (Christmas Concert).

I start every class with every day with a routine that involves listening, singing, rhythm, melody, moving and expression. I change it up a little according to grade level and what we are focusing on that month.

Since we perform our routine every day I use it as a formative assessment to gauge whether or not students understand a concept such as rhythm vs beat, or quarter note vs eighth note. If I notice students are struggling with a portion of the routine, we can use some class time to practice and reinforce that skill. When the majority of the class can perform the skill, I can change up or add to the routine to teach and reinforce new or harder concepts.

For example: Grade One will start off by echoing a 4 beat rhythm pattern using only quarter notes. When everyone is comfortable doing this, we will progress to using quarter note rests, then eighth notes and eighth note rests. Grade Six will start off with a 4 beat rhythm pattern using quarter and eighth notes and rests and progress to an 8 beat pattern using sixteenth notes and rests, syncopation and dotted notes.

When most students are showing understanding/mastery of a concept/skill, being able to perform a so-mi singing solo for example, I can use it as a summative assessment. I find that since they perform the routine in front of peers on a daily basis, they are more comfortable about performing and being assessed on these skills.

**Starting Routine**:

I sing, they echo- “This is my talking voice/this is my whisper voice/this is my singing voice/I am Mickey Mouse/I can sing really high/I can sing really low/I can sing in the middle” (used to assess identification of different voices/pitches)

I clap or use body percussion and they echo – different note values and phrase lengths are used for different grades e.g – only use quarter notes and 4 beat phrases for Grade One, but use eighth notes and 8 beat phrases for Grade Six (used to assess rhythm/beat)

I sing, they respond using so-mi – “Who is wearing \_\_ today?” “I am wearing \_\_\_today!” (used to assess melodic/group singing)

I sing, they respond using so-mi- “Concentration, everybody ready, when you sing your name, the game begins. My name is Mrs. Layher” “My name is \_\_” (used to assess a solo singing)

We then sing a welcome song that only changes a few times throughout the year so they feel very comfortable singing it (used to assess melodic/harmonic/group singing)