

Article Review

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Article Title: Idea Bank: Using Kodály to Promote Music Literacy Skills

Author: Emily Mason Journal: Music Educators Journal

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What is the author's purpose?

In this article, Emily Mason describes the method put in place by Zoltan Kodály, a “Hungarian philosopher, educator, ethnomusicologist, and composer.” She explains the three Ps that are the main focus of this method. This includes preparation, presentation, and practice. Mason also gives segments of sample lesson plans to further promote her stance.

What are the salient issues in this article? (i.e. the main issues that provoked/stimulated your thinking)

The main issues that provoked my thinking were three Ps of Kodály's process of general music education. The first P is preparation. In this stage the teacher asks multiple questions in order to be aware of the students' readiness of the concept. I thought this was interesting because we use questions when learned to teach songs to children. I didn't realize that this was part of the Kodály method and I enjoy making connections between all of the approaches we've read about and what we have been taught to do.

The second P is presentation. This is when the concept being taught is given its correct name. This may be presented iconically rather than symbolically, which I think is important to differentiate because many methods skip the icon stage all together. This P also specifies that the song used to teach the concept must be one that is familiar to the students. They can't focus on learning a concept while also having to learn a new song. This is similar to how Dr. G tells us not to noodle with a concept while teaching a song.

The third and final P is practice. This stage comes immediately after presentation. In order to show an understanding of the concept, students must practice it by “speaking, singing, playing, moving, reading, and writing.” Students will begin this stage with songs that they already know and will eventually apply the concept to new songs. Once students are successful with practicing the concept, they can move on to composing and improvisation.

Another salient issue is that the Kodály method engages all students. It is similar to the generative approach in that it works from the known, through the unknown, to the new known. Since it gives students the opportunity to perform, create, and describe, it uses all of the modes of behavior that we have previously discussed. This allows students with different learning styles to absorb the concept in multiple ways.

How do you believe this article will impact your personal/professional development as a teacher? (i.e. what insights, connections, comparisons, or considerations resulted from reading this article?)

I think the Kodály method will come in handy as it has a similar process to the other approaches we have discussed -- it just gives each step a different name. Since I have already decided that I'd like to incorporate the methods with similar approaches, it only seems logical that I would also use this one. Considering Dr. G has already taught us some of the steps used in Kodály, I think it will feel natural to integrate it into my own teaching.

I think I will use the step of preparation a lot while teaching because it involves the process of asking questions and playing games as we have already learned to do while in class. I like that this step includes multiple learning styles, such as visual, aural, and kinesthetic. This is inclusive of all students, which makes the concept accessible to everyone. This is the ultimate goal of the Kodály method: "to provide all children with the best musical experiences possible."

The presentation step of Kodály's process is also one that we've already learned through other approaches. It requires the use of songs that the students already know, and as we have learned in class, we shouldn't noodle with a concept while teaching a song. This step encourages repetition, an important factor of the generative approach. I'd like to incorporate both of these ideas into my own teaching as it is something I'm already comfortable with.

I really appreciate the final step of practice because it encompasses all of the learning styles just as the first step does. For this stage, Kodály recommends the students speak, sing, play move, read, and write the concept. This is really appealing to my teaching style because it is very inclusive of all students. It also incorporates the need for repetition by enforcing the concept in so many different ways.