

# Musical approaches essay



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There are many thoughts and theories behind the methods used to teach music. Three methods used by educators in teaching music are: the Orff approach, the Kodaly approach, and Dalcroze Eurhythmics. All three share the belief that music is essential to the total education of the child.

Essentially, each approach strives to broaden the musical horizons of students as they have meaningful experiences with and about music. These approaches each have various advantages and disadvantages.

The Orff approach was developed from the early 1920's through the 1950's in Munich, Germany. Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman are jointly responsible for the method that bears Orff's name. This came about as a result of their wish to find a way to merge music, dance, and drama. One theory of this approach is "sound before sight." There are many advantages to this approach. This method is very student centered and covers the full spectrum of a student's music education. It places a major emphasis on building student's self-esteem and sets young students up to be successful. Students can feel free to create and express themselves without the fear of being judged harshly by their peers.

This approach encourages students to experience music at their own level of understanding. Students have a greater exploration of musical instruments or musical skill. Improvising is a hallmark of the Orff approach. This method allows teachers to integrate deeper learning skills into a lesson and freedom in their lesson planning. The simplicity of this technique allows all ranges of handicapped students to participate without the fear of being ridiculed or left behind. These are just a few of the many advantages to this approach.

The disadvantages to the Orff approach are by far in comparison to the advantages. There are a couple of downfalls, but not many. The cost of materials involved can be a disadvantage. Sometimes there are not funds to supply the cost of materials needed. Being without enough instruments for every child can lead to behavior problems in the classroom. Controlling the students without instruments can be challenging. There are not many disadvantages to this approach, but there are numerous advantages. The large number of advantages and small number of disadvantages explains why it is considered by many as the easiest to use.

The Kodaly method is an approach to music education based on the philosophies of Zoltan Kodaly. Kodaly's philosophy is "music for everyone." This method focuses on a balance of singing, listening, playing, moving, thinking, and creating. There are several advantages to this approach. A tool of the Kodaly approach is the use of hand signs, which makes it easier for the student to learn. The teaching and learning of music through use of the singing voice provides the opportunity for musical understanding and frees the student from the technical problems associated with instrumental music. The approach emphasizes step-by-step skills development and utilizes age-appropriate singing. Children begin at an early age. A unique advantage of this approach is that by working from the easy to the difficult (in very small steps) it is very accessible to the dyslexic student. These advantages have helped aid in success of this method.

With its number of advantages, the Kodaly approach also has its disadvantages. Time is a big factor in the use of this method. Teaching to read music takes time. Some teachers find it difficult to set up a program

that relies so heavily on a sequential format. There is also not much use of instruments, which means less hands-on. This approach involves complicated skills which require a lot of training and methodological understanding of the teacher. A big challenge in implementing this approach is the use of voice, or in other words, getting students to sing. These are just some of the disadvantages of the Kodaly approach.

The Dalcroze curriculum uses body and mind integration in developing musicianship and includes the following three components: eurhythmics, solfege, and improvisation. All three components plus intensive listening are included in Dalcroze instruction, but the eurhythmic portion seems to receive more attention in current application. Eurhythmics should begin at an early age- four or five is considered ideal. The purpose is to encourage free body movement in response to music. There are several advantages to this approach.

Teachers can use short recorded musical selections or patterns played on rhythm instruments to stimulate movement. In eurhythmics experiences, students use their bodies as musical instruments; they show their musical understanding through movement. Beyond musical intelligence, the Dalcroze approach engages and exercises several other aspects of intelligence. Musical games and experiments engage logical thinking. The social quality of music-making develops communication, feeling, and empathy. Learning is active and it is this multi-sensory approach which makes Dalcroze an ideal method for children with learning difficulties.

The Dalcroze method also has a number of disadvantages. A teacher needs direct instruction to thoroughly understand and use this approach. Teachers must be trained in techniques and principles, in order to adapt to the characteristics, needs and abilities of their students. Most do not have the money or the time to travel and attend schools for training. Dalcroze teachers also need highly developed piano improvisation skills to stimulate musical responses through movement. Not every teacher is a skilled piano player. Overall, the Dalcroze approach is not very practical.

Opinions vary regarding the extent to which any one method should be used. But each method stresses certain behaviors in varying amounts and at different times, such as singing, instrument playing, music reading and writing, and movement. Although they are different, they are used interchangeably by many educators because each method has its own strengths and weaknesses. These methods can be used together to enrich and support each other. It all depends on who you are teaching and how you want to teach.