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Consistency and Phase-By-Phase Principle in Providing Musical Education to Primary School Students

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Abstract: The article emphasizes the importance of the principles of consistency and phase-by-phase approach in providing musical education to primary school students. It highlights that for 1st grade students, the primary objective is to develop a culture of listening to music and to spark an interest in the subject of music.

Keywords: Musical education, consistency, culture, melody, rhythm, lyrics, literacy, song, interest, listening, emotional impression, lesson, emotion, talent.

Introduction: Strict adherence to the principles of consistency and gradual progression is essential in providing musical education to primary school students. For students entering the 1st grade, the main priority is to cultivate a culture of listening to music and to awaken interest in the subject. At this stage, students are introduced to music through listening to and performing simple school songs together. The initial repertoire consists of songs with simple melodies and lyrics, and a narrow vocal range. For example, students may listen to familiar folk tunes such as Alla (a lullaby) or cheerful children's songs.

In the 2nd grade, students gradually transition to learning more complex melodies and rhythms. They begin to explore songs with a more vigorous, march-like character, as well as festive and dance melodies. By the end of the 2nd grade, students are introduced to the first elements of musical literacy: naming sounds such as do, re, mi, and identifying basic rhythmic values in practice (whole note, half note, quarter note).

In the 3rd grade, the content of musical education becomes richer. Students by this time have already

acquired a repertoire that includes several folk and composed songs. They begin performing individually or in small groups. At this stage, exercises involving simple polyphonic singing (e.g., canon singing) and playing accompaniments on instruments in an ensemble setting may be introduced.

By the 4th grade, elementary concepts of music theory are reinforced. Students learn the basic principles of reading and writing musical notation on the staff. They are now able to independently perform a simple piece from notation, either by singing or playing an instrument. At this stage, students are also introduced to more complex rhythmic structures (e.g., syncopation) and dynamic expression markings (such as piano, forte, etc.).

Initial knowledge about musical form is also introduced, and students learn to identify couplets (verses) and repetitions in simple songs. In this way, students gradually progress from basic to more complex skills in musical literacy and perception. The teacher plays an invaluable role in successfully implementing a health-promoting (sanogenic) approach to musical education. The teacher is not only a provider of knowledge but also a key figure in creating an emotional atmosphere in the lesson. During each session, they observe students' moods and respond accordingly—motivating or calming them when necessary. For example, when noise increases and attention wanes, the teacher might play a soothing melody to regain focus; conversely, if sluggishness is observed, they can energize students with a lively musical game.

In addition, the teacher strives to involve every student in the process without overlooking anyone's musical ability. In group singing, they may pair students with loud and soft voices together, or assign solo parts to talented students during instrumental playing—giving each child a chance to express themselves. This approach increases students' confidence and boosts their interest in lessons. In general, the main goal of the sanogenic approach is to make musical education a joyful and beneficial activity for students, creating opportunities for each child to experience a sense of achievement.

Stages of developing musical perception and literacy. Musical perception refers to students' ability to understand and derive aesthetic pleasure from listening to music. To develop this ability in primary school students, it is essential to first teach them to listen attentively. During lessons, various types of musical excerpts are played, drawing students' attention to the emotions and images the music evokes. For instance, a cheerful melody may stir feelings of joy, while a calm, lyrical tune can induce a sense of peace and serenity. As students listen, they internally experience such moods. After listening exercises, the teacher encourages students to express their impressions through questions and answers. This method helps deepen their musical perception and aesthetic taste.

Students are also introduced to basic rhythmic feelings. Musical games and physical movements are used to develop rhythm recognition. For example, students form a circle and take turns clapping or stepping in rhythm with the song. This helps them coordinate hearing and movement. In the well-known Dalcroze method, such eurhythmic exercises develop children's sense of rhythm through body motion. Initially, simple 2/4 marching rhythms are practiced, followed by transitions to more complex meters like 3/4. To strengthen rhythmic awareness, students may recite poems to music or play various patterns on drums. As a result, they become able to understand simple rhythmic notation (e.g., ♪ and ♩ for eighth and quarter notes) and perform them using claps or instruments.

Furthermore, the ability to hear and accurately reproduce musical pitch is gradually developed.

In the teaching methodology of Hungarian educator Zoltán Kodály, it is emphasized that the most effective way to train the ear of students is by having them sing folk songs. He regarded folk music and singing as the foundation for developing musical literacy. Indeed, folk songs have been used for centuries in the musical upbringing of students and hold a special place as a rich cultural and musical heritage of the people. Initially, students memorize simple songs consisting of two or three notes (for example, songs based on the sol–mi interval). Later, they learn songs based on the pentatonic scale (five-note scale) with a wider pitch range. According to Kodály's recommendation, the pentatonic scale made up of the tones do, re, mi, sol, la is ideal for younger children, as it allows the teaching of fundamental musical elements.

During the singing process, the teacher uses solfège syllables and hand signs to help students visualize the pitch of each sound in space. As a result, by the 3rd or 4th grade, students can attempt to sing simple songs by reading notation or to understand a melody from musical notation. While musical literacy may comprise only a part of the lesson, it must be taught consistently and systematically. In the 1st grade, the relative pitch and duration of notes are explained verbally—for example, students are taught to perceive that "do" is a low tone and "sol" is a high tone. In the 2nd grade, students are introduced to the staff and clefs (e.g., the treble clef), and are shown how notes are positioned on the lines. In the 3rd grade, students begin writing music: they are given exercises to notate short melodies in their notebooks. By

the 4th grade, students are expected to read simple pieces from notation and recognize familiar songs when written as notes. A student who has acquired musical literacy can understand any piece they hear more deeply, learn it with ease, and gain spiritual nourishment from it. Therefore, it is important to teach the elements of notation progressively and reinforce them through creative exercises.

Understanding musical expressive means is also a crucial part of the educational process. Students must learn not only to sing melodies but also to understand their expressive characteristics. In lessons, the concepts of dynamics—singing loudly (forte) or softly (piano)—are practiced in a playful manner. When the teacher extends their arms widely, students sing louder; when the teacher makes smaller hand gestures, they sing more quietly. Through this, students learn to control volume and use expressive tools in music.

The concept of tempo is taught in a similar fashion. By performing fast and slow songs alternately and identifying the differences, students grasp the meaning of tempo markings like largo (slow) and allegro (fast). The perception of musical form is explored more seriously in grades 3–4. Students begin analyzing the structure of simple songs or melodies, identifying the number of sections and recognizing repeated parts. For example, after listening to a folk song, they are tasked with identifying how each verse (couplet) is repeated and where the same melody returns. This enhances their analytical skills and musical memory.

When these methods are applied as a whole, musical perception and literacy are systematically developed in primary school students. The goal is to spark interest in the subject of music and engage all students actively. As renowned educators Carl Orff and Zoltán Kodály emphasized, for children, music is above all about joy and play. Teaching music without games and movement is difficult. If the lesson is enriched with engaging musical games, national songs, and creative tasks, students will genuinely love music and make it an integral part of their lives. This, in turn, has a positive impact on their overall intellectual and emotional development.

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