

THE EFFECTIVE WAYS OF TEACHING MUSIC FUNDAMENTALS FOR LATE BEGINNERS

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Abstrak :

Tulisan ini membahas tentang bagaimana cara mengajar dasar-dasar musik yang benar secara teori dan praktik kepada anak-anak (di atas 10 tahun) maupun orang dewasa secara umum.

Background

In our time, music is very influential. Music is also becoming more and more a part of people's lives. For example, in many schools, music has now become one of the core curriculum subjects. Most of the children have received the foundations of music. Music is not only something we enjoy but music can become a career for people, even for young students.

In the past, music was not viewed as an important component of a person's education, especially in Indonesia. As a result, there are very few universities that offer music education. Music has been considered simply as a hobby. Parents of aspiring musicians have thought that music could not be studied at a serious level. How could music be a good career choice? This is why we, as music educators, must introduce the young people to the fundamentals of music. By creating this foundation, they will not only enjoy the music but it will become a meaningful part of their lives.

Music can and should be used as a powerful tool to enrich education and also add to the skills of children and young people who may not have the opportunity to pursue musical activities. To be effective as music educators, music must be taught in an effective manner and a variety of methods from well known music educators such as, Suzuki, Kodaly, Orff, and Dalcroze can be used to help them grasp the fundamentals of music easily.

Many teachers only teach the students and put too much emphasis on literacy without utilizing creative thinking. All children, especially late beginners, can create their own music, even though it may be simple. Looking at this condition, encouraging students by giving them sequential instruction in music fundamentals, so they can truly create their own accurate compositions.

During the time of this internship, writer found out that many people who categorized as late beginners, would very pleased if someone can teach them fundamentals of music. There is no such a word late for those who want to add their knowledge and expand their abilities especially in music.

Theoretical Description

Music encompasses fun, careers, and also talents. Many people lack basic music fundamentals even though they can play music. They can sing and play only by hearing without reading the notes or learning how to read the notes. This group of people, sometimes need a deeper understanding in the areas of theory, reading the notes, rhythms, chords, style of playing, articulation, and technique. All of these components relate to music fundamentals.

In learning about music education, it is evident many things are used to teach music fundamentals. Teaching students of different ages and different levels is part of the learning process for teachers. Many schools of music use different curriculum and they have different goals for their students. For example, Yamaha music school has a different curriculum than Aminoto Kosin music school. However, they basically teach the same music fundamentals. As long as music has been taught, music fundamentals has always been the same. The difference is only in how people learn music and what kind of methods teachers are using.

Many methods of music are used to guide us in the music world, especially in music education. In our times, we can find a lot of methods that show us how to teach music fundamentals, such as, Suzuki method, Dalcroze method, Orff method, and Kodály method.

Methods of Teaching

In music education, there are some methods of teaching music that have been introduced, and each of methods have their own differences in how to present and how to learn music.

1. Suzuki Method

Suzuki method is an approach to the teaching of instrumental music based on the educational philosophy and teaching of Sinichi Suzuki.¹ Suzuki method is also known as mother tongue method. Suzuki believed that learning and teaching music has to be based on love. It is according to his book "Nurtured by Love". Same as when baby learns foreign language, it is easier for them to learn mother tongue language at the beginning. Suzuki reasoned that when the children have skill in acquiring their mother tongue language, then they would have ability to become proficient in instrumental music.²

Suzuki methods involves some factors that can be use to learn music such as, immersion, small steps, encouragement, and unforced timetable of learning the material.³ This kind of learning could help students to highly develop and progress in learning music. The basic factor of learning music according to Suzuki method is love and no scolding the students.

The following pyramid shows the factors of how students learn music according to Suzuki method,⁴

Love
Praise
Repetition
Small steps
Group Contact
Ear Before Eye

Early Beginnings
Delayed Reading
Everyone has Ability
One Lesson One Point
Success builds on Success
Learning through Listening
Desire for Learning Created
Children Absorb or " Catch" Music
"Mother Tongue" Approach to Learning
Environment created for successful Learning

2. Kodály Method

Kodály method was named after a Hungarian composer and educator Zoltán Kodály (1882-1967). Students will learn their mother tongue first before they would learn foreign language, same as the way they learn music. The philosophy of Kodály method, students should learn their own folk song before learning foreign music. Despite of folk song, chants also will be helpful in learning music because it has simple melody and rhythm.

Kodály method used several ways for students to learn music. And each ways has their owns purpose.

a. Child developmental

The child developmental approach, Kodály used some patterns that follows normal child abilities and stages of how they grow.

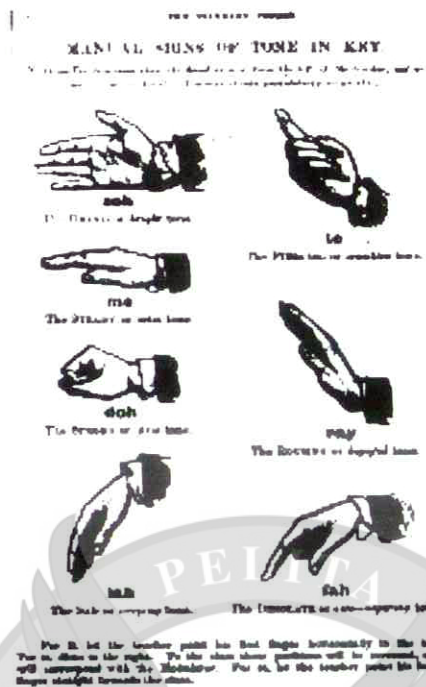
According to Kodály, using moving rhythm is one of method that can be used for students in learning music and that is also relate to children's walking. So it is easier for them to learn music quickly. Melodically, movable do and solfa terminology (so, mi, and la) is the first melody that students could recognize easily because they are the tones that mostly used in the childhood. For example,

b. Rhythm Syllabus

Rhythm syllabus is needed for sight- reading, will be sound according to the notes, ta-a-a-a is for whole note, titi for eight notes. It will be easier for students to do rhythmic with this method.

c. Rhythmic and movement

Kodály got inspiration by Dalcroze movement method. The movement could be walking, running, or clapping. And some singing exercises are accompanied by rhythmic movement.



Picture Hand signs

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/kodaly_method, accessed May 23rd, 2008

d. Hand Signs

Hand signs represent the interval. This exercise is needed for sight-singing and assign for scales. For example, do, mi, so, are stable in appearance. But the other notes are referring to the notes do, mi, and so. The hand signs are made in front of body, do is at the waist level and la at the eye level, so students can recognize the different easily.

There are some steps to teach students the solfa according to Kodály method by using the hand signs;

- So mi
- So mi la
- So mi do
- La so mi do
- So mi re do
- La so mi re do
- Mi re do
- Mi re do la
- Mi re do la so
- Do' la so mi re do

3. Orff Approach

Orff approach was developed by German composer Carl Orff (1895-1982). The

fundamental of Orff approach are, singing, percussion instrument, body percussion, movement, playing, and literacy.

There is a process of how students learn music;

- a. Imitation,
- b. Exploration,
- c. Improvisation,
- d. Composition,
- e. Literacy

According to the Orff approach, students learn from the basic principle of imitation. Imitation refers to repetition of a phrase played on one instrument or voice by another. Exploration is the attempt to develop the initiate about something. Improvisation is practice of making or creating something. Composition is creating own song or a work of music.⁵

4. Dalcroze method

Dalcroze method was created by Emile Jaques- Dalcroze (1865-1950). Dalcroze method is the method that combines art and music through movement. Dalcroze class is divided into three divisions;

- Eurhythmics, teaches the concepts of rhythm, structure, and musical expression through movement.
- Solfege, teaches the concept of vocal training and improvisation through aural training and sight-singing by understanding the pitch, scales, and tonality.
- Improvisation, expresses the music by the understanding of form and concepts of music, that finally can create its own music using movement, voice, and instruments.

Bloom's Taxonomy

Benjamin Bloom created a process of learning, which is now called Bloom's Taxonomy. In this particular paradigm of learning theory, there are graduated steps in how students learn and use different levels of thinking.

Bloom's Taxonomy is a multi-tiered model of classifying thinking according to six cognitive levels of complexity.⁶ It is the classification of intellectual levels that starts from the very basic level. According to the revised version of Bloom's Taxonomy, the basic or lower levels are remembering, understanding, and applying. The higher levels are analyzing, evaluating, and creating.

Bloom's Taxonomy helps teachers to measure the thinking ability for children, so that teachers can evaluate the intellectual thinking of students and challenge them to rise to the next level. Bloom's Taxonomy can be used in every situation of learning, across the curriculum.

Bloom's taxonomy describes every level of thinking and also gives the understanding of each level.

Understanding of Late Beginners

Late beginners are categorized by the group of age, and in general starts from 9 or 10 years old. Most of people categorize children from infant until 6 or 7 years old as an early childhood beginners. Late beginners can be also categorized by levels of

thinking. 11 years old students has different intellectual than 14 years old.

Late beginners or older beginners have a motivation, motor skills, and also a discipline of practice that is mature than young age children. Late beginners are not necessary need a parent at practice time or at lesson time, but teacher has to be their guidance. In choosing a program for late beginners, however take into account their level of intellectual development, and in the case of group program, and also the age of peer in the class.⁷

Late beginners have inherent problems with learning music, for example:

- Problem in singing on pitch
- Fingering obstruction caused by stiff fingers
- Focus complexity.

The Progress of Learning

The students have different abilities in how they learn music. Some of them were good in rhythm but some of them were very good in indicating the notes. The teacher had to involve them in how to help others in their weakness.

Class had to be build in a comfort situation, serious but fun. The students love music, but sometimes the teacher had to be strict with the students. The students could follow the materials that were given from the first week until the last week of music lesson. Sometimes they got stuck in the middle of lesson, and this was the teacher's job how to give them a way out and try to find a way and help them in those situations.

Patience was needed in teaching. All of them came from different levels of thinking and different levels of learning, so the teacher had to adjust the goals that had been set.

Conclusion and suggestion

How to set the curriculum and lesson plans

The curriculum and lesson plans were changed gradually. This was happened because of some consideration:

- What did the students need,
- How could they cope with certain materials,
- Are they able to follow the goals that had been set

There are some suggestions for the other interns who want to teach late beginners:

1. Be alert with the student's condition before start to design the curriculum
2. Set the long term goals before teaching is required because the teacher will know what does the teacher has to do so that they can reach the goals in time.
3. Do not worry about changing the curriculum and lesson plans every time because it will happen during the lesson time. And try to set your time and stick on the lesson plan because sometimes we could easily forget the time and the goals.
4. Find a method that can be used for the students who come from different age groups.

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