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Sound Connections
Chapter 1: Teaching Music Literacy
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Summary

- Music is an aural art form
- One does not need to be able to read or write music to be able to make it
- Language allows us to communicate, and so does music
- We can recreate in sound the ideas formed in far away places and times
- We can create and preserve our own musical creations
- The ability to read and notate music allows for music understanding
- Musical literacy allows us to be independent, well-rounded musicians
- The ultimate goal of education is to broaden horizons with knowledge

- I. Defining Music Literacy
 - A. The singing voice is the fundamental instrument for every musician because it is most closely linked to the musicians' ear
 - B. Audiation- the ability to hear music internally that provides the foundation for comprehensive music literacy, establishing vital basis for both reading and notating
 - C. Music literacy- the ability to translate notation into vocal sound (reading) and sound into notation (notating)
- II. Music Literacy Instruction: Past to Present
 - A. Roots of an emphasis on music literacy in the United States goes back to colonial times
 - B. Singing schools in the 18th Century were established to develop fundamental singing and music reading skills of church members
 - C. Fasola system- a four-syllable version of movable-do solfege that was developed to improve the quality of congregational singing; changed to the 7-syllable movable-do solfege by Lowell Mason
 - D. In the 1800s Lowell Mason adopted Pestalozzian and European educators' pedagogical ideas, emphasizing the principle of sound before sight and became America's first public school teacher
 - E. The A Cappella Choir movement began to dominate high school vocal music curriculum which focused on just music-reading skills
 - F. The Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance (CMP) approach began in the 1960s, wanting to bring back education in the classroom and wanted to develop literate musicians and skilled performers

- G. The nine National Standards for Arts Education were developed in 1994
 - i. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
 - ii. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
 - iii. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.
 - iv. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines.
 - v. Reading and notating music.
 - vi. Listening to, analyzing, and describing.
 - vii. Evaluating music and music performances.
 - viii. Understanding relationships between music, the arts, and disciplines outside the arts.
 - ix. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.
- III. Music Literacy Achievement
 - A. Interaction of motor and literacy skills that connect music making with reading and notating facilitates musical understanding and enables students to link perform, concept and percept
- IV. The Challenges of Teaching Music Literacy
 - A. Music literacy must be developed over along period of time and is most significant instructional challenge for music educators
 - B. Practice does not make perfect; perfect practice makes perfect
 - C. “Womb to tomb” mentality
 - D. All of music education doesn’t agree on systems, making it hard to decide what works best
- V. The *Sound Connections* Approach
 - A. Can be used at all levels and in any setting
 - B. Begin music literacy in kindergarten (or before) and continue sequential learning
 - C. The *Sound Connections* long-term process
 - i. An instructional sequence that progresses from sound to sight; audiation or “thinking sound”; must make sound connections between musical sounds and musical symbols
 - ii. Rhythm and tonal systems that complement the sound-first approach and are effective for all developmental levels; must be sound-based; movable-do system best with la-minor system recommended; takadimi for rhythm-syllable system
 - iii. Content sequences that correlate with the logic of rhythmic and melodic structure
 - iv. A combination of commonly accepted and innovative instructional strategies; need repetition
- VI. Using this book
 - A. *Sound Connections* is a comprehensive guide to teaching music literacy
 - B. Music literacy should be the highest priority
 - C. All music teachers can implement *Sound Connections*, not just general and choral educators, bands and orchestras can benefit from it too

Discussion

This chapter was full of important information to music educators, especially with music literacy. It gave explicit information as to what music literacy is exactly, how it began, and teaching it to students. It explained the specific *Sound Connections* approach, and how it works extremely well in a classroom to develop music literacy in students. Teachers should desire to develop their students' music literacy skills, and strive for that over everything they do in a classroom. This chapter was very informative to me, because of my lack of understanding at what music literacy really is. The choirs, bands, and general music classes I participated in didn't emphasize music literacy, and only made us sing, play, or perform. I believe this chapter will benefit me in the future with my own classes, because I already want my future students to become musically literate. I wish to teach elementary-aged students, and when I implement the *Sound Connections* approach into my classroom, I will set up my students for success in the future. I may be their first and most meaningful experience with teaching music literacy, and should be sure to start them off right. I understand that teaching music literacy to students is a challenge for all teachers, and is going to take a lot of hard work and planning, but I am willing to accept this challenge for the well being of my students. This chapter will continue to be helpful to me in the future due to its amount of information and reminders as to why students should become musically literate.