

Music Program

Nick Batzios M.Mus.

Dr. Shaw explains the positive effects of learning to play music on second graders. The results have been dramatic. In the most recent research, children who received training on the keyboard as well as on video-game software designed to teach reasoning skills, scored 27 percent higher on math tests than classmates who received software training alone. “ There is no doubt something special is going on here, “ says Dr. Shaw. He and his colleagues believe that learning to play music encourages children to recognize patterns and symmetries, which primes their brains and enhances the kind of skills involved in solving math problems

(Family Circle, The Positive Power of Music, p. 42, 06/02/00).

Music stimulates our imagination and helps us acquire a vision. Our vision inspires us to dream about what we could become. My approach to teaching challenges our children to problem solve rather than just memorizing material. Our children become independent learners. Music is a compulsory part of our children’s educational growth and development.

There are three things that make someone successful in life: intelligence, ambition, and opportunities. Opportunities being the most important. I am building opportunities for our children, such as The Winter Concert, and The Spring Concert. I am building opportunities to help our ambitious children express their intelligence and talents, which in turn will build on their confidence and experience. These experiences will help to create dreams, and these dreams will ultimately help our children succeed in their life.

I plan to organize two concerts a year:
The Winter Concert and The Spring Concert.

My mission is to teach our children

- Important musical educational concepts from Kodaly, Dalcroze, and Orff
- To sing on pitch
- To play the beat and rhythm on different instruments (drums, guitar, bass, piano, recorder, djembe, xylophone, tambourine, triangle, etc.)
- To read music
- To experience music (beat and rhythm) through movement
- To reinforce musical concepts through music listening

This is just a small example of what I do in the classroom. These concepts are cumulative. Every new cycle or grade mentioned below adds only what is new to that cycle or grade to avoid rewriting these concepts.

Kindergarten

- Pitch matching (Kodaly approach, to develop musical ear)
- Instruments for beat and rhythm (xylophone, drum, tambourine, triangle, wood block, maracas, etc.)
- Learning the names of these instruments
- Movement for beat and rhythm (Dalcroze approach, walking beat, patting beat on knees plus movement to music)
- Clapping rhythms then building them with popsicle sticks. Reading music (quarter notes, eighth notes, and rests or ta's and ti ti's)
- Singing on pitch plus silent singing
- High and low
- Loud and soft
- Fast and slow
- Statue game for high and low, loud and soft, fast and slow, and movement to music

Cycle 1 (Grade 1)

- everything from kindergarten plus
 - Learn notes on staff using hand and fingers
 - more elaborate orchestration of songs, for example, more children playing the beat on the xylophone plus one or more people playing the rhythm of the song at the same time (the children learn about independence, and learning to play in an ensemble)
 - Rhythm activity. The children have to identify what rhythm I am clapping by reading rhythms on the board. The class is divided into teams and they receive points for every correct answer
 - Clapping rhythms (the new rhythm is sixteenth notes or tiki tiki)
 - Singing on pitch
- More advanced beat activities, for example, passing a music stick around in a circle on the beat

Cycle 1 (Grade 2)

- Everything from grade 1 plus
- More instruments in the songs that we sing. The children play the melody of the song on the xylophone accompanied by other xylophones and percussion instruments playing the beat and/or accompaniment figures
- In this xylophone ensemble, the children who are listening, must give their opinions of how the other children are playing. This helps with the children's music listening skills, they learn new music vocabulary, and they learn to form their own musical opinion. The children that are performing learn to accept comments (positive and negative), learn to play in an ensemble respecting each other, and learn how to improve using these comments. Another important part to this lesson is that the children are learning from each other, learning to trust one another, I usually leave my own comments and suggestions at the end
- Melody activity. The children have to identify what melody I am playing on the piano by reading the melodies on the board. The class is divided into teams and they receive points for every correct answer
- The new rhythms are the half note and the whole note
- Singing on pitch

Cycle 2 (Grade 3)

- Everything from grade 2 plus
- More advanced orchestrations of the songs we sing with the xylophones and percussion instruments plus suggestions and comments by the class
- Clapping new rhythms, dotted rhythms and ties
- Teaching imitation through one of the songs they sing, explaining what it means, then reinforcing it through listening to one or more pieces from the 20th century (classical). The children listen to these pieces trying to find the imitations. This improves their music listening skills and helps them to start analyzing a piece of music
- Melody activity like grade 2, but here it is more advanced
- Singing on pitch

Cycle 2 (Grade4)

- Everything from Grade 3 plus
- This is where our children learn to play the recorder
- The songs are accompanied by xylophones and band instruments
- Singing on pitch (singing exists at every level)
- This is where everything comes together, not only are the children playing the recorder, but they are reading music, they are playing in an ensemble, and they are strongly becoming independent learners
- More advanced melody activity

Cycle 3 (Grade 5)

- Everything from grade 4 plus
- More advanced songs on the recorder
- More advanced accompaniments on the xylophones and band instruments
- More advanced melody activity

Cycle 3 (Grade 6)

- Everything from grade 5 plus
- More advanced songs on the recorder
- More advanced accompaniments on the xylophones and band instruments
- More advanced melody activity
- Not only are our children independent learners but they are also excellent musicians, ready to take on new musical challenges

We have two inspiring music classrooms and studios with an abundance of band instruments: Drums, electric guitars, electric basses, electric pianos, djembes, metallophones, and xylophones.

Our music lab serves many functions: it accompanies the children (digital band) when they sing or play songs on the recorder and band instruments. This reinforces the beat helping our students to focus and excel on their performance.

The music lab is a tool for our students to compose music using the latest technology.