

# Exploring Instructional Strategies Based on the Kodály Concept

Emphasis on Play-Songs for Primary School in Korea

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This presentation aims to explore application possibilities of educational directions based on the Kodály concept with focus on play-songs listed under revised music curriculum of 2015. It further aims to recommend various ways to use play-song singing activities in music classrooms. In order to research different methods of utilizing play-songs that can be implemented in classrooms, this presentation explores similarities and differences of play-songs with singing activities used in music schoolbooks for 1st-2nd grade-level published in 2018. Following the recommendation of educational directions from this study, subsequent study of ‘Development of a Music Learning Program to Create a Playground by Using Play-Songs’ is proposed, which compares current approach of simple song reading exercises in classrooms with a holistic approach of advanced music learning exercises that can teach skills applicable in and out of the classrooms.

**Keywords:** Music practice, music curriculum, play-songs, Kodály concept

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Motivation and Objectives

Korean music education strives to educate individuals so that they can lead humanitarian lives (Curriculum 1st Edition, 1954). Current curriculum that was revised in 2015 continuously pursues teaching of humanitarian character that can benefit society. Curriculum of Hungary implements Kodály concept, named after Zoltan Kodály (1882 - 1967), which also emphasizes the similar value to humanitarianism, the “ability to continuously start something new and understand the full democratic principle” (Magyar Közlöny, 2003). Music education based on Kodály concept involves listening, reading music and learning harmony, listening and singing/playing an instrument, musical theory, and more (Youngmi Lee, 2002a,2002b). Erzsébet Hegyi proposes a teaching method that implements Kodály concept in solmization. Using Kodály concept as the foundation, this teaching method implements learning with music schoolbooks that contain historical master pieces of music, learning melody and polyphony music, memorizing music, and cultivating musical understanding through choral work.

This presentation includes ‘teaching method based on singing’ from ‘Solfége: According to Kodály Concept’(Erzsébet Hegyi, 1987), which is one of solmization program for instruction. Similar to this, ‘music education through real sounds’ has been the key component of revision from previous curriculum of 2009. This presentation includes different teaching methods that appropriately reflect Korean music education as well as activity-based methods that can directly support ‘music education through real sounds as an auditory teaching’. Based on Kodály Concept, this presentation will explore the Kodály concept in various teaching methods in music curriculum. It will also approach from activity-based teaching perspective using play-songs as a folk music included in current music curriculum. This follows the three-step process outlined below as ‘singing according to Kodály concept’.

1. First stage is solmization of tone sets in songs with ostinato rhythm such as play-songs.
2. Second stage is song-bouquet stage based on learning how to connect 3 to 6 songs with similar themes of melody and tone sets.
3. Third stage is about cultivating music communication skills and a sense of community through various learning activities which consider the balance of conscious and unconscious learning.

This presentation inspects Kodály concept based teaching methods that can most effectively implement the play-song singing activities that are included in revised curriculum of 2015 music subject in Korea for primary school. Based on the findings, various approaches of implementing activities that use play-songs will be explored.

## 1.2 Background

### 1.2.1 Music Education and Kodály Concept

Music education according to Kodály concept, implements activities such as listening, singing, understanding harmony, playing instruments, music theory, and advanced music creation (Youngmi Lee, 2002b). First teaching objective of Kodály concept based music education is music listening and writing through the act of singing. This approach is prerequisite to reading music, implementing solmization, and expressing physically through hand sign and movements. Kodály concept also includes play-song singing activities in its curriculum and music schoolbooks. Play-song singing activities, is byproduct of culture throughout history and it will be a useful instructional tool in allowing future generations to lead prosperous lives by music as key component of culture and art. This fundamental reason why Kodály concept utilizes play-songs singing activities, can be traced to Kodály principle of cultivating individuals with the idea of humanitarianism from ancient Greek (Zoltán Kodály, 1929). In another words, from educational perspective, singing activities bring the most value to Kodály concept based music education as the most effective tool. Following quote can highlight the humanistic perspective of Kodály, where he pursued music education through folk songs and music culture.

*“All music culture’s true learning stems from singing. Most beautiful and free music experience starts from singing and it is the foundation of music culture.” (Zoltán Kodály, 1962)*

According to the quote above, the cultural essence of music education, similar to ancient Greek cultural education, is individuals experiencing singing as holistic art form in their lives. This implies that the most fundamental objective of music education is teaching singing and expressing through the beauty of human voice. Kodály concept based music education, is an education where everyone can experience legacy of history that emphasize culture of each community, society, and nation through folk song. It also explores approaches that can help students get past musical infantilism through activities that use play-songs. Therefore, focus of teaching activities that implement folk music is singing.

## 2 Educational Value of Music Activities

Dictionary definition of ‘playing’ is ‘enjoying an activity in a group’ (Min Jung Oh, 2017). Playing is defined theoretically as a function of self and defined physically as a control of id and superego. Given the definitions of playing, it can be considered as a tool from educational perspective. For example, activities such as singing, playing with music in and out of classrooms, and participating in musical activities, mature the students’ sense of community. Therefore, activities combined with music education that encourages playing allow students to be inspired by music in and out of classrooms, find interest in music education, and cultivate music communication skills that can be later used to interact creatively with society.

From theoretical perspective, educational value of music activities is related to emotional, cognitive, social, and physical development. Students can express their internal emotions through the activities and develop their emotional maturity. Furthermore, through various experiences of these activities, students can obtain self-esteem, free will, and sense of accomplishment. These activities will be a catalyst for motivation to solve real life problems. From cognitive perspective, another related area of presentation is language. Students can cultivate their communication skills through changing the lyrics of songs, learning to improvise, and creating music that conveys a message. It can be seen by this that music activities are closely tied with developing cognitive and communication skills. Social and physical development related activities are more reflected through activities outside of classrooms. By engaging in playing, students can learn sense of community by playing with their peers and also have opportunities to exercise physically. Especially, if the musical component of these playing can be connected to the learning objectives, these playing can be considered as a conceptual approach to music education that inspires participation, manifests creativity, supports emotional development, and improves social and physical improvement (Youngmi Lee, 1999). These play-songs can also bring much value from linguistic educational perspective.

Revised Korean curriculum of 2015 also recommends implementing various learning activities and emphasizes intellectual and emotional value of these activity-based teaching. By including activity-based learning in the curriculum, many assert that they are essential in education for primary school. This approach has been an important tool in teaching lower level students to initiate creative processes and develop intellectually and emotionally. It has been providing experiences where students can be curious about art and follow their aesthetic impulses.

From instructional perspective, Kodály asserted that music is the best teaching material and collected Hungarian folk songs to be listed as contents for schoolbooks in the music curriculums. In Kodály Iskola, named after Kodály, lower level students start music classes by singing with playing song bouquet. These lower level classes, that teach music through repetition by playing song bouquet, are connected to upper level classes of solmization. Solfege, instructional objective of lower level music education based on Kodály concept, is teaching the students to express themselves and appreciate cultural values. There is increased value in that songs sung in play-songs can easily be found outside of classrooms where students can continuously express themselves.

1. First stage is solmization of tone sets in songs with ostinato rhythm such as play-songs.

The first step is utilizing hierarchy of tone-sets in children folk songs for playing with singing as a style of parlando-rubato. These children folk songs for playing are accompanied by singing rhythm ostinato like the rhythm of children folk songs and play-songs.

For example, d'-l-s-m descending tetra-tonic tones can be utilized in solmization as a playing song, 'Shoulder and Shoulder-Friends' as below.

4/4. 1 1 1 1 1 s m m -  
 |  
 d'd'- 1 1 1 s m m -

The children's play-songs such as 'Shoulder and Shoulder-Friends, Nam-Saeng-Ha, Bee and Bee, Main Gate, and Toad house', are accompanied with singing rhythm ostinato, 'Ja-Jin-Mori', as the rhythm for these activities.

4/4. 'Dung du Kung Dung du Kung, // '(Ta ti ta, Ta ti ta...)

The way to play is to sit on a line where the rhythm of 'Ti-Ta' rhythm plays and students come out with arms across each other's shoulders, standing side by side while singing the song. Repeat the song with the shoulders of two people while playing rock, paper, scissors.

2. Second stage is song-bouquet stage based on learning how to connect 3 to 6 songs with similar themes of melody and tone sets.

As a play-song bouquet, Nam-Saeng-ha(l-m), Toad house(d'-l-m), Shoulder and Shoulder-Friends(d'-l-s-m) are connected with opening song of Main Gate(d'-l-s-m)'. Play-song bouquet are singing songs re-used in 1st semester of 1<sup>st</sup> ~2<sup>nd</sup> grade to teach the students to connect the lyrics with themes and design song bouquets that follows the hierarchy of the selected songs.

Table 1. Play-Song Bouquet

Domain	1 <sup>st</sup> ~2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade (Primary School)				
Theme of Semester	Spring			Summer	
Play-songs as Folk Music	Nam-Saeng-ha	Bee and Bee	Shoulder and Shoulder-Friends	The Main Gate	Toad House
Ton-set	<i>l-m</i>	<i>s-m-r</i>	<i>d'-l-s-m</i>	<i>d'-l-s-m</i>	<i>d'-l-m</i>



### 3 Discussion

#### 3.1 Activities of Kodály Concept

This presentation explored various teaching methods of incorporating play in music education curriculum. Kodály concept based teaching methods that implement play songs and folk songs listed in music schoolbooks were investigated as ‘play-song singing activities’.

Explored teaching method directions are as follows:

1. The essence of music education is explored from the process of students experiencing art in all forms.
2. Music can be learned naturally through activities that can be conducted in and out of classrooms.

: In case the songs included in the music schoolbooks are not appropriate for the grade level, hierarchy of the songs should be considered and redesigned to fit the level of the students. For example, play songs such as, 'Shoulder and Shoulder-Friends, Nam-Saeng-ha, Bee and Bee, Main Gate, and Toad house have been continuously included in 1st-2nd grade level and 3rd-4th grade level which can be connected to ‘Ganggangsullae’, a song that is sung during a traditional activity. The connection between the songs can be identified by the similar theme of ‘playing’. Please refer to the example in the previous chapter.

3. The 'singing' function of the Kodály concept requires basic and recent music ability to be used in understanding and expressing activities of music such as Solfege as well as reading and writing music.

The beginning of Solfege based on Kodály concept starts from playing in the case of singing play-songs and folk songs (Primary Integrated Music Curriculum 5th Grade Level; Music Curriculum 3rd ~ 4th Grade Level, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, Donga). In this way, music activities centered on play-songs can be found to be deeply related to Solfege learning of the Kodály concept in the lower grades of primary school which is the first opportunity for students to experience social aspect of life.

In order for the students to effectively learn in classrooms, it is instrumental to propose proper teaching objectives, methods, and contents in music schoolbooks, which are the most important teaching materials. Following this study, subsequent study of ‘Development of a Music Learning Program to Create a Playground by Using Play-Songs’ have been proposed. Despite the limitations of this research, it is recommended to incorporate this research to write future music curriculum that will better implement play-songs.

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