



Research Article

An examination of the state of Kosovan music education methodology in reaching universal standards

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Abstract

The research addresses the integration of music into piano teaching methodology for preschool and primary school children in Kosovo. Based on Mary Helen Richards' 'Education Through Music' (ETM) and Alf Gabrielsson's methodologies, this study emphasizes the significance of incorporating traditional Albanian music along with international elements into the teaching process. The study analyzes how the use of folk songs and recognized children's materials can enhance students' musical development, supported by empirical and theoretical evidence. Additionally, it highlights the importance of adapting materials to meet children's specific needs and integrating technology to foster the educational process. This research is prepared as a case study and document analysis, representing types of qualitative research. While describing the current state of music education in Kosovo, document analysis also identifies key aspects for setting international standards and developing a new curriculum, specifically in the context of piano education. The new approach in music education aims to preserve Albanian cultural heritage, providing a solid foundation for rich musical experiences in the future. The study concludes with recommendations for future research and teaching practices, which include developing educational materials and promoting international collaborations.

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Introduction

The growing interest in educational endeavors within the Republic of Kosovo, particularly in the field of music education, presents a significant opportunity to enhance the educational development of children. In this context, the necessity for a structured curriculum focusing on piano education, which incorporates Albanian national songs, dances, and melodies, becomes inevitable. Such a curriculum will facilitate the preparation of future teacher candidates at preschool and primary school levels, enabling them to acquire profound and comprehensive knowledge of music as a vital educational tool (Sylejmani, 2018). However, the music education curriculum should not be confined solely to the Albanian musical tradition. The integration of works by internationally recognized composers is essential, as it will enrich the educational experience and offer students a broader understanding of music. This combination will aid in the development of students' technical and interpretive skills, preparing them to address various challenges encountered in teaching. This research aims to address current issues related to the concept of music in Kosovo. It will explore the fundamental challenges of music education in Kosovo, examine symbolic materials applicable within the music education program, and analyze how to achieve a balance between traditional and foreign works (Muka, 2019).

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Photo 1. University of Pristina
Faculty of Arts (Web 1)



Photo 2. University of Peja
Faculty of Arts (Web 2)



Photo 3. Music School of Prizren
Lorenc Antoni (Web 3)

Key Characteristics of the New Piano Education Program

Features of the Piano Education Program

The development and implementation of a teaching program for piano education have emerged organically within the Faculty of Education, particularly in the Departments of Preschool and Primary Education Teaching. This need has been shaped by the demands related to the piano-playing abilities of future teacher candidates and the responsibilities they will encounter in the education of new generations (Hallam, 2006).

Needs of Teachers and Children

It is crucial that these candidates are able to interpret simple, easy, and familiar songs for children. This will provide them with the opportunity to learn and sing alongside the children, thus strengthening their bond. The "Learning by Ear" method will be applied as a proven approach that has demonstrated remarkable results in the development of musical skills; this is supported by the work of Shkalla et al. (2020).

Significance of the Program

The demand for a program like piano education has gained prominence due to the profound impact of music as an art form and the increasing professional-level piano-playing abilities of students. This will significantly enhance the professional confidence of future teacher candidates, which will, in turn, positively influence the dynamics of the teaching process (Hallam, 2006).

On the other hand, children will feel more secure, calmer, and more connected to music. Most importantly, they will develop a sustainable perspective in the art of music, contributing to the formation of their creative identity; this is validated by Muka (2021).

Selection of Music Pieces

The selection of music pieces is a critical component in music education and must ensure the suitability of materials by considering students' skill levels. The selection of music pieces is based on the general principles of internationally recognized music education pedagogy. These principles include transitioning from the known to the unknown, from the familiar to the unfamiliar, from the simple to the complex (Jensen, 2001).

Additionally, music pieces should reflect cultural and historical diversity, encourage emotional expression, and align with the teaching methods employed. They should contribute to achieving educational goals and foster greater engagement in the learning process by taking into account students' preferences (Hallam, 2006). These elements are essential in creating a rich and stimulating environment for musical development.

Popularity: To ensure broad acceptance, only songs with the following characteristics will be chosen: well-known, familiar, easy, and simple. By "well-known songs," we mean those that are widely recognized and easily identifiable, contributing to a "familiarity" that enables listeners to identify themselves with the song and others; this identification occurs through the lyrics or melody upon the first listening experience. This "familiarity" with the song does not imply a personal affinity between a specific individual and a particular song, nor does it suggest that the song is "easy" or "simple" (Baker, 2014).

A song may be well-known but not necessarily familiar! Familiarity with a song involves the ability of most people to sing it (in their individual style), whether through lyrics, melody, or even by whistling. This can be done by individuals of various profiles, ages, and skill levels, such as a 50-year-old economist with no musical background, a wrestler or boxer focused solely on competition, a 70-year-old fruit vendor considering ways to avoid spoilage, or a 19-year-old medical student interested in Facebook or tattoos (Julsin & Sloboda, 2001).

Easily Learnable Songs: A song may be "easy" to learn, but at times, it may not align ideologically or aesthetically with a certain level, its content might be inconsistent, or it might not be suitable for the primary school level within a specific age group. It should be noted that young students do not yet recognize musical concepts such as notes, pitch, intervals, or rests. Therefore, the education should adopt an "ear training" method, rather than a notation-based one (Young, 2013).

Additionally, a song that might be simple for teachers may be unattainable for young children. Future teachers must be aware of this, ensuring that song selection is appropriate when playing piano with children. Often, more complex songs will need to be simplified so that children can understand, enjoy, and sing them more easily (Young & McNaughton, 2016).

Pedagogical Approach

Following these steps requires careful, unhurried, and attentive work, using a highly pedagogical tactic with a "step-by-step" approach. Failure to adhere to these rules at each step will make the teaching process difficult, first for the instructors and then for the children. Young children may not know where to start or end a song and will fail to learn it properly. Conversely, this could foster aversion to song teaching, leading children to disengage from music due to the pedagogical errors of the teacher (Williams, 2004).

Teaching Through Play: Reversing the practice of piano teaching methods, specifically with teacher candidates who are students of the Faculty of Education working with children, would constitute both a professional mistake and a harmful situation for children. This is because the fundamental motto of children is "learning through play" and "playing to learn" (O'Connor & O'Mara, 2015).

A good pianist may often be a non-traditional pedagogue—one with limited pedagogical skills, rigid adherence to piano performance rules, and lacking evaluative sensitivity when comparing a piece with their students, due to a general lack of knowledge. This arises from the failure to adequately consider the pedagogical needs required for successful piano instruction (Ginsburg, 2007).

However, contrary to the above, a "less proficient pianist" can be a traditional, effective pedagogue—one with extensive piano knowledge (though not necessarily performance skills), who is adept at pedagogical tactics and considers the specific circumstances, emotional state, and economic conditions of individual students. Such a teacher not only has expertise in the piece or song but also displays genuine love, closeness, and success in working with children.

Teaching Techniques: At these teaching levels, a piano teacher does not necessarily have to be a concert pianist or a graduate pianist. It is sufficient for them to have a good understanding of the piano, to know piano performance techniques (such as posture, hand positioning, finger use—whether inside or outside the keys—, and managing distance and height on the piano). Most importantly, they must not forget that their primary task is to foster a "love" for the piano in their students. As pedagogues, it is our responsibility to teach and guide students in the fundamental concept of "sight-reading" (A.C. Lehmann, 1993). In short, all information is received by the human eye, processed in the brain, and only then do other organs (in this case, one or more fingers) receive "instructions" from the brain to press a specific key in a specific manner and hold it for as long as necessary. This procedure should never be overlooked, implying that the gaze should be directed towards the sheet music, not the keyboard—a common habit among beginners on this instrument.

Developing Self-Discipline: Through daily, consistent, and disciplined practice that is not overly brief, students aspiring to master piano will gain the ability to "penetrate" the essence of sound, achievable only through cognitive focus. At this level, they will be able to control the strength with which a specific finger strikes a particular key and begin to vary it according to need, sometimes softer, sometimes firmer. In this way, they will step into the world of musical

sounds, which will seem exceptionally beautiful, rare, and even enchanting to non-musicians. Naturally, at this level and during this learning process, it is premature to attempt applying concepts like Weber's laws (Weber, 1834; Fencher, 1860).

Aim of Study

The primary objective of this study is to establish pedagogical standards for curriculum development in piano education in Kosovo. This framework will take into account existing scientific research, the current situation in the country, urgent needs, and both weaknesses and strengths.

This program will be based on in-depth analyses of the current state of music education in the country, considering the demands and needs of both teachers and students. By integrating the best international practices and methods, the goal is to create an environment that promotes the development of musical skills and fosters a passion for music. This study aims to improve teachers' professional preparation and contribute to the advancement of music culture in Kosovo.

Method

This research is based on qualitative research methods, specifically case study and document analysis. While describing the current state of music education in Kosovo, significant aspects have been identified through document analysis, particularly concerning the establishment of international standards in piano education and the process of developing a new curriculum. This study examines the integration of Albanian music into the education of children in Kosovo, focusing on methods like Education Through Music (ETM).

Findings

Determining Students' Readiness Music teachers must be prepared for the challenges they will encounter when working with children, which includes the importance of piano accompaniment. Recognizing songs appropriate for preschool and elementary school children is essential to creating an effective learning environment. According to Bruner, it is crucial to understand that children perceive music in various ways, including auditory, verbal, kinesthetic, written, visual, and abstract methods. Therefore, teachers must have the ability to read and interpret musical notes to effectively teach songs to children. In the teaching process, using auditory methods, such as teaching songs without referring to notes, is important to help children develop their musical skills.

The readiness of students in Kosovo is a significant issue. If adequate importance is not given to preparing students for lessons, it may negatively impact the learning process. Bruner suggests that teaching practices should focus on activities that determine students' readiness, ensuring that they are prepared for lessons.

In the Kosovo education system, evaluating students' readiness has become increasingly important. However, current experiences indicate that there are still areas that need improvement. Most schools focus on meeting the set curriculum and often do not provide sufficient activities to help determine students' learning readiness (Haxhiu, 2011).

Nevertheless, some educational institutions have started implementing student-centered innovative practices, including formative assessments and teaching methods that promote student readiness. This will help provide a solid foundation for students to pursue further levels of education (Rrustemi & Kastrati, 2020).

Incorporating Classroom Management Skills Children are easily persuaded when teachers use their authority effectively. Teachers should foster a sense of familiarity by bringing children closer. If a teacher distances themselves from a child, the child may fear approaching the teacher, refraining from asking questions and becoming filled with uncertainties. Children should be given enough confidence to feel they are still practicing, realizing that if they make a mistake while singing, it means they have not yet learned the song (Fisher & Frey, 2014).

The teacher, being "smart-cunning," deliberately makes mistakes during the song-teaching process and then restarts the exercise with the children. This approach helps children gain confidence. In this way, the teacher encourages the child to practice more and to show high concentration while singing. Every student (future teacher) must understand that without the functionality of the Teacher-Child-Parent triangle, any type of teaching becomes extremely challenging (Epstein, 2011).

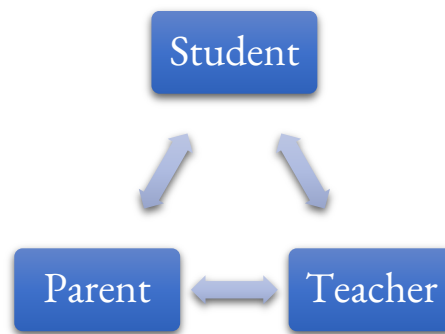


Figure 1. The Education Triangle. (Illustrates the relationships and interactions among the key factors in the educational process). (Bruner, 1996)

In this context, the central focus should be on the children; they should learn everything in the field of music "by ear." The teacher should be very concrete, provide minimal verbal explanations, and be practical and comprehensible to parents (Gordon, 2012). Excessive words cannot be retained for long by children at this level; therefore, we should avoid long 'big' verbal explanations (Orff, 1978). To provide 'intonational support' to children, teachers should be prepared to play simple, familiar, and accessible songs on the piano. To achieve this, books containing notations derived from well-known children's songs should be prepared. From these texts, future teacher candidates should first learn to play these songs melodically themselves and then teach them to children.

In the modern era of the 21st century, music education, whether as basic education or as a process of training future professional musicians, should be carried out professionally and using renowned methods. For example, the method of the famous Hungarian composer Zoltan Kodály can be cited (Kodály, 1974). When referring to Kodály, it should be clearly stated that the definitions he presents in his works are filled with "rich" colors and a variety of content. It is important for future teachers to follow this diversity, especially when working with children on intonational heights. Therefore, the teaching of melodies from well-known Albanian songs should be conducted through various and entertaining games, even supported by techniques of "transforming extremities into other organs." This is evident from the "Solfège" example presented by Kodály (Houlahan & Tacka, 2015).

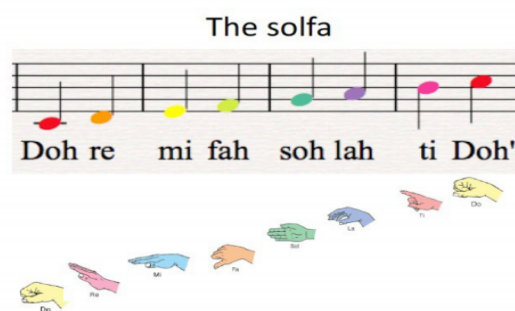


Figure 2. Kodály's Solfa (Solfège)

At this point, singing becomes easier because "it is followed and accompanied by a change in hand position," representing the ascent of notes toward a sequence, as if on a continuously rising string. In this context, Kodály adds an "H" to some note names, making pronunciation freer, closer to the sky, and more natural (McGowan, 2006).

At this stage, students need to clarify two things: depending on the need, teachers should combine their piano playing with hand movements so that children can follow the "hand height" (intonation); and the Solfa method serves merely as an additional alternative (not mandatory) to achieve the ultimate goal—teaching songs by singing them. In this case, students must learn the lyrics of the song in poetic form, making it easier to learn the melody (Houlahan & Tacka, 2008).

In our context, the working system with students overlaps with the frontal teaching of music education via the piano. Here, the teacher educates more than 30 students simultaneously. Individual training should be conducted with students to ensure that the education is beneficial and highly effective. This not only helps music teachers work more comfortably during the lesson but also keeps the interest and participation of the children, i.e., the students, at an

effective and satisfactory level. In this scenario, we need to plan and implement the triangular structure, only then deciding whether a student will undertake the task of working with children (Bennet, 2008). Bennet's triangle refers to the interaction between teachers, students, and lesson content as a teaching model, emphasizing the importance of the interplay of these three elements for an effective teaching process.

Teacher: Takes on the role of guiding and facilitating the process.

Student: Focuses on active participation and interaction.

Content: Represents the knowledge and skills to be acquired.

Bennet argues that effective teaching requires a balanced planning of these three components. In the context of music education, this necessitates the creation of an environment where teachers encourage students to experience active learning through music (Bennet, 2008).

Regarding teachers' behavior towards children, it should be noted that words like "no," "bad," "you did it wrong," or similar expressions should never be used under any circumstances. Children do not fully understand the concepts of negativity, denial, or error. If any teacher uses even one of these terms, they will never achieve the goal of educating children in music (Marzano, 2007).

If someone approaches children with expressions like "no" or "you did it wrong," we can observe extremely negative and belittling responses in their demeanor. When children hear such expressions, they immediately react by refusing to sing because they are afraid of making mistakes. If children indeed make mistakes while singing, the best, most effective, and non-hurtful approach from teachers should be encouraging, such as: "Very good, shall we try again? Can we do it a bit more carefully and slowly?" (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). This would be ideal not only for the child but even more so for the teacher. Establishing communication with children in this way would be an excellent approach for both teachers and children, leading to successful outcomes in working with children. Every music teacher should forget the word "mistake" and remove it from their vocabulary. This is a fundamental behavior rule in working with children and should be communicated to everyone aiming to teach at this level (Dweck, 2006).

ETM (Education Through Music) Method

As pedagogues, we must inform students about a highly successful method that is based on adaptation as a technique for specific conditions. It is known that adaptations are always possible, at all times and places. The renowned methodologist Mary Helen Richards embodies this approach (Richards, 1995).

Mary Helen Richards' influence on education in the modern era has become increasingly popular, reflecting her views from the outset. After graduating from Lincoln University in Nebraska, Mary Helen Richards moved with her family to a place called Portola Valley, disappointed by the general state of music education in California and particularly in Portola Valley. She soon began working at two primary schools in Portola Valley and Corte Madera, where her lessons and organized music activities made a significant impact. What is the Mary Helen Richards Method—ETM Method—and why should everyone implement it? (Richards, 1995).

According to this method, the introduction, identification, inclusion, and activation of music must be carried out very carefully, as teachers face a set of sequential, interconnected graphical elements used in various ways. This method involves creative, popular, and straightforward approaches that vary from one teacher to another. In all cases, these elements are incorporated into the vocalization process, transforming into sound symbols.

In 1969, based on ETM interests, the "Richards" Institute for Education and Research was established in Oakland, CA (Richard, 1970). Building on the core principles of Kodály's philosophy, ETM aims to achieve a developmental level in music literature through the use of local folk songs in the native language. Kodály extended ETM with another directive to Mary Helen Richards: "Adapt your songs and works to have an original character suitable for American and North American children." (Kodály, 1974). This principle can also be applicable in Kosovo's piano education.

Efforts immediately began to collect, process, and analyze songs to ensure their use and application are implemented as successfully as possible. Hundreds of students from North America participated in this collection, selection, and analysis process.

Currently, we have compiled and published a significant number of songs from Albanian folklore and other sources. It is necessary to select from these, include some well-known children's songs from our folklore, and adapt them into suitable piano melodies so that students can play them more easily, as Richards did.

Some traditional Albanian songs that can be adapted to the piano and are well-known among children include "Qingji i vogël" (Figure 1), a traditional Albanian song that often depicts village life and warm relationships between humans and nature. "Hapa Dollapa" (Figure 2) is a traditional song that reflects daily life and human emotions, emphasizing feelings of joy, love, and community.

Traditional songs are frequently included in music education materials for children in Albanian schools, with "Muzika për Fëmijë" (Rraci & Sylejmani, 2013) being one such example.

Qingji i vogël



Figure 1. Qingji i Vogël (Little Lamb)(The original song was composed by Ramush Kelmendi in 1967). (Muca, 1983). Measure 1-8



Qingji i Vogël | Këngë për Fëmijë | Burreci TV #kengeperfemije



Video 1. Qingji i Vogël (Web 4)

Happa dollapa

Part1 Andante Albanisa childrens song

Figure 2. Happa Dollapa (Gate Melody)(The original song was composed by Ramush Kelmendi in 1966). (Muca, 1983).Measure 1-6



Video 2. Hapa Dollapa (Web 5)

A New Approach in Music Education

The new approach significantly enhances educational efforts by building on the philosophy of play, effective interpersonal interactions, and musicality, thereby facilitating the initiation of practices in various settings. In these three aspects, all children should be included without discrimination.

With the spread of ETM (Education Through Music), its goals and scope will expand, increasing the demands for students to demonstrate their musical abilities, communication, movement, interactions, and other cognitive needs. Since then, comparative explorations in the U.S., along with studies in neurobiology and neuropsychology related to children's learning and well-being, have significantly validated this development and perspective.

Following these major achievements, ETM administrators and Helen Richards draw attention to music educators, classroom teachers, special education teachers, speech and language pathologists, professional therapists, pediatricians, neuroscientists, parents, church musicians, choir musicians, and all other essential elements needed in Kosovo by the Albanians. If, in this way, conditions for a new experiment called "Language Arts Through Music (LATM)" were

created in the U.S. (Houlahan & Tacka, 2008), why shouldn't the same be done in Kosovo? The 1971 experiment in the U.S. consisted of:

- Enhancing musical learning through a single song.
- Examining and analyzing the skills developed while singing play songs and learning musical elements.
- Providing classroom teachers with the opportunity to work with music, so they are not affected by risk and validity while achieving their goals.

To clarify, in our context (Kosovo), some principles of ETM applications are applicable, but not all. ETM (Education Through Music), which reached its highest level of implementation in the U.S. between 1969-1985, was based on the following principles (Richard, 1970):

The discovery of folkloric songs from North America (a total of about 150 songs) formed the core repertoire of ETM. These songs were included in this repertoire due to their simplicity, balance in form, flexibility, and resilience; they also attracted extraordinary success and attention from broad audiences due to their resilience against activities and frequent repetitions (not monotony).

- For ETM teachers, the priority was how language was adapted using antonyms-synonyms and its role in music teaching and performance.
- The inclusion of children in the ETM method can be summarized by a highly effective rule that relies on the presence of diversity in music education. The absence of musical experience before formal education, experiences of singing and instrument playing, findings and involvement of parents, students, and teachers, the need to personalize and socialize the learning experience, and the need to enhance pride in achievements are characteristics of every school and every student. These form the principles that ETM also operates and works on.
- Singing Every Day: Singing a simple piece of music in the classroom is a rare occurrence in many regions. The texts and contents of lessons conducted during those early years of education have created the impression that the focus of ETM is not—or was not—on the music curriculum; rather, arts, speech (language use), mathematics, and grammar skills could perhaps be taught more easily through music.



Figure 3. Summary of Mary Helen Richards' Song 'Let's Do It Again' (Web 6)

Building upon these facts about ETM, we should apply the same method and implementation path in practice, as we believe this method will yield significant results in the conditions of the Republic of Kosovo. Another important and interesting method is Edwin Gordon's approach (Gordon, 2012). This method has quite specific features that we can consistently address, but we will not do so at this stage of the study.

Musical and Educational Resources

This study addresses the integration of Albanian songs into piano teaching methodology, relating them to preschool and elementary school children. The selection of songs suitable for this age group should be limited to widely known and popular works. Music activities with children not only foster their creativity but also contribute to the development of their social skills (see Figure 4).



Figure 4. Children Playing Piano and Singing Albanian Music from Emin Duraku Elementary School

Note: Parental consent has been obtained for the children featured in this photo.

In Figure 4, the children are seen engaging in musical activities that contribute to the development of their social and creative skills (Kadiu, 2015). Although Albanian folk music is rich in terms of lullabies and children's songs, it has not been sufficiently transcribed and published (with musical scores). Compared to other cultures, Albanian songs are much richer (Bardhi, 2018).

We must rely on the knowledge of children, not solely on our own, as it is they who will teach the songs, not us or the students. Children find it easier to learn songs they already know; they lack the capacity to learn songs that adults (teachers or pedagogues) know (Bruner, 1996).

However, by considering certain popular songs published at different times, we can utilize these publications as much as possible, even if they are fewer compared to other European nations or the United States. A sufficient number of published works, with minor rearrangements or orchestral adjustments, can be made accessible to preschool and elementary-level students.

We should apply the triangular approach of the renowned Swedish professor Alf Gabrielsson, which addresses various aspects of music (Gabrielsson, 2011).

Gabrielsson associates music teaching broadly with practical experiences that are inherently linked to dictated experiences. To better understand the music education process, it is important to examine three fundamental elements: Practical Experience, Dictation Experience, and Reflection & Analysis (Gabrielsson, 2009).

Practical Experience: Practical activities like playing instruments and singing play a crucial role in the development of musical skills. Practical experience fosters creativity and collaboration while enhancing listening and coordination skills through activities such as playing melodies, improvising, and singing in groups.

Engaging in such activities establishes an emotional connection with music and enhances students' motivation. A supportive environment encourages the discovery of musical passion, while also contributing to the development of young artists' self-confidence and discipline (Hallam, 2010).

Dictation Experience: Theoretical education, instruction from teachers, and sheet music studies provide the necessary structure and direction for the learning process. This approach lays a strong foundation of knowledge, facilitating the transition to practical activities. Knowledge acquired through theory is crucial for the development of musical skills, as well as for preparing for challenges encountered in interpretation and creation (Bruscia, 2014).

Reflection and Analysis

The process of reflecting on learning experiences and analyzing performances contributes to a deeper understanding of music. Music education becomes more effective and fosters a holistic approach when these three elements (Practical Experience, Dictation Experience, Reflection, and Analysis) work harmoniously.

By consistently recording the age, gender, and educational level (or preschool) of children, we create a basic record of the knowledge and needs of these children. The test should be applied across as wide a geographic area as possible in many regions of Kosovo.

After a three-month field study, we will collect a sufficient number of songs. These songs will be selected by filtering out non-Albanian ones, with preference given to those most frequently sung by children. The songs will need to be linguistically refined, transcribed into sheet music (if not already transcribed), and rearranged for piano to suit children's levels. Then, these songs will be taught to our students, who will work with children.

Based on the previous explanations, we do not have the right to eliminate any text that includes folk songs, traditional music pieces, stylized songs, or children's songs. We aim to model songs such as "O bubreç," "O sa mirë, oh sa keq," "O maçok çamarrok," "Macja le të lahet," and "Ç'u rrëzova, bum ç'u rrëzova" (Suli, 2008).

Songs like "O bubreç," "O sa mirë, oh sa keq," "O maçok çamarrok," "Macja le të lahet," and "Ç'u rrëzova, bum ç'u rrëzova" form an essential part of the traditional repertoire of Albanian folk music. These songs serve as fundamental materials for studying Albanian culture and identity. They offer valuable opportunities for integrating music into children's educational processes, contributing to the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage. Additionally, they play a significant role in enhancing musical activities within the teaching process, strengthening the link between culture and education (Musliu, 2012).

Combinations of Tradition-Global Works

Generally, the most effective combination seems to be having 70% of the collected material as Albanian songs and 30% as English songs. Technological advancements have enabled children to learn, adopt, or speak English from a very young age, making the songs easier and more accessible (Murray, 2010).

There are hundreds of English songs for children, but the main challenge is selecting the most well-known ones. In this context, a useful resource is the work "A Treasure of English Nursery Rhymes - With Music," edited by L. E. (Ed) Walter (Walter, 1988). We can mention some song titles well-known among Kosovar children that they comfortably sing in English: "Cock-a-doodle-doo," "Jack and Jill," "Baa, Baa! Black Sheep," "Hickory, Dickory Dock," "Mary, Mary (quite contrary)," "Pussy-Cat, Pussy-Cat," "Little Jack Horner," etc. Moreover, these songs composed and adapted for children can be found with sheet music, and we only need to adapt them to our circumstances and teach them to the students, who will later teach them to children (Walter, 1988).

It is worth emphasizing that because Albanian has the consonants "TH" and "DH," children will find it much easier to learn these songs compared to languages like German or French. In summary, the combination of Albanian traditions with foreign-global works appears highly suitable and particularly favorable, especially given technological advancements (Gashi, 2014).

Of course, priority should be given to Albanian tradition and the existing song repertoire. Foreign works-songs aim to break monotony, create an attraction in singing and play, and help children adapt to modern times, always without forgetting the rich Albanian tradition. With this training, children will feel integrated into contemporary life while also preserving Albanian musical tradition. This complements them and prepares them more maturely for their future lives (Duli, 2018).

Certainly, we cannot limit ourselves to only Albanian and English songs. Songs from other cultures will also be considered. In this regard, YouTube can be a significant resource, offering various types of songs from all over the world.

Overall, we do not see an insurmountable barrier or difficulty in integrating the repertoire of traditional Albanian music with the traditions of other European and world cultures. On the contrary, these elements reinforce and enrich each other. Albanian songs can be incorporated into the global repertoire, and conversely, songs from global traditions can be learned and sung by Albanian children.

Conclusion

This study emphasizes the importance of music education and the necessity of effective classroom management in music teaching. Determining students' readiness is a fundamental element in this process. According to Bruner's suggestions, it is necessary to consider the diverse perceptual relationships of students, which plays a significant role in teaching strategies. Innovative approaches, such as Mary Helen Richards' ETM Method and Alf Gabrielsson's Method, encompass three important aspects of music education, holding the potential to bring significant changes to music education in Kosovo. By combining Albanian music with internationally recognized songs, this approach not only preserves cultural heritage but also provides children with opportunities to connect with modern music. This integrated methodology helps bridge two cultures and prepares children for a life rich in musical experiences (Çitaku & Gashi, 2019).

Special emphasis in this study is placed on the integration of Albanian music into piano teaching methodology for children in early age groups. Piano education should be a process that includes student-centered and innovative pedagogical approaches. The selection of materials and songs that align with universal standards is essential for providing effective and enjoyable teaching. This approach will lay a solid foundation for future musical experiences and help students establish a connection with different cultures through music (Kocani, 2018).

For successful music education implementation, teachers should adopt a student-centered approach, use appropriate materials, and engage in a continuous development process. These practices will enhance students' musical skills and make the role of music in education more evident. Establishing student records and conducting extensive testing are necessary steps to ensure that teaching materials are suitable for children's needs and levels (Shkurti, 2016).

In conclusion, music education should be a dynamic and harmonious process that effectively and enjoyably fosters children's artistic skills. This approach will prepare a strong foundation for future musical experiences, supporting the artistic development of students.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Future Research

In-depth Analysis of Teaching Methods: Research should be conducted to examine the effectiveness of various teaching methods, including both traditional and modern techniques, in the field of music education.

Development of Educational Materials: New and innovative piano teaching materials that are suitable for different age groups and incorporate both Albanian and international music elements should be created.

Integration of Technology: Research should explore the use of technology in teaching, such as music applications and online teaching, to enhance student engagement and motivation.

Comparative Studies: Comparative studies between different education systems should be conducted to identify best practices and derive lessons that can be applied in Kosovo.

Promotion of International Collaborations: International projects and exchange programs that enrich the experiences of both students and teachers in music education should be encouraged.

Evaluation of Social Development Impact: It is essential to examine the impact of music education on children's social and emotional development to better understand its benefits beyond musical skills.

Parental Involvement: Strategies should be developed to increase parental involvement in the teaching process, emphasizing the importance of family support in children's musical development.

Recommendations for Practitioners

Reading Relevant Materials: Music educators should be encouraged to read this article and other related articles that present effective pedagogical approaches.

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