

Assessment & the National Standards in the Kodály Context

OAKE National Conference
Long Beach, CA
March 11, 2016



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Today's Objectives

- Explain the skill areas identified by the National Standards.
- Identify the ways that the Kodály approach develops these skill areas in students.
- Analyze the barriers to implementing standards-based assessment in your classroom
- Select strategies to facilitate implementation of your assessment program.

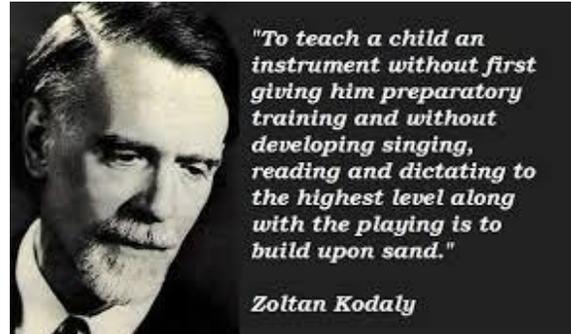
Today's Outline

- Why the Kodály Approach?
- Eight common problems with assessment and their solutions
- Assessment strategies by skill domain

Why the Kodály Approach?

Our approach is both timely and timeless

- Developing musical skills has always been important.
- National Standards place a heavy emphasis on functional musicianship.
- Schools across the nation are increasingly focused on skill proficiency and assessment rooted in student progress toward skill proficiency.
- We need to be part of the proficiency conversation.
 - This justifies our work to those who hold the attitude that we are “the classroom teacher’s prep” or the attitude that we are babysitting kids with music.
- New Oregon law requires reporting on student progress toward proficiency separate from participation.



"To teach a child an instrument without first giving him preparatory training and without developing singing, reading and dictating to the highest level along with the playing is to build upon sand."

Zoltan Kodaly

Our approach is relevant

- Kodály students engage daily with the same skill domains the National Standards address - singing, playing, reading, notating, composing, arranging, etc.
- Kodaly teachers engage their students in more purposeful and intentional skill development than the other approaches.
- Showing progress in skill areas justifies our work from an advocacy perspective in a proficiency-driven era.

Our approach is practical

- Kodaly teachers faithful to the approach are already addressing the standards.
- Kodaly teachers are already consciously assessing students daily.
- Recording and reporting is the key.
- Though the reporting tasks may seem to much to handle, they are achievable.

Eight Common Problems with Assessment & their Solutions



Problem #1:

So many standards, so little time.

Solutions:

- Prioritize skills that are most frequently taught and most easily assessed when reporting. For me, though I address all nine areas, the bulk of my assessment and activities focuses on singing, playing instruments, and reading & notating music.
- If phasing in this transition, you might pick one skill area a year, focus on measuring and communicating that one, and then add others over time.

Resources for Problem #1

I've selected Singing, Playing on Instruments, and Reading & Notating Music as the "priority standards" in my class. You can see more about how I've communicated these standards and expectations to parents on my class website (www.wilkinsmusic.net).

The original National Standards for Music Education (1994) are in the supporting handout. For more information, consult print versions in libraries as they are the most reliably located sources. Many of the web versions were removed following the introduction of the new standards.

A new set of National Core Arts Standards is was adopted in 2014. You can read more about them on their website at www.corestandards.org.

Problem #2:

Creating measurable criteria for assessing student performances

Solutions:

- Post proficiency expectations in your room and talk about them with kids.
- Essential questions => Questions I ask about my singing/playing
- Use rubrics in kid friendly language. Make them available to parents and students. Talk about them with kids.
- Demonstrate and show examples of proficient work.
- Think through and practice examples of different levels of performance before using them with kids. Dialogue with colleagues. Evaluate sample performances together.

Resources for Problem #2

Assessment Rubrics - Student Language (yellow handout)

Teacher Language (see www.wilkinsmusic.net/rubrics)

The Proficient Musician posters

- See next page for the “look fors” in each standard
- You are welcome to print the posters I use and put them up in your room. These are available for download at www.wilkinsmusic.net/oake-wd/

The Proficient Musician

Standard #1: Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.

As a singer, I...

- Sing the right notes in tune with few mistakes.
- Sing the right rhythms and keep a steady beat.
- Use an open and free tone quality.
- Support my tone with a good breath.
- Pronounce words clearly with good vowel and consonant sounds.
- Use a good body position.

Standard #2: Playing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.

As an instrumentalist, I...

- Play the right notes in tune with few mistakes.
- Play the right rhythms and keep a steady beat.
- Play with an open and free tone quality.
- Support my tone with a good breath.
- Use a good body and hand position.
- Play accompaniment parts correctly.

Standard #3: Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.

As an improviser, I...

- Make up musical ideas that respond to the ideas of other performers
- Create repeated rhythmic and melodic patterns that accompany other music
- Vary melodies that I know by changing the rhythm or melody in different ways

Standard #4: Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines.

As a composer, I...

- Create and arrange music that accompanies a story or dramatic reading
- Write and arrange songs and pieces for instruments that follows directions from my teacher
- Use a variety of voices, instruments, and other sources of sound when I write music.

Standard #5: Reading and notating music.

As a performer, I...

- Read rhythms from notation correctly...
- Perform melodies from notation correctly. I know both the letter names and solfa names...
- Perform musical symbols and directions accurately and can tell you what they mean...
- Identify the letter names of notes on the staff...
- Write rhythms and pitches correctly in stick notation and staff notation...

...with at least 75% accuracy.

Standard #6: Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.

As a listener, I...

- Can tell you what kind of music I'm listening to.
- Describe what I hear in the music.
- Use my musical vocabulary correctly when I tell what is happening in the music.
- Can tell you what the form of the music is by listening to it.
- Can tell what kind of instrument or voice is performing when I hear it.
- Respond to what I hear through movement.

Standard #7: Evaluating music and performances.

As a growing musician, I...

- Can identify some ways to tell if a performance is a good one or not, and then I use them to judge the quality of a performance.
- Explain why I like certain kinds of music using my musical vocabulary words.
- I can tell you which skills I'm good at and why. I can explain how I am working to improve my musical skills.

Standard #8: Understanding the relationships between music, the other arts, and other academic disciplines.**As a student of the arts, I...**

- Explain how terms used in music are the same as or different from how they are used in the other arts.
- Show how an event, scene, feeling, or idea might be represented in the different arts.
- Describe how what I am learning in music relates to or helps me with other subjects in school.

Standard #9: Understanding music in relationship to history and culture.**As a historian and lover of music, I...**

- Can tell you how I use music in my daily life, and why certain music is good for different activities that I do.
- Explain the functions of music and musicians in different cultures and traditions.
- Describe what makes different types of music unique.
- Demonstrate good audience behavior for the many ways and places I listen to music.

Problem #3:

Finding the time to assess my students

Solutions:

- Use singing games: Leverage whole class activities where possible (Greetings with objects; Doggie, Doggie; My Mama's Callin' Me, Telephone Song)
- Work in partners / small groups so you can hear multiple kids at a time. You don't need to hear each kid individually, and they usually do better in a group.
- Look for exceptionalities

Implementing standards-based assessment does not need to increase your workload or take away teaching time from rhythmic & melodic elements.

Resources for Problem #3

Use games and activities you are already working on and using for assessment.

See sample grade level assessments chart on next page for repertoire ideas.

Sample Grade Level Assessment Repertoire

Special thanks to Mr. Richard Greiner, Mr. Hal Shepperd, Mr. Michael Ballash, and Mrs. Dani Aldinger for their contributions to the list below.

Grade	Singing Assessments		Playing Assessments		Reading & Notating Assessments
1st	Lucy Locket Bounce High, Bounce Low Snail, Snail Doggie, Doggie Star Light, Star Bright		Echo rhythms of song material on percussion instruments Broken bourdon on Orff Instruments for song material: Scotland's Burning; Engine, Engine; Star Light, Star Bright		Rhythmic dictation with manipulatives, icons, and stick notation
2nd	Rocky Mountain Bow Wow Wow Let Us Chase the Squirrel Frosty Weather		Simple accompaniments for song material, including broken bourdon, ostinati, and drones using Orff instruments, and other classroom percussion. One Bottle of Pop, Sea Shell, etc.		Rhythmic dictation with manipulatives, stick notation, and standard notation
3rd	Sea Shell Alabama Gal Frosty Weather My Paddle Old King Glory		Four beat accompaniment patterns for song material using Orff instruments and/or boomwhackers. These may include broken bourdons, ostinati, and drones. <i>easyHot Marimba! pieces</i>		Rhythmic dictation with manipulatives, stick notation, standard notation
4th	America (My Country 'Tis of Thee) Fire on the Mountain Great Big House Oregon, My Oregon Old King Glory Wake Up Canon		<u>Orff instruments:</u> Great Big House <i>Hot Marimba!</i> (easy pieces)	<u>Recorder:</u> My Paddle Hot Cross Buns Au Claire de la Lune Jolly Old St. Nicholas Renaissance Round	Treble clef note reading tests Rhythmic dictation activities with stick and standard notation
5th	Shoo Fly; Push the Business On; Turn the Glasses Over; Are You Sleeping?; Coffee Canon; Wake Up Canon	<i>Challenge Pieces: America, the Beautiful; Star Spangled Banner; Simple Gifts, Battle Cry of Freedom</i>			Treble clef note reading tests Rhythmic & melodic dictation activities

Problem #4:

Tracking and documenting student progress with a large student body

Solutions:

- Use a seating chart with spaces to record performance data on each kid. Mark all notes on one sheet and keep in folder/binder/clipboard.
- Seating chart markings for pitch matching

Pitch Matching Codes			
	Matched pitch in the given key.		Did not match interval. Sang too high.
	Matched the interval but in a lower key.		Did not match the interval. Sang too low.
	Matched the interval in a higher key		Used speaking voice.

Resources for Problem #4

See the sample seating chart on next page. I use the above symbols to record pitch matching observations in the primary grades.

Seating Charts

- 1) Have kids' names and pictures for each class.
- 2) Add places to mark scores for the different categories you're assessing.
- 3) Mark all your grades on the chart for each class – then all your grades are in one place when it comes time to grade kids at the end of the term.
 - a) Have short, regular assessment activities throughout the term. If you can assess kids in the context of games, that is even better. Don't spend your whole 30 minutes doing playing tests.

When you are observing a whole class, look for exceptionalities – kids that are doing quite well or are not doing well. Make note of these things.

Sample Seating Chart

Top Row					
	5	4	3	2	1
	Peter Erdei	Zoltán Kodály	Grandma Moses	John the Rabbit	Frau Line Maria
Singing					
Playing					
Literacy					
Participation					
					
	10	9	8	7	6
	Bela Bartok	Alan Lomax	Woody Guthrie	Uncle Sam	Queen, Queen Caroline
Singing					
Playing					
Literacy					
Participation					
					
	15	14	13	12	11
	Old Dan Tucker	Doctor Foster	The Drunken Sailor	Pete Seeger	Renee Fleming
Singing					
Playing					
Literacy					
Participation					

Enter singing, playing, etc. scores on the chart.

I have sometimes differentiated scores with different color pens and making a note at the bottom about what, for example, the purple singing score represents or the date on which we did it.

I keep these charts in a binder on the piano in my room so that they are available for use in class and easy to find in the event of an unexpected need for a substitute.

Problem #5:

Creating a culture where it's OK to perform, try, make mistakes, etc. in front of others.

Solutions:

- Small opportunities to perform and succeed in front of others.
- Give your best effort. I will help you succeed.
- Recognize at least one thing a kid does well.
- Be honest about your own mistakes.
- Work with kids & families to create safe spaces - work with a partner
- Multiple opportunities to demonstrate skills and experience success.
- Invest in relationships with kids that go beyond the music room.

Problem #6:

Separating a student's proficiency from their participation

Solutions:

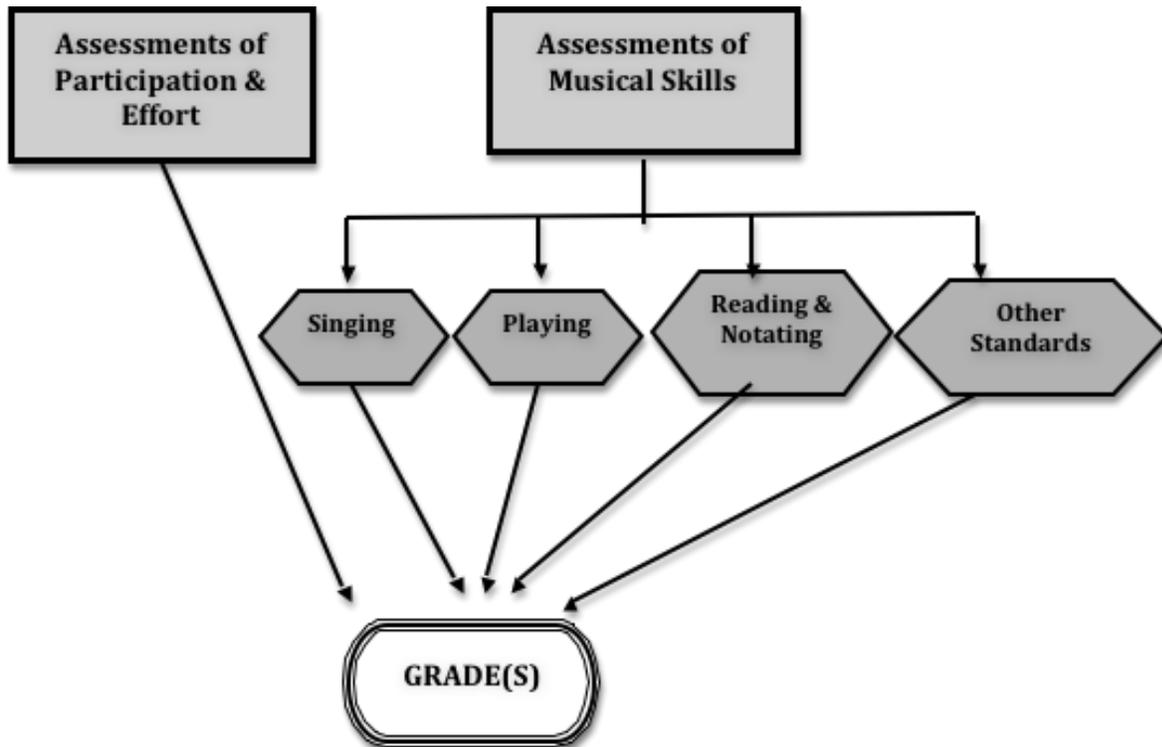
- If you can, make sure they are separate line items on the report card.
- Separate reporting allows you to recognize those kids who are working hard, but are still working toward proficiency. It also allows you to recognize superior skills when behavior is not acceptable.
- Avoid letter grades for skills when possible. Use the language of proficiency.

Resources for Problem #6

Our district recently revised our report cards to be standards based. In music, we have separated assessments of proficiency from participation. Below are the line items for each grade, along with the proficiency scale we use to grade our students.

Kindergarten	Grades 4-6	Proficiency Scale	
Class Participation	Singing	Exceeds (E)	95-100%
	Playing Instruments	Meets (M)	80-94%
Grades 1-3	Reading & Notating Music	Nearly Meets (NM)	70-79%
Musical Skills	Class Participation	Does Not Meet (DNM)	0-69%
Class Participation			

If you keep your skill assessments separate from the participation, you can recognize outstanding effort in students who are not there yet with a particular skill. It also allows you to report when a child's skills are strong but class participation needs improvement.



Problem #7:

Communicating performance expectations to parents

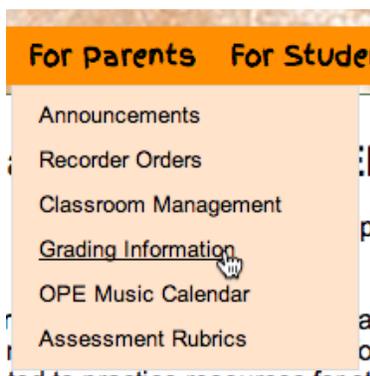
Solutions:

- Make rubrics, standards, etc. available to parents.
- Use a website.
- Show evidence of student growth. When written work is done, send all papers home. If you have quantitative data, show growth over the year in summary form for school newsletter.
- When parents aren't clear about why a kid is at a certain stage with, for example, singing, highlight the applicable parts of the rubric in your response.

Resources for Problem #7

I make our assessment rubrics, proficient musician traits, etc. available to parents on my class website. I give kids a quarter sheet card to take home each year with the website address on one side and the music program dates on the other. The site is also linked to our school website, and I send home periodic updates to parents via our email newsletter.

My class website may be found at www.wilkinsmusic.net if you'd like to see more of what I've done with my classes.



Rubrics (Student Version)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Music Assessment Rubric - Class Participation - STUDENT.pdf View Download	Class participation (student-friendly language)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Music Assessment Rubric - Std. 1 - STUDENT.pdf View Download	Singing (student-friendly language)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Music Assessment Rubric - Std. 2 - STUDENT.pdf View Download	Playing instruments (student-friendly language)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Music Assessment Rubric - Std. 5 - STUDENT.pdf View Download	Reading & notating music (student-friendly language)

Problem #8:

Pressure from classroom teachers and administrators around the Common Core State Standards

Solutions:

- Recognize that while our standards are not the same, there is overlap (see chart). Emphasize these connections in your discussion.
- Communicate your own proficiency expectations and standards clearly to administrators, classroom teachers, and families. We are not merely someone's prep period or a musical babysitter. Show them why.

Resources for Problem #8

See [General Music Standards & the Common Core](#) handout (blue).

The Common Core State Standards are accessible via their website at www.corestandards.org.

The College Board has released several documents pertaining to the links between the New National Core Arts Standards conceptual framework and the Common Core State Standards. You can view them on the National Core Arts Standards website at <http://www.nationalartsstandards.org/content/resources>.