European Music Portfolio - A Creative way into Languages

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Emerging from merging
DD Cards Reading-composing (language and music tools)

Cristina Fedrigo
Pedagogy of Music Professor, Music Education Department
Conservatorio di Musica "G. Tartini" di Trieste (Italy)

Considerations and indications for use

Background: DominoesDominium Author's Project[1]

Materials:

A. Song / Rhyme /Story

B. Series of cards:
Cards with the parts of A
Cards with music elements
Cards with special indications.

Functional aspect analysis of this version of the game

Tools for basic experiences of "reading" and "exposing" children to expressive songs that can suggest the meaning and help with memorisation processes.

Tools to help de-structure materials and compose parts, for both language and musical characteristics.

Words are drawn to suggest and help children, even non-readers, find and follow the thread of the song/story/rhyme.

Uses structure and sound (see oral traditions learning strategies) to easily put the different parts together.

The music cards can be used in different ways.

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1   See: http://www.cristinafedrigo.it/noteprofessionali/progetti.html

WORKING WITH "A CARDS"

1. Sing the song and then ask the children to put the cards in order, following the story / the structure of the rhyme.
Some graphic aspects of the cards help the children to easily organize the sequence, starting from a random order of the cards.

2. More difficult: ask children to do the same, without singing them the song / rhyme first. In this case children can follow only the suggestions from the graphic aspects of the cards, and the logic and "sound" structure of the story / rhyme / sentences. For verification, listen to the song, see if they agree with their choices.

3. When the cards are set in the correct sequence, repeat the song together. To consolidate learning.

4. At this point, we can begin to use the special cards, or the music cards: depending on the different context and situation, teachers / educators can functionally decide. Both choices are possible.

WORKING WITH "B CARDS"

1. SPECIAL CARDS
These have the function of opening opportunities and possibilities in reading and practicing. They "cut the thread" (without losing it and practicing in time, anyway) of the main structure, and give short and easy instructions so that children create something a little new, following the instructions of the cards. In this way, the overall meaning of the material starts to change and develop, without losing the coherence and the familiarity of every element for children. So the memory of the main structure develops toward something which is not completely predictable.

2. MUSIC CARDS
Something similar happens when we use music cards. They should be used in time while children / students are practicing. The music cards enlarge the composition amplifying specific musical elements and involve children in controlling their first sight performance. Every change or integration in the composition of the cards, should be practiced gradually.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES
3. to go to an even more advanced level of the game, ask children / students to create new cards as they prefer and let them put these new cards where they want, to compose and play new creations.
They can produce cards which change aspects of the story, the rhyme, the musical structure …

4. Cards with empty space
These cards are made with printing on only one half of the card, leaving space for children to write, with coloured marking pens, to specify musical aspects of the single card. For

example: a rhythmic card could be tuned indicating the pitch of the rhythmic pattern, a verbal card could be read choosing a dynamic expression (*f, ff, p, pp*), and so on …

The main idea of this pedagogical approach

The DD Project idea has been with me since I was a child and reflects my musical and educational experience. I remember watching my mother teach in the primary school, and helping her prepare didactic materials and singing with her pupils. Later, when I was a music and music education student in the conservatory I used different materials to teach them to sing and play together.

The importance, efficacy and beauty of good didactics and useful teaching tools, always connected to my personal and professional growth. One of the guidelines of this project is the fundamental inheritance of Maria Montessory, which was so present in my mother's educational approach, especially the "materials of development". However, following the example of teachers like my mother, who often worked in poor social, economic and cultural contexts, I learned the necessity of creating these kinds of tools by hand, using what each context offers me. Even when we are working on the same content in different situations, the context to which pupils belong is the point of view for starting. An efficient didactic tool is a concept, a strategy which is "playable" in different ways, even using different materials and resources, depending on the various suggestions and opportunities of the time and the place where we work.

I think that the patrimony of "good practices", such as methods, strategies and teaching tools, requires us to constantly renew and refine them (and our points of view), developing the thread that joins them to the different worlds where our students live.

Creating tools for teaching is, in my opinion, one of the most important ways to understand and play with other people's starting points in the learning process.

Last, but not least, using beauty as a pedagogical resource helps pupils. It also encourages teachers to resist finding a strong sense dimension in their daily duties, because playing games, music and creativity nourish our professional consistence and enthusiasm.

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Other references:
DominoesDominium Author's Project, see:
http://www.cristinafedrigo.it/noteprofessionali/progetti.html