



**Arts
&
Educational Services**

**5 Learning Objectives a Quality Music
Education Program Should Achieve in
Two Years**

Introduction

Benefits of a Quality Music Education

Learning music enhances the development of the mind in that it promotes strong cognitive skills, logical thought patterns, discipline, and creativity (Rao & Soumya, 2019). A music education causes a student to meet challenges (Bonneville-Roussy et al., 2020) whether it's mastering an instrument, singing, reading, or writing music. Based on how the student approaches the challenge determines the outcome of it. For instance, the student must examine the challenge in order to determine how to persevere successfully. This raises the conscious awareness of the student and puts the student in a position to solve a problem or overcome an obstacle thus strengthening cognitive skills.

Once the challenge has been analyzed, the student must rationalize as to how to solve the problem or overcome the obstacle, which encourages logical thought patterns. Once this is done, a consistent course of study or regular practice patterns must take place in order to master the challenge, which gives the student solid discipline skills. After the challenge is mastered, the student is equipped to repeat the process for the next musical challenge.

As the student continues to study music, other areas of music such as theory and history should be studied. Eventually, this will help uncover the inner musical expression that may lie dormant within the student if it is not explored. This brings forth the student's creative ability.

5 Learning Objectives a Quality Music Education Program Should Achieve in Two Years

The following pages discuss 5 goals a **quality** music education program should achieve when teaching its students, the elements needed in becoming well-rounded musicians. At the end of two years, thriving music students should have the ability to do the following:

1. The students should be able to read music notation so that singing and/or playing it (depending on whether the student is a singer or instrumentalist) becomes less difficult the more it's practiced.
2. The students should be able to identify and apply note values
3. The students should be able to count out rhythms comfortably.
4. The students should know music theory and be able to apply it when analyzing the structure of different styles of music. This is very important for music students who study composition.
5. The students should know and be able to explain the history of different styles of music. This is very important in order for music students to gain an appreciation and tolerance for various genres.

Learning Objectives for a Solid Music Education Program

Goal # 1A: Reading Music Notation

A solid music education program will train its students to read and write, music notation in both, the treble, and bass clef.* When these skills are learned, they can be applied, vocally or to an instrument, effectively. In the Quality Music Instruction Guide for Piano Book I, the instruments will be piano/keyboard and voice.

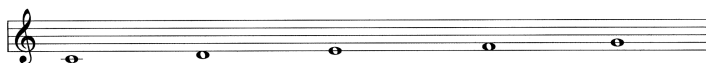
Because learning to read and write music can be challenging, sometimes, playing and singing by ear (playing an instrument or singing without reading music notation) is the desired method of learning music. Even though playing by ear is an excellent skill to possess, reading music notation while playing an instrument or singing, takes a musician to a higher level of understanding music. Analyzing music becomes more logical. Also, it opens the doors to pathways not travelled by musicians who can't read music notation. For instance, if a musician is hired to perform at an event that has a specific theme (wedding, funeral, luncheon, etc.), chances are, if there no recordings for the music to be performed, sheet music can be followed in order to play or sing the songs. Also, if a musician chooses to audition for a position as a choir member, director, or accompanist, the music to be sung or played can be learned at a much faster pace when two senses (hearing and sight) are relied upon rather, only, one (hearing). Not to mention

most professional choirs require its members, directors, and accompanists to read music notation in order to accomplish the desired results.

Even though I promote developing the ability to read music notation, the information stated above is not, by any means, an indictment on musicians who do not read music. In fact, there are some **excellent** accomplished musicians who choose not to learn music notation. However, the ones **I've** come in contact with are exceptional. They are very gifted individuals in their area of musical expertise who remained focused and driven to achieve the high goals they had set and continue to set for themselves. Unless a budding musician is on this extraordinary level, it is strongly suggested that music students embrace the art of reading music notation.

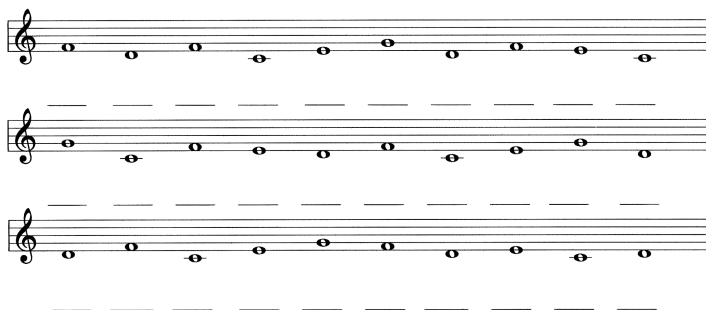
The following pages illustrate a music notation exercise and a “C” position diagram as a logical way to introduce notation on the treble clef and apply it to the piano.

Learning the Treble Clef: Middle “C” - G



Middle
C D E F G

Directions: Fill in the spaces below using the chart above.



There are other clefs in music and all of them should be introduced to the students. Students that play instruments that use other clefs should be able to recognize the notes on the treble and bass clefs* and the students that read treble and bass clef notes should be able to read notes on other clefs.

***Bass clef not shown.**

Learning Objectives for a Solid Music Education Program

Goal # 1B: Applying Music Notation

The Music Alphabet and “C” Position

A solid Music Education program trains its students to read and write music notation and its values in both, the treble, and bass clef. Before this can be accomplished, getting acquainted with the music alphabet and hand positions on the piano/keyboard must be introduced. Read the following information and view the diagram as a first-step guide to what beginner music students need to know while on their way to becoming well-rounded music students.

The *music alphabet* consists of the first seven letters of the alphabet: A-G. Following the note, “G,” is the note, “A.” A beginner student will begin his music journey by learning, what is called, “C” Position beginning with the right hand.

“C” position for the right hand:

The right **Thumb** (finger # 1) is placed on “Middle C”

The right **Pointer Finger** (finger # 2) is placed on “D”

The right **Middle Finger** (finger # 3) is placed on “E”

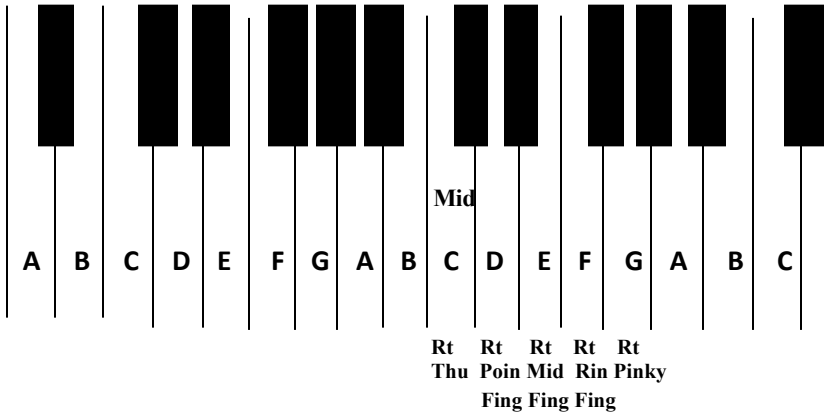
The right **Ring Finger** (finger # 4) is placed on “F”

The right **Pinky** (finger # 5) is placed on “G”.

Study the diagram below to see how the fingers of the right hand are placed on the keyboard.

The Music Alphabet on the Piano

“C” Position on the Piano



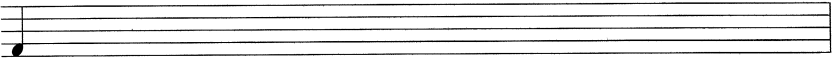
Once “C” Position is learned, then the students can begin playing the notes filled out in the previous exercise, on the piano, in order to become comfortable with “C” position. The next step would be to learn the bass clef notes and follow the same course of action with the left hand.

Learning Objectives for a Solid Music Education Program

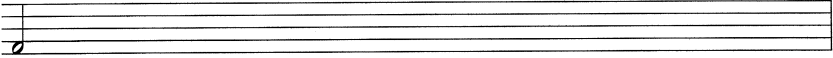
Goal #2: Knowing Note Values

The following diagram illustrates 4 different types of notes. Each note has its own value. Press any key on a piano or keyboard or sing any note and hold it for the value of each note. Be able to identify each type of note.

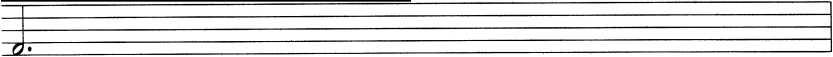
Quarter Note = 1 beat



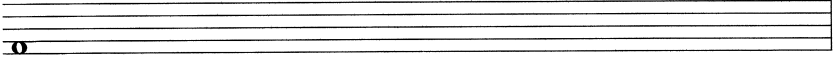
Half Note = 2 beats



Dotted Half Note = 3 beats



Whole Note = 4 beats

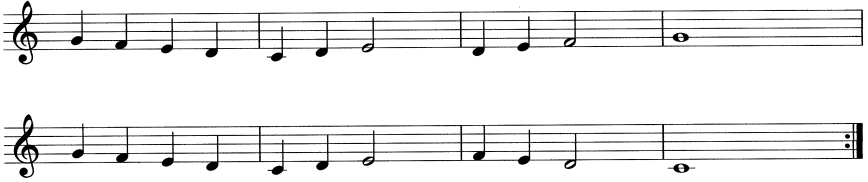


Learning Objectives for a Solid Music Education Program

Goal #3: Counting Rhythm

Look at each song. Follow the notes and count out each rhythm based on the note value chart from the previous exercise. Also, if necessary, review the music notation and “C” position charts for help.

Song #1



Song #2



Song #3



Learning Objectives for a Solid Music Education Program

Goal # 4: Learning Music Theory

A solid Music Education program trains its students in understanding Music Theory. Music Theory is important because it is the key to analyzing music and good musicians should have this ability. Understanding the structure of music is laying the foundation for new music to be created. For instance, knowing the major and minor scales, on which music of the Western Hemisphere is based, helps students to understand the make-up of a composition which can lead students to compose their own music.

In order to play an instrument or sing, there are basic skills all music students must know. One particular skill is playing or singing major and minor scales. In order to do this, the key signature of each scale must be known. The following is a diagram that illustrates the major keys that contain sharps. This diagram provides students with a method of learning the number of sharps in a key in numerical order.

Key Signature Diagram

Major Keys with Sharps (black keys to the right of the note – for example: “F” sharp (#) is the very next black key on the right of “F”)

C Major: 0 Sharps

G Major: 1 Sharp – F#

D Major: 2 Sharps – F#, C#

A Major: 3 Sharps – F#, C#, G#

E Major: 4 Sharps – F#, C#, G#, D#

B Major: 5 Sharps – F#, C#, G#, D#, A#

F# Major: 6 Sharps – F#, C#, G#, D#, A#, E#

C# Major: 7 Sharps – F#, C#, G#, D#, A#, E#, B#

By reading this diagram in order, students will see the close relationship one key has with the next key. For instance, “C” major, having no sharps or flats, is closely related to “G” major since “G” major has only one sharp. However, “C” major is not closely related to “E” major because “E” major has four sharps. Knowing the relationship between keys is important for ear training purposes so students can hear as well as see how music is structured and then progresses into new music.

Once the major keys that contain sharps are learned, then the major scales with sharps can be learned vocally or on an instrument.

Next, the major keys and scales that contain flats, the minor keys and scales that contain sharps then the minor keys and scales that contain flats should be introduced in that order.

Music Theory: Learning the “C” Major Scale

Once the key signature diagram is learned, then it will be time to learn how to sing or play scales on an instrument. The following example illustrates the “C” Major scale in both, the treble, and bass clef. Also shown is the correct fingering that is to be used if playing the scale on the piano. It is best to learn the scales in the order as shown in the key signature diagram so as to understand the relationship keys have with one another. This is important because knowing the relationship between keys helps train the ear to listen for the close melodic and, ultimately, harmonic connection within music. Also, learning the scales in the order as shown in the key signature diagram prepares instrumentalists for the increasing number of sharps (or flats) when playing them. Gradually adding a sharp (or flat) when learning a new scale makes learning the scale less intimidating. There is a great deal of knowledge to obtain in music. The less overwhelming the process is in comprehending it, the better the learning experience will be.

"C" Major Scale

"C" major scale (right hand)

Musical notation for the right hand of the C major scale. The treble clef is on the top staff, and the bass clef is on the bottom staff. The right hand part is written on the treble clef staff. The notes are: C4 (middle C), D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. Fingering numbers are placed above the notes: 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 3, 2, 1.

"C" major scale (left hand)

Musical notation for the left hand of the C major scale. The treble clef is on the top staff, and the bass clef is on the bottom staff. The left hand part is written on the bass clef staff. The notes are: C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4. Fingering numbers are placed below the notes: 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 3, 2, 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

"C" major scale (both hands)

Musical notation for both hands of the C major scale. The treble clef is on the top staff, and the bass clef is on the bottom staff. The right hand part is written on the treble clef staff, and the left hand part is written on the bass clef staff. The notes and fingering are the same as in the previous two sections.

Learning Objectives for a Solid Music Education Program

Goal # 5: Learning Music History

A solid music education program trains its students in understanding music history. Music history allows students to appreciate different styles of music (Grout, 1988). This is really important for composition students. Coupled with their understanding of music theory, they can draw from various genres of music to create their own original music styles.

Understanding the different time periods in music history is very important because the students are able to see the progression of one style of music to the next. Also, the students will see the connection between styles of music and the events that occurred during different time periods. The students will learn how historical events were and still are reflected in music. The following is a list of European time periods in chronological order. Each period had a style of music written by significant composers who flourished in each era as their music progressed into later genres.

The Ancient Period (app.753 B.C.-336 A.D.)

The Medieval Period (app. 336-1500)

The Renaissance Period (app. 1450-1600)

The Baroque Period (app. 1600-1750)

The Classical Period (app. 1750-1827)

The Romantic Period (1827-1900)

The Early to Mid –Twentieth Century (1900-1951)

Each style of music was unique. When each era is studied, parallels between the music and its time are evident. The music took on its characteristics and told the story of the events of its time as they unfolded. The music became a mirror of its time.

Music History: Understanding the Progression of European and African-American Music History

Like anything else in history, music evolved beginning with certain characteristics that reflected the time in which it was born, and then gradually developed into a new unique style of music as time passed and events took place. For example, when studying the music of the Western world or European music, it is understood that the music of the **Ancient Period (app. 753 B.C. – 336 A.D.)** was monophonic (consisting of one line, only) (Grout, 1988). Today, this is known, as the melody. Therefore, how a melody captured the ears of its listeners was most significant during this era because it was believed that music was made to affect the emotions. Because of this belief, scale systems known as *modes* were used to create moods and the structure of a mode determined the mood of a composition.

As the Ancient Period gave way to the **Medieval Period (app. 336-1500)**, music progressed from one-lined melodies to two-lined harmonies, known as polyphony (Grout, 1988). This music was created by doubling the one-lined melodies with another pitch at an interval of a third, fourth or fifth.

Like European music, American music, such as Jazz, went through similar progressions. **Ragtime Music (1890's–1920's)**, possessing straight, jagged rhythms evolved into the smoother, swinging rhythms of **Early Jazz** that was influenced, greatly by Ferdinand Le Menthe, better known as **Jelly Roll Morton (1890-1941)** in the 1920's (Gridley, 1991).

Knowing music history gives music students the advantage of understanding why styles of music took on certain characteristics. This makes music more logical. Knowing the link between different styles of music allows students to identify with the music which enables a greater appreciation for it.

Once the information about the different periods and the music that dominated them is examined, questions as well as hands-on projects should be given so that students can demonstrate their learning and instructors can assess them. The following are a few sample questions that could be asked during a music history lesson:

1. What are the approximate dates of this period?
2. What is the historical background of the music of this period? Explain the thoughts of the people or any major events taking place that had a direct effect on the music during this time period.
3. What types of instruments were used during this period?

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