

Maximizing the Music: Tips, Tricks, and Strategies for K-5 Music

Dr. Megan M. Sheridan
University of Florida
mmsheridan@ufl.edu

Songs used in the session:

- Let Us Chase the Squirrel: <https://kodalycollection.org/song.cfm?id=876>
- Bump Up Tomato: <https://global.oup.com/us/companion.websites/9780190235772/rep/example/bump/> (video)
- I'se the B'y: <https://www.bethsnotesplus.com/2015/05/is-the-by.html> (I used a slight variation of this)
- Fantastic song resource: <https://www.kodalycollection.org/>

Teacher Talk

- Teacher talk is everything a teacher says in the classroom.
- Teachers talk far more than they realize ([Nápoles & Vázquez-Ramos, 2013](#)).
- Students prefer it when teachers talk less ([Nápoles, 2017](#)).

Guidelines for maximizing the music:

- Reduce teacher talk
- Give succinct instructions – The fewer the words, the better!
- Create musical transitions
- Use body language and gestures: communicating without words encourages students to focus remain engaged in the lesson

Rote Teaching Process

1. Teacher sings the song.
2. Ask a question about the song (What was the last word?)
3. Teacher sings the song again, giving the class something to do (Pat the beat, listen for a specific word, etc.).
4. Ask a second question.
5. Teacher sings the song a third time, giving the class something to do or listen for.
6. Ask a third question.
7. Echo sing phrase by phrase.
8. Echo sing larger sections.
9. Sing the entire song together.
10. Students sing the entire song without the teacher.

Musical Transitions

- Physical Transition: Move while singing
- Musical/Vocal Transition: echo singing, echo clapping
- Listening Transition: Teacher sings or plays while students listen

Considerations for Lesson Plan Structure:

- Think about how you structure your lessons.
- How do you begin?
- Is there a balance of high concentration and low concentration activities?
- How do you move from activity to the next?
- How do you end the lesson?

Lesson Plan Structure Example

1. Warm-up (include a familiar song)
2. New Song
3. Preparation of a new concept – High Concentration
4. Movement – Low Concentration
5. Practice of a known concept – High Concentration
6. Closing activity

Five Actionable Tips for Maximizing the Music

1. Give directions in the fewest words possible.
2. Have a clear process for teaching songs by rote.
3. When teaching through immersion, limit talking.
4. Plan your transitions. Be purposeful with how you move from one activity to another.
5. Plan lessons using a clear, defined structure. People generally function best when they know what to expect.