

AN ABSTRACT
of
MUSIC LISTENING, THE KEY
to
LEARNING

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This paper is concerned with music listening and its importance in the learning process. It is designed to show how this skill contributes not only to a child's physical, intellectual, social, and emotional growth, but to his mental growth. Personal experiences with children of a first grade class have provided the examples which show the application of growth in music listening.

Music has appeal for people of all ages. Everyone has some musical resources within himself to sing, dance, or listen to music. As Leopold Stokowski says, "music is something deep inside...a voice from the divine."¹ Music speaks to anyone who is sensitive to its appealing message and can be understood and appreciated by everyone through its sound, rhythm and unworded personal appeal. It is social in nature bringing groups together for a common expression of experience and listening is more stimulating and performance more enjoyable when groups join in making music.

Music should be a pleasurable school activity. Children's development centers around their relation with people. Their need for acceptance is provided by activities in which there is participation and sharing with contemporaries. If wisely guided, these activities can be pleasant and rewarding. The pleasure of listening to

¹Leopold Stokowski, Music For All Of Us (New York: Ginn and Company, 1949), p. 115.

music with community groups brings enjoyment and education.

Good listening is an active use of mind. The ear is the channel through which impressions are registered. The degree of musical awareness provides the degree of musical enjoyment. Opportunities for listening to music are numerous and can be enjoyed through many mediums. Through his listening, everyone can gain whatever he desires, learn whatever he will and get whatever satisfaction from his efforts.

In music for early childhood the art of listening is important. Children are conscious of sounds at an early age and through a natural instrument, the voice, singing comes easy to them. This skill develops under the guidance of a wise teacher who plans listening activities, diagnoses difficulties, and improves listening habits. Learning to listen with great awareness and sensitivity to a variety of sounds is the teacher's first concern. Bringing music to the child from many avenues will develop his taste and lead to an appreciation of all things aurally beautiful.

To have an experience is to personally feel, enjoy, and perceive. It also implies knowledge derived from one's action. The child can participate in music through various activities, through his whole being: his thinking, his ear, his voice, his body and his soul. Experiences

involving all these faculties are necessary for first graders who listen to learn, that vital concern of early childhood. These children have explored music in song, rhythm and sound gaining musical concepts, feeling rhythmic movement, understanding the language of sound, creating songs and dances and making musical instruments. They have learned to understand the meaning of music and to appreciate its value. Each child has grown at different times, through different activities, with different achievements. Only through the skill of listening was this made possible. Does this not prove that listening is the key to learning?