

WHOLE PART WHOLE at the keyboard

Janna Olson

WHOLE: An introduction to music where students are exposed to the piece of music as a whole. It consists of listening to music and moving. The student may already be forming “an impression” or a “general understanding“ of tonality and meter. This would happen most often in an off-the-bench activity time. Some students may even attempt to replicate the piece by rote if it is attractive to them.

PART: Now the students experience and perform patterns (rhythm and pitch) both orally and with fingers on the keys. This is the first stage for technical coordination with small parts of the piece as the students learn to apply various parts. Rhythm and tonality are separated in the learning process for greater ease in learning. They will audiate and perform tonal and rhythm patterns in the tonality and meter of the piece. They do not necessarily need to perform the exact patterns from the piece.

WHOLE: At this stage the students will have acquired a greater understanding of the whole piece. They may play through the piece and are developing an individual interpretation. They now perform with specific understanding of tonality and meter and have learned to internally understand the structure of the music with its tonal and rhythm patterns. Note: The movement between Whole and Parts is fluid—going back and forth depending on lesson time and structure

Rationale for “Whole-part-whole”:

1. Foster an atmosphere of curiosity rather than perfection.
2. Builds independence and deeper musical understanding
3. Prepares a student for success and avoids running a “house of correction”

Whole-part-whole Piano repertoire example:

Allegretto in C major by Christian Gottlob Neefe (Level 2 RCM)

WEEK ONE:

- Listen and move: free flow (infinite sign, birds, butterflies, trees)
- Do you hear Major or minor tonality? CONTEXT
- Listen and move: sneaky, freeze in ninja pose and sing DO (video example)

WEEK TWO:

- Listen and move (swim in jello)—freeze and sing DO CONTEXT (video example)
- Echo major tonality patterns CONTENT
- Listen and move and find the MB/mb CONTEXT
- Listen for same and different (chant on BAH then on DU-DE) CONTENT
- Perform and improvise with rhythm patterns at the keyboard
- Assign C is DO technical work (arpeggio, scale, cadence, triads, 5-finger patterns)

WEEK THREE:

- Listen and move to find form (Oreo cookie): roll arms for part A, wiggle fingers for part B, back to roll arms CONTEXT AND CONTENT
- Go to the keyboard and find 5 C's. Identify areas of the keyboard accordingly
- Sing essential tonal patterns, play and improvise
- Prepare repeated notes and slurs with game activities (Pet the giraffe)

WEEK FOUR:

- Listen and move like stuck in mud—echo rhythm patterns from part B
- Go to keyboard and warm-up with C is DO and rhythm pattern improv.
- HS with DO as central point—code word for finding DO quickly in the middle of work
- Keep singing AND chanting patterns with more improvisation activities
- Possibly write patterns on white board

SOMETIME IN THE FUTURE

- Student plays the whole piece
- We give feedback: We ask questions about what they hear etc

Whole-part-whole song to sing example:

Leaves are Falling (Marilyn Lowe)

1. Listen with eyes closed (teacher establishes tonality and meter)
2. Listen and move like a tree swaying in the wind
3. Sing resting tone
4. Sing starting tone
5. Ask about meter
6. Echo rhythm patterns (Two 2 MB patterns)
7. Name category of pattern (upbeat)
8. Identify where patterns occur
9. Identify tonality
10. Imitate tonal patterns
11. Identify type of pattern (tonic minor)
12. Identify where patterns occur in song
13. Audiate for repetition of melodic pattern (beginning)
14. Sing Song
15. Play or sing chord roots