

Rote Song Guidelines

General Guidelines

- When teaching rote songs NEVER let students just sit and listen. They should always be listening for a musical concept/feature.
- Sing a cappella or the singers will never become independent. Establish tonality; give a clear starting pitch.
- Song Acquisition: Immersion and Phrase-by Phrase; Teach the entire song as one solid piece; do not break it up unless it is very long.¹
- Sing the song on a neutral syllable first (noo, bum, ee, etc.). Use only pure vowels. Select a consonant that will assist vocal production and aid in the rhythmic style of the piece. (Non-legato: t, p, b, d; Legato: m, n, v, z). Alternate vowel & consonant combination to reflect changing textures.
- Only add words when students can sing it accurately and with phrasing and beauty.

Rote Songs - Tonal

- Instruct singer to move their hands in tonal contour (like elevator-pitch on staff):
 - In the air; on the floor/desk with colored yarn/string;
 - Following the contour drawn on the board;
 - On a white board with a marker
 - As students advance, have them share his/her contour with the class
 - After students have done the specific phrases in contour, mix them up to see if the class can determine which phrase is which.
 - With a flashlight on the ground or the wall;
- Stop in the middle of the song and have the students sing the tonal center
- Instruct students to raise their hands when there is a specific tonal or melodic pattern (do-mi-re)
- Instruct students to draw phrase rainbows in the air to find logical resting points
- Instruct students to translate the song or sections of the song into solfège, write in tonal contour and then transfer to a staff
- Instruct students to wave on the highest pitch and/or the lowest pitch, or a specific tonal or melodic pattern
- Instruct students listen and raise their hand for repeated pitches; tonic and/or dominant triad patterns
- Instruct student to sing the melodic cadence from the song that defines the tonality.

Rote Songs - Rhythmic

- Instruct the students to feel the pulse of the music demonstrating:
 - Macro beat motions
 - Micro beat motions
 - Meter motions
 - Beat vs. Rhythm motions
 - Continuous movement, microbeats with their hands and macrobeats with their heels, bilaterally or rocking
 - Perform continuous movement, macrobeats with their hands and microbeats with their heels, bilaterally or rocking
- Instruct students to listen for specific rhythm patterns and raise their hands when they hear them (Takadimi, ta-di) = simple; ta-ki-du, ta-du = compound).
- Instruct students to write rhythm in iconic notation of long & short (____ _ _ _ or ____ . . .) as they advance use popsicle sticks, 3 X 5 cards with rhythms containing one beat per card in simple and compound meter, and then in short-hand.
- Instruct students to feel (compare and contrast) the difference between simple (beat divided into two) and compound meter (beat divided into three).

¹ Rita Klinger, Patricia Shehan Campbell and Thomas Goolsby, *Approaches to Children's Song Acquisition: Immersion and Phrase-by-Phrase*, Journal of Research in Music Education, Vol. 46, No. 1 (Spring, 1998), pp. 24-34.