

# THE VOICE AND THE SONG FROM A GLOBAL AND INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

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## Abstract

Through the voice and song we can find the right tools to work in an interdisciplinary, globalized and changing learning environment. This approach is about creating new strategies for working with different competencies required in the acquisition of knowledge, promoting active and collaborative methodologies and in consideration of diversity. During this process students involved Teacher Education and teachers from different knowledge areas of the Faculty of Education at the University of Zaragoza (Spain). The song will apply its power to stimulate emotions, develop sensitivity, memory and imagination. Our principal objective is to use the voice and the song as an interdisciplinary tool for students taking a Master Degree in Primary Education (6-12 years) in the acquisition of different competencies. The results take into consideration the potential lack of a musical background that students may have, an emphasis has been placed on the selection of the material used and the change in attitude of participants during the process, in assessing the experience positively.

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**Keywords:** Voice, song, primary education, interdisciplinary

## Introduction

The human voice is the natural medium par excellence through which we musically express and communicate with others (House, 2004 p.76). Different curricula attach particular importance and relevance to the correct and proper use of the voice as a means of expression. The voice and the song are used routinely in teaching-learning processes in different areas of knowledge in both Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education. We agree with Hemsy of Gainza (1985) that the perception of the sung word is totally different from the spoken word, generating melody as an emotional reaction, a stream of sympathy or rejection that produces a response. Thus it is difficult for the child or children to be indifferent to such a stimulus. Singing is one of the oldest forms of expression as stated by Barceló (1995). Also, singing is the most basic way of making music and entirely possible for everyone, irrespective of their ability; it is also a socially powerful activity linking individuals to their community as Welch states (2008).

It is possible for children to use songs spontaneously in their daily games. There are several studies that suggest that students enjoy the use of songs in school, as demonstrated by Mizener (1993). In following this line of work, we want to convey to undergraduate Elementary Education students the need to apply the use of singing and song in elementary schools with activities that encourage the development of speech and expression and are contemplated through different perspectives. With music and song in particular, we can work on different areas of knowledge, in line with what most educators agree education "in" and "through" music allows this. Furthermore, as indicated by Vila (2000 *apud* Carabetta 2011:15) music never reaches our ears with empty connotations. It is logical that Music be an

element chosen to define our cultural identity, as we classrooms contain a range of students from different backgrounds.

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The main goal of this project is for the students in 3<sup>rd</sup> year taking *Fundamentos de la Educación Musical* to understand voice and songs as instruments in the teaching and learning process from a global and interdisciplinary approach.

The project will be developed in 3 steps:

**In the first** step, a questionnaire will be design to collect information about the 3<sup>rd</sup> year students musical knowledge. These students take a six-credit music course, *Fundamentos de la Educación Musical*, in their second semester of that year. In the next year students will have to make course choices to decide which will be their specialization.

For students studying teaching in Primary Education, these will be the choices for their specializations:

- Speech and Language specialist
- Special Education
- Physical Education
- Musical Education
- English or French language Education

Through the data collected from the questionnaires, it was detected that the students had not enough musical knowledge. The questionnaires were applied in 44 students, being 83,33% of them women and 16,67% men. All the students taking part in this research were in between 20 and 25 year-old students.

It was proved that most of the students did not have any musical knowledge, as only 18,52% of them had have previous music education. Moreover, most of this education had not been taken in regulated centers.

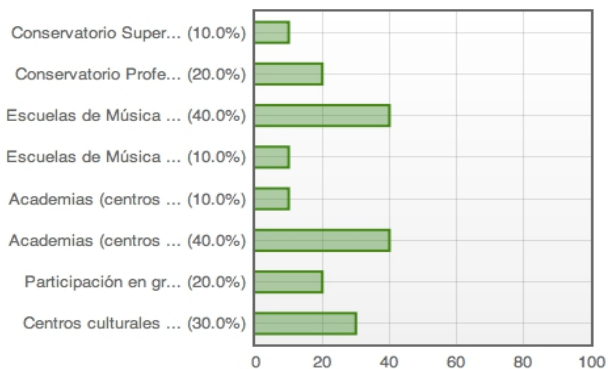


Figure 1. Conservatories and Schools of Music

The results obtained from the questionnaire also showed that, that only 4% of the students planned to choose the Musical Education specialization.

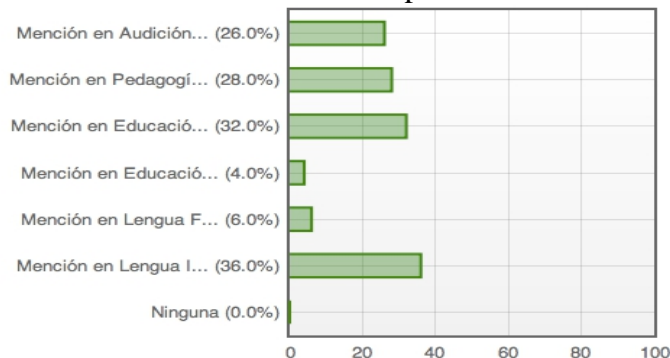


Figure 2. Specializations

**In the second** step of this Project, students will gather in small groups of four students, according to their future specialization preferences. An educational music project was designed understanding voice and songs as tools to acquire competences in different areas.

**In the third** step, students presented their project. The topics selected by the students are listed below:

*Speech and Language:*

- Language development in students with speech difficulties
- Traditional stories through Disney songs
- Work done through augmentative language helps work with children of special educational needs related to speech.

*Special education:*

- Feelings and emotion expression through songs

*Physical Education:*

- Trip a round the world through traditional songs from each country.

*Musical education*

- There is not an specific project in this area

*English language*

- Parts of the body, health and professions related with this area. To encourage comprehension and vocabulary development different songs are used: "The Hokey-Pokey", "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes" y "Dinosaur moves your body".
- Animals, using vocabulary selected to work with specific phonics. The purpose of this project was on improving students' pronunciation skills. The song used in this project were: "The Foggy Forest" y "The Bear hunt"
- The habitats, studying vocabulary related with this topic through Disney movie songs such as "In the sea", cartoons songs such as "Walking in the jungle" and popular songs as for example "Old Mcdonald had a farm"

We hope to develop the process carried out in one of these projects, in particular the proposal made by prospective students with a major in Physical Education. Students propose the project be focused on the work of motor actions used in an expressive or artistic nature as those situations that require motor responses are aesthetic and communicative in character and can involve individual and group activities. Thus, we value the use of space and qualities of movement, as well as the rhythmic components, the mobilization of imagination and creativity in the use of different registers of expression (body, oral, dancing, musical), as these are based on actions.

We propose related body expressions and different dances and songs that children can relate to in different parts of the world. The proposal is carried out through the story of Mr. "Don Luis" a cat that moves to different cities around the world.

The proposed methodology uses the story as a motivating element for students, the activity is based on the realization of an interdisciplinary exercise, in which aspects of different subjects of the curriculum are covered. Learning is significant, since previous experience of the topic is relevant towards improved learning. To allow for this, from the first session questions are raised in class, related to cases close to their personal environments (social, family, academic, etc.). They will establish a "fun routine" to encourage the children to participate in the search of the unknown, exploration of their imaginations and physical skills with dance, song and bodily maturation.

The songs and dances are proposed:

| Project | Thematic Content | Song                      |
|---------|------------------|---------------------------|
|         | Presentation     | Bailando por el mundo     |
|         | Paris            | Moulin rouge              |
|         | Portugal         | Ai seu ti pego            |
|         | China            | OPA Gangnam style!        |
|         | Madagascar       | I like to move it!        |
|         | Brazil           | Bienvenidos al Sambódromo |
|         | Senegal          | ¡Porque esto es África!   |
|         | Cuba             | Mueve los pies sabrosón   |
|         | Milán            | Gondoleros por el Duomo   |
|         | Test             | We will practice          |
|         | Representation   | Mira papá lo que se hacer |

## Conclusion

When starting the project, the students who had no musical knowledge, didn't feel they had enough ability to use their voices and songs as vehicular instrument to improve the teaching-learning process. However, by selecting the right materials and with the work done during the academic year 2013-2014 on vocal and physical disinhibition, as well as the study and analysis of musical elements involved in song, facilitated the self-confidence and security necessary for students to use the voice and the song in its various educational projects.

By the end of the project students highly appreciated the work done and realized the need to use song in the primary stage of education, for the acquisition and development of different educational skills.

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