

DISCRIMINATION ACTIVITIES

Discrimination activities are designed to cause the child to reflect on his own audiation—to realize that two things that he hears are different. Just as the child playing with stacking cups or different shapes discovers that they are different, so much the child learn that what he hears has its own distinguishing characteristics. These activities simulate the comparing of shapes. It allows the child to compare sounds--to compare one meter with another, one tonality with another. By having the opportunity to compare two things "next to each other" in sound, he begins to discriminate between them. He learns that they are different. He learns what to listen for in order to discriminate. Ultimately, he knows each through its own discriminating characteristics. It is through comparing that the child learns what something is, as it is distinguished from what it is not.

Although children with natural gifts in music will likely make those discriminations themselves, most children will not and need the opportunity to compare differences in music. Whereas it is easy to let a child manipulate different sized cups or shapes of different sizes, it is not easy to give a child aural stimuli to "play with." The discrimination activities give the child the opportunity to play with different aural stimuli, to compare them, to sort them, to notice their distinguishing characteristics, to discriminate between them.

The discrimination activities draw the child's attention to his own audiation--bringing to consciousness what he "knows" unconsciously. It is after much saturation that discrimination activities are introduced. The child must know in audiation before he can begin to discriminate.

Discrimination activities are an ongoing process. Those included here are the most basic as well as much more developed discriminations. As professional musicians and educators we are continually discriminating, based on the discriminations we have made previously. Once we know a rectangle from a circle, we can begin to recognize the rectangle shape in buildings and make more sophisticated discriminations between those buildings.

Many of the discrimination activities are set up like a riddle, engaging the children in determining which puppet is singing (which tonality or meter is being sung). The point of the game is not to get the children to recognize say, that one is duple and the other triple, but that the two musical examples are different. Same and different is the prime goal of these activities. When the riddle is set up, whether or not the children get the "answer" right is not the point of the game. The game is simply drawing their attention to same and different in audiation. The expected response is primarily to get the children to attend to the activity. The teacher invites the children's response to the riddle, but the focus is on attending to aural examples as they are presented "next to each other" in sound. Children readily get into the game, pointing to the puppet they think is singing, but whether their answer is right or wrong does not matter.

With the goal of placing the aural stimuli "next to each other" as with stacking cups, the techniques of presenting these activities are determined and are critical to the success of discrimination activities. The prime goal has to be audiation, keeping the different stimuli alive in audiation, placing the different stimuli in close proximity for comparison in audiation without the interruption of words or the game itself. The techniques must present the riddle, the answer, and the whole game without

interrupting audiation. Because of the charm of the puppets, or the fun of the riddle, it is easy to "get into the game" rather than into comparing in audiation. The teacher must maintain the focus.

The puppets as a prop provide a visual for the children to hook their same and different perceptions onto. That is, the visual provides something more tangible than proper names. Having to sort duple and triple patterns by proper names forces the use of language which interrupts audiation. Sorting duple and triple by simply pointing to a puppet keeps the music rather than language prime. It also provides a simpler discrimination tool for very young children. Young children can discriminate same and different in audiation. They just need activities that allow them to do it at their very young stages of sophistication and without verbalization.

Puppets are the props most often used in the discrimination activities. The individual personalities of the puppets add to the attractiveness of the activities while setting up an ideal situation for comparing in audiation. Discrimination activities can use other props, but the puppets are recommended for "teaching" discrimination in audiation. The other activities give the children opportunity to "use" their discrimination skill and broaden it to new dimensions.

Once children have reached level 2, they are ready to begin to discriminate in audiation. From that point on, one discrimination activity in each class or within each week is recommended, alternating weekly tonal and rhythm, or, alternating blocks of four weeks (see lesson planning)

Often, saturation or movement activities will involve experience with things that will then be presented as discrimination activities. That is, movement may suggest macros and micros in a meter long before the terms macro and micro are presented in discrimination activities. It is that experience that will allow the children to discriminate in the discrimination activities.

Similarly, many of the tonal saturation and movement activities involve the resting tone, yet even to refer to the resting tone as a resting tone involves discrimination, as it requires distinguishing the resting tone from the aural stimulation.

The presentation of tonal and rhythm syllables is initially done as a discrimination activity, as it draws the children's attention to their own audiation, to what they already know in audiation. Once syllables have been presented as a discrimination activity, in duple meter, for example, duple syllables can be used in other activities as a saturation activity--saturation of those syllables.

In language the child hears much, dialogues with people who can speak the language, and learns from whatever teachable moments. In the *Enchanted Playhouse*, the children hear much, dialogue with the teacher, who speaks the music language, and learns--moves forward with the discrimination activities--the "teachable moments."

TECHNIQUES—To be used as a reference for several activities.

TEACHING DOODLELEE

These activities are a delight, captivate the children, and really lead to the desired response. Doodlelee always tries hard but can never quite do what the children can do. He always needs their help. The techniques presented here are for all of these Discrimination activities with Doodlelee. Teaching Doodlelee Micro Beats in duple meter will be used as the example. The series of activities can be done in all meters, presenting in one class session micro beats in duple meter, then in another, micro beats in triple meter. The next class session could present macro beats in duple meter and the next, macro beats in triple meter.

Teacher:

"Today Doodlelee Duck, we are going to teach you micro beats in duple meter. Micro beats, Doodlelee. We want you to go 'du de, du de, du de, du de.' Got that, Doodlelee? Micro beats. 'Du de, du de, du de, du de.' You try it Doodlelee, 'du de, du de, du de, du de.'

Doodlelee:

"Du, du, du, du."

Teacher:

"Doodlelee, you did macro beats. You went 'du, du, du, du.'" We want micro beats. We want 'du de, du de, du de, du de.' Try it again, Doodlelee. 'Du de, du de, du de, du de.'

Doodlelee:

"Du, du, du, du."

Teacher:

(To the children) "Did he do it?"

Children:

"NOooooooo."

Teacher:

"Doodlelee, you did macro beats. You did 'du, du, du, du.' Those were wonderful macro beats, Doodlelee, but we want micro beats. We want 'du de, du de, du de, du de.' Try it again, Doodlelee. 'Du de, du de, du de, du de.'"

Doodlelee:

"Du, du, du, du."

Teacher:

"Did he do it?"

Children:

"Nooooo!"

Teacher:

"I think he needs our help. Let's help him. (Including the children in chanting) "Du de, du de, du de, du de.'"

"Now Doodlelee, see if you can do it. Du de, du de, du de, du de.'"

Doodlelee:

"Du, du, du, du."

Teacher:

"Did he do it?"

Children:

"NOooooo!"

Teacher:

"We better each help him. Matthew, you help him." Teacher chants 'du de, du de, du de, du de.' as if instructing Doodlelee, then cues Matthew to respond with Doodlelee.

Child and Doodlelee"

"Du de, du de, du de, du de.'"

Teacher:

"Megan, du de, du de, du de, du de" (to Doodlelee).

Child and Doodlelee:

"Du de, du de, du de, du de."

Teacher:

(After each of the children have had a turn) "Now you try it, Doodlelee. Du de, du de, du de, du de."

Doodlelee

"Du de, du de, du de, du de."

Teacher and Children"

Cheer

Teacher:

"Boy, Doodlelee, you really did it! These children are such good teachers! They taught you micro beats today."

Five or six children might be singled out for a turn. Depending upon the size of the class, Doodlelee may not be successful until after all of the children have had a turn, so his response after the first five or six children might still be macro beats, with the teacher indicating that he needs more children to help him. She may at the end include all of the children in unison--"one more time, Doodlelee."

The idea is to continue to contrast macro and micro beats. When more individual children have individual turns with micro beats without the contrasting macro beats, audiation can be replaced with imitation and the tempo can be lost. Similarly, when teaching macro beats, without the contrasting micro beats, the meter can be lost.

The fewer words in this activity, the better. The focus should be on micro beats with the contrasting macro beats for audiation.

Doodlelee's struggles help the children accept their struggles and really make them feel good about themselves, as whatever is so difficult for him is so easy for them. The teacher's positive approach with Doodlelee provides a model for her approach with the children, and her patience with his incorrect response is really perceived by the children. Once in a class of four year olds, I had forgotten to include the line "Those were beautiful macro beats, Doodlelee, but we want micro beats." A four year old interrupted me to tell Doodlelee hid did beautiful macro beats.

The teacher might include a comment like, "Last week, Doodlelee, we taught you micro beats in duple meter. Now we are going to teach you micro beats in triple meter." Whether or not the children (or parents) understand what you are saying, they will at least get the idea that this is not the same thing they did the week before.