

**Folk Music in the Music Classroom:
How Does the Use of Folk Music Affect
Student Engagement and Learning?**

By

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Abstract

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This thesis is a theoretical study regarding song repertoire in a music curriculum. The purpose of the study is to examine the philosophical and practical motivations for the use of folk music, as well as implications for educators who wish to base their curricula on this type of song material. A music education methodology from Hungary that places at its core the use of such music, the Kodály approach, is explored in detail, first in a historical context within its country of origin and then in relation to its current uses in the United States. This exploration, paired with four examples of songs and their Kodály-influenced applications in the author's classroom, gives the reader a definitive context in which to comprehend the final investigation; the study culminates in an investigation of the use of folk music in American schools, paying particular attention to the ways in which educators acquire and share song material with their students.

The sources for the historical study of the Kodály approach include both relevant literature and the author's own training in the methodology, including a summer seminar in its town of origin in Hungary. The sources for the final investigation take on two main forms: personal interviews with music teachers who use folk music in their curricula, and pertinent literature from the fields of ethnomusicology and music education.

Significant findings include the motivations for various educators' usage of folk music, which include primarily its accessibility and wide-ranging potential uses; the effects of this music on student participation; and the many understandings of the word *authenticity* in terms of both the acquisition and presentation of folk music.

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