

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A METHOD

The correct presentation of any material is essential, but one should not forget that success isn't guaranteed by the method used. The teacher not the set of books, is the determining factor in the quality of results.

Method

- a systematic plan followed in presenting material for instruction.
- does the method meet your teaching goals and objectives?
- all methods have strong and weak features. No one series has all the answers.

Approach

- note learning
- classical melodies or simple familiar folk melodies
- one composer, many composers or teacher's own approach
- established school approach
- first position first approach
- multiple key approach
- rote learning
- Other?

Format

- is color used?
- are pictures or drawings used?
- music fonts clear?
- is the material helpful without being cluttered?
- is the material written in an appropriate language for the audience it is intended?
- is the book long enough to be practical, but short enough to give the student a feeling of accomplishment.

Sequence

- does the book keep the student advancing in a steady manner or in spurts?

Purpose

- for individual, independently studied or with a teacher?
- for group
- for combination of individual or group

Technique

- is the program practical and geared for taking a beginner into, intermediate or advanced?
- by the end of the method will technique be developed sufficiently?

Note Range

- does the series or group of books guide the student into higher and lower notes and positions?
- is the series only the first position?

Rhythm

- what kinds of rhythms are encountered?
- is the method of counting easy to understand?
- numerical, syllabically
- other

Chords and Scales

- how and when are these presented?
- are both tablature and notation given?
- are both strumming and arpeggios introduced?
- are different types of chords used? (maj. min. sev.)

Theory

- intervals
- chords
- fretboard harmony
- functional harmony
- transposition
- creative work

Repertoire

- does the repertoire make sense for the intended audience?
- is it appealing and tasteful?
- is the rate of progression gradual?

Ensemble

- is there material for the instructor to use as duet?

Supplemental

- if separate books are used (alternative methods) how well does the method allow for that?
- what should you supplement the method with?
- are suggestions given in the book?

Form and Structure

- is there room for creativity, improvisation or composition?

Musicianship

- does the method teach the student how to be musical or allow it to be taught from the instructor?
- is too much emphasis on the mechanical aspects of playing and not on expression.

Sight Reading

- is there some mention of sight-reading or exercises for it?

Length of Study

- how long will it take the student to become musically literate? One, two or three years?