

University of Denver

**Digital Commons @ DU**

---

Musicology and Ethnomusicology: Student  
Scholarship

Musicology and Ethnomusicology

---

11-2019

## The Pedagogy of the Suzuki Method

University of Denver

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.du.edu/musicology\\_student](https://digitalcommons.du.edu/musicology_student)



Part of the **Musicology Commons**



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

---

## The Pedagogy of the Suzuki Method

---

## The Pedagogy of The Suzuki Method

### Annotated Bibliography

Brooks, Nancy Greenwood. "Toward a Deeper Understanding of Suzuki Pedagogy." *American Music Teacher* 30, no. 1 (September-October 1980): 20, 22-23. [https://www.jstor-org.du.idm.oclc.org/stable/43538358](https://www.jstor.org/du.idm.oclc.org/stable/43538358).

Brooks explains the essence of Dr. Suzuki's approach as the Mother Tongue Approach, a "cognitive approach too broad to be circumscribed by a step-by-step method." She then evaluates the repertoire and culture as accidents, or symptoms, of the approach and explores whether or not they are essential. She discusses the idea that presenting the Suzuki Method as a one-package plan and not distinguishing the essence from the "accidents," stumbling blocks are placed in its way for wide acceptance in the professional musical community. In addition, these distinctions will help parents understand that things like listening to the recording are part of the essence of a Suzuki approach, making it essential. This article furthers my argument for what is pedagogically important for a Suzuki teacher to focus on. In addition, her distinctions help add clarity to the professional music teacher world.

Colprit, Elaine J. "Teacher Verbalization of Targets in Suzuki String Lessons." *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, no. 157 (Summer 2003): 49-61. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40319186>.

This study describes the topics teachers address and specifically how the way they present tasks influence a student's ability to perform successfully. For example, Colprit examined both the way in which teachers communicated and the resulting quality of student performance in that lesson or rehearsal. By observing "rehearsal frames" Colprit found that students were more

successful when teachers expressed goals in terms of specific physical actions rather than in terms of musical effects. By understanding which types of verbal and nonverbal communication retain in a student, I will have more tools in deciphering why one performance was successful while another was not.

Duke, Robert A. "Teacher and Student Behavior in Suzuki String Lessons: Results from the International Research Symposium on Talent Education." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 47, no. 4 (Winter 1999): 293-307. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3345485>.

This study investigates the behaviors of teachers, students, and parents in private study lessons, in addition to the relationships between student characteristics and lesson behavior. 29 string teachers, using instruction based on Suzuki's principles, "were observed teaching two or three different students across three consecutive lessons -- a total of 246 lessons." These videotapes were evaluated by 13 expert string pedagogues who were trained to evaluate "using systematic observation procedures...specifically for this project." Results show that excellent Suzuki teachers' instruction is devoted to active student involvement, high proportions of teacher talking -- focusing on informative statements and directives, performance demonstrating, and physical positioning. Interestingly the high rates of positive versus negative feedback differ this data with "other available data regarding applied music teaching." This information will aid in my understanding of how lessons using Suzuki-based instruction run specifically between students and teachers. It also provides a look into how instruction differs from other teaching method lessons. Finally, this study adds helpful data on private lessons, an aspect of the scholarly study that is lacking in representation.

Garson, Alfred. "Learning with Suzuki: Seven Questions Answered." *Music Educators Journal* 56, no. 6. (February 1970): 64-66, 153-154. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3392719>.

Alfred Garson, a music consultant for the South Shore Protestant Regional School Board in Montreal, Canada, and editor of the *Canadian Music Educator*, answers seven questions regarding the Suzuki Method that are frequently asked of him during various radio, television, and press interviews. Most relevant to this paper, he discusses the ways in which this method teaches the violin, such as demonstration and repetition, and how this method differs from other teaching methods. This article seems to mainly be explanatory, serving as a source for clear explanation. Interestingly, it seems many articles from this time period are mainly defining to the greater audience what the Suzuki Method even is.

Grilli, Susan, and Shin'ichi Suzuki. "An Interview with Dr. Shin'ichi Suzuki at the Talent Education Institute, Matsumoto, Japan, on 18 April 1991." *International Review of Education* 38, no. 5 (September 1992): 547-551. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3444693>.

In this interview, Grilli asks Suzuki questions regarding the Suzuki method as a broader idea of education than just music. They discuss that any child in any environment can be taught and educated. In addition, Suzuki expresses his kindness and respect for all living human beings' souls - for both adults and children. For this paper, this is a useful source because it deals with direct insights from Suzuki himself. Since it is a primary source, it interacts with other secondary sources by serving as a great point of comparison.

Hendricks, Karin S. "The Philosophy of Shinichi Suzuki: 'Music Education as Love Education.'" *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 19, no. 2 (Fall 2011): 136-154. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/philmusieducrevi.19.2.136>.

In her article, Hendricks “attempts to bridge the philosophical gap between Western music education philosophers and practicing Suzuki music teachers.” She argues that Western music education philosophers might benefit from accepting practical pedagogical alternatives, such as lived experience and oral tradition, while Suzuki teachers may benefit from additional introspection and philosophical reflection. In addition, she directly addresses Estelle Jorgensen’s essay, directly linking their arguments in the scholarly conversation. For my argument, this is a good scholarly critique of current Suzuki teaching.

Jorgensen, Estelle. “On Philosophical Method.” In *Handbook of Research on Music Teaching and Learning*, edited by Richard Colwell, 91-101. New York: Schirmer Books, 1992.

Jorgensen addresses different pedagogical methods and their philosophical assumptions.

Specifically, she suggests that Suzuki pedagogues fail to discuss and defend their chosen method from philosophical assumptions, exchanging these for “personal opinions” and “practical issues.” She continues to suggest that the philosophies and principles at the root of the Suzuki, Kodaly, and Dalcroze methods as being somewhat superficial. This is an important source as Jorgensen is coming into her argument with a different tone compared to most other scholarly writings on this topic. It provides slight controversy to both my argument and to the general scholarly conversation.

Kendall, John. “Suzuki’s Mother Tongue Method.” *Music Educators Journal* 83, no. 1 (July 1996): 43-46. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3398994>.

This is a short article on Shinichi Suzuki’s teaching concept, the Suzuki Method, and its growth, both generally and in America. He notes three possible dangers and their implications that he would like adherents, especially teachers, to understand, such as “[t]he ‘earlier beginning, more

and more difficult music' syndrome...unison performances of advanced repertoire...[and] the use of tape recorders." Again, this earlier type of article serves an explanatory purpose for other readers and scholars.

Lee, Yera. "A Pedagogical Guide to 'Suzuki Violin School,' Volume 4 Using the Suzuki Method." DMA thesis, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, 2012. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

This thesis presents a pedagogical guide for teachers especially to consult when teaching from Volume Four, the beginning of using new intermediate techniques like shifting. Lee uses the important principle of review by relying upon earlier pieces and exercises from the Suzuki Method volumes to focus on techniques such as shifting, string crossings, and trills. Before systematically breaking down each piece in the volume, Lee discusses the different techniques both introduced and developed. She presents ideas for how to teach, practice, learn each piece while developing techniques for future study. These pedagogical ideas will further my understanding of how Suzuki teachers go about teaching principles through practical pedagogical means. In addition, this thesis provides a useful bibliography for my future discovery of sources. It is also a current reference regarding practical methods for teaching specific techniques that can be cited easily.

Salerno, Julie. "The Suzuki Method and Beyond for the Advancing Violin Student." Interview by Danae Witter. *American String Teacher*, November 2015. <https://doi-org.du.idum.oclc.org/10.1177/000313131506500408>.

Interviewing Dr. Julia Salerno, a lecturer of violin and viola at Eastern Washington University and the co-director of the Walla Walla Suzuki Institute, Danae Witter focuses her questions on

transitioning advanced students in both curriculum and repertoire. They discuss using supplemental materials to the Suzuki Method volume books such as scale systems, exercise and etude studies, and repertoire. In addition, Salerno advises on motivating students, handling parents, and encouraging practice. It answers questions relevant to how teachers work with an older student while most papers focus on young children.

Thibeault, Matthew D. "Learning with Sound Recordings: A History of Suzuki's Mediated Pedagogy." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 66, no. 1 (April 2018): 6-30.

<http://du.idm.oclc.org/login?Url=?url=https://search-proquest-com.du.idm.oclc.org/docview/2012628467?accountid=14608>.

This article looks at pedagogy in the Suzuki Method as a part of a mediated network and as the first widespread approach to learning an instrument in which audio recordings are essential. Thibeault explores the central aspect of sound recordings in terms of philosophical ideas, volume recordings, learning through listening, cultural values, and most importantly to my argument, pedagogical practices. By examining these specific ways pedagogy has "enmeshed with sound recordings," Thibeault shows how the musical word has produced new pathways in musical development. In addition, this article aims to help other music educators "notice mediated aspects already present in their pedagogy." By making these discoveries educators can help the profession share and explore additional learning that is already part of a larger network.

Thompson, Merlin. "Authenticity, Shinichi Suzuki, and 'Beautiful Tone with Living Soul, Please'" *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 24, no. 2 (Fall 2016): 170-190.

<http://du.idm.oclc.org/login?Url=?url=https://search-proquest-com.du.idm.oclc.org/docview/1869883597?accountid=14608>.

Through a thorough biography of Dr. Suzuki, Thompson explores the relationship between authenticity and music education. This article examines “how the various aesthetic and pedagogic themes associated with the Suzuki Method are grounded in Suzuki’s sense of self.” Further, Thompson invites teachers to purposefully engage in both “meaning-making and music-making experiences reflective of what it means to be true to oneself.” This text is useful as it serves as filling a hole and stimulating discussion in the scholarly conversation around the roots in which the Suzuki Method is grounded. Further, it deepens my understanding of the background of the Suzuki Method.