Robb Epps Teaching Philosophy

Throughout my experience in education, both as a student and an educator, there have been several key elements that have influenced my approach to teaching. These elements are: kinesthetic learning, the Kodaly method, the Constructivist method, and reinforcement through active repetition. The combinations of influences from each of these elements are what I employ in the classroom in my attempt to create an engaged student and active environment for learning.

During my pursuit of post secondary education I gravitated towards the arts. I believe that, as well as being creative, the tactile nature of music and visual arts played to my tendency of favoring kinesthetic learning. Kinesthetic learning focuses on doing a process for learning and putting things into practice. Since that time I have endeavored to include kinesthetic experiences in my classes along with aural and visual activities. For me this means getting the students active and participating in the classroom.

In education theory I have found two methods from which I pull to shape what I do in the classroom. While studying Music Education I was introduced to the Kodaly method. A brief synopsis of its practice is the use of movement and games to aid in the development of rhythm and counting skills. I have also researched Constructivist learning. The Constructivist method focuses on experimental learning through personal experience. In both theories the student must be an active participant in the learning process; the instructor must facilitate an active classroom experience.

Finally, there is reinforcement of materials through active repetition. The Dale's Cone of Experience shows that a student retains 20% of what they hear versus 90% of what they do. Yet rote repetition only leads to habit. Those habits can easily be bad ones if the learner is not mindful about what they are practicing. Active repetition means that the learner must be present in the task they are reinforcing. A truly engaged student is a present student. The Ebbinghaus Curve of Forgetting shows that the frequency of study assists in remembering information and recalling it. Prolonging the student's engagement in the learning process keeps them focused on the learning materials to aid in generating the initial frequency of study. Then mental retention can more readily be accomplished and learning will occur.