

To What Extent is Demonstration-Based Instruction Effective in Music Education?

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A Review Article

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Received: 07/03/2026

Revised: 28/03/2026

Accepted: 29/03/2026

Published: 03/05/2026

Citation:

Sembiring, P. (2026). To what extent is demonstration-based instruction effective in music education? *Journal of Teaching and Education for Scholars*, 3(1), 31-38.

<https://doi.org/10.59065/jotes.v3i1.272>



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Abstract

This study analyzes demonstration-based instruction in music education through an integrative review of twenty peer-reviewed studies published between 2019 and 2026. The review employs an integrative synthesis approach involving systematic literature search across Google Scholar, SINTA, and Scopus, followed by screening based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria and thematic comparative analysis of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods studies. The synthesis shows that demonstration supports learning outcomes, including psychomotor development, technical proficiency, coordination, musical literacy, and interpretative performance across instrumental and vocal contexts. However, its effectiveness varies depending on instructional design and is significantly strengthened when combined with active learning strategies, goal-oriented instruction, and performance-based assessment. The study proposes an integrative pedagogical framework that positions demonstration as foundational modeling within a structured sequence of exploration and evaluation. Rather than functioning as an isolated practice, demonstration is conceptualized as a core component within a coherent instructional system. This study contributes to the literature by synthesizing fragmented findings into a unified analytical perspective that clarifies the conditions under which demonstration-based instruction is most effective in music education.

Keywords: *Demonstration-based Instruction; Integrative Review; Music Pedagogy; Performative Skills*

1. Introduction

It has been suggested that music education involves cognitive learning, motor skill acquisition, and development of auditory perception (Hande & Hegde, 2021; Rajendran et al., 2020; Worschech et al., 2023). Education in music requires students to conceptualize not only musical notations and structures, but also neuromotor skills that integrate perception and action simultaneously. Studies in the psychology of music suggest that the development of musical abilities occurs through structured processes such as repetitive practice, feedback, and mental representation of movement and sound (Pakulanon & Petviset, 2025). Because of these characteristics, teaching methods in music education require specific pedagogical considerations, as general instructional approaches cannot always be directly applied without adaptation (Ford et al., 2020; Zhou, 2022).

Practicing demonstration-based teaching methods is common among music educators. Teachers demonstrate techniques, articulation, dynamics, and rhythmic patterns, which students then imitate and develop further (Bremmer & Nijs, 2020; Srihakhot et al., 2025). From a theoretical perspective, this practice is supported by social learning theory, which emphasizes that learning occurs through observation and modeling of a competent performer (Firmansyah & Saepuloh, 2022). In motor learning contexts, the presence of a model facilitates the development of movement schemas and reduces execution errors, particularly in early stages of skill acquisition (Hadjiosif et al., 2021). Therefore, demonstration should not be understood merely as a visual or auditory aid, but as a mechanism for constructing cognitive and motor representations of musical activity.

However, learning in music cannot be explained solely through imitation. Constructivist perspectives highlight that learners actively construct knowledge through engagement, exploration, and reflection (Jabsheh, 2024). In addition, embodied cognition suggests that musical understanding emerges through the integration of bodily movement and perceptual experience, reinforcing the importance of physical

engagement in learning processes (Bremmer & Nijs, 2024). These perspectives indicate that demonstration must be positioned within a broader pedagogical framework rather than treated as a standalone instructional strategy.

Existing research in music education emphasizes the importance of teachers as models, particularly in developing practice strategies and self-regulation (Dockan et al., 2025; Yoo, 2023). However, these studies are often limited to specific instruments or contexts and frequently combine demonstration with other strategies such as feedback and scaffolding. As a result, the role of demonstration as a distinct instructional component remains insufficiently synthesized across studies.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the extent to which demonstration-based instruction is effective in music education through an integrative review of existing literature. This study seeks to identify patterns of effectiveness, analyze contextual factors influencing learning outcomes, and develop an integrative pedagogical framework that explains how demonstration interacts with other instructional elements.

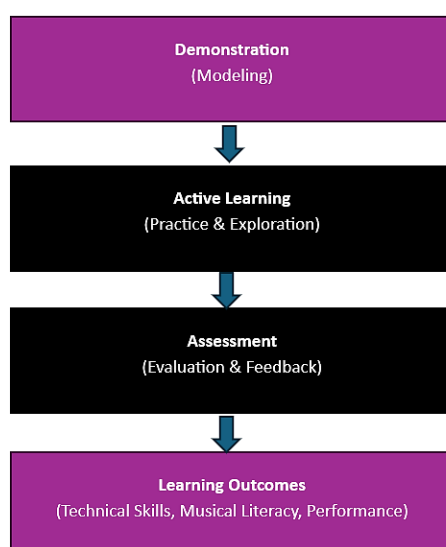
1.1 Conceptual Framework

This study is guided by an integrative conceptual framework that positions demonstration as a central instructional mechanism within music education. Demonstration is conceptualized as modeling, enabling learners to observe and internalize musical actions through imitation. Contemporary interpretations of social learning theory emphasize that learning occurs through observation of models and the processing of observed behavior into meaningful knowledge structures (Amsari et al., 2024). In the context of music education, recent studies highlight that observational processes are closely related to self-regulated learning, where learners actively monitor and refine their performance based on modeled examples (Ou et al., 2025). This indicates that demonstration functions not only as imitation but also as a cognitive mechanism that supports structured learning processes.

Beyond observational learning, constructivist perspectives emphasize that learners actively construct knowledge through engagement and exploration, particularly in practice-based learning environments (Lam, 2024). In music learning, this process involves interpreting, adapting, and applying modeled material in different performance contexts. In addition, motor learning theory explains that repeated exposure to modeled actions facilitates the development of coordination and procedural memory, particularly in performance-based domains (Hadjiosif et al., 2021).

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework of Demonstration-based Instruction in Music Education



Furthermore, embodied cognition suggests that musical understanding emerges through the integration of perception and bodily movement, reinforcing the importance of demonstration as a link

between cognitive and physical aspects of learning (Bremmer & Nijs, 2024). Based on these perspectives, demonstration-based instruction is conceptualized as part of a broader pedagogical sequence consisting of demonstration as modeling, active learning as exploratory engagement, and assessment as reflective evaluation. These components interact to influence learning outcomes, including technical proficiency, musical understanding, and performance quality, while motivation and instructional context function as moderating factors. The conceptual framework of this study is illustrated in Figure 1.

2. Methods

2.1 Research Design

This study utilized a literature-based method with an integrative review design. This design affords the researcher the ability to integrate findings from quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods studies within a particular analytical framework. Integrative reviews require systematic procedures to identify, evaluate, and synthesize literature, thereby enhancing transparency and replicability (Barisoux et al., 2024; Littell & Gorman, 2022). This approach was undertaken to evaluate the role of demonstration-based instruction in music education and to synthesize theoretical and empirical evidence.

2.2 Data Collection Procedures

The data consisted of scholarly articles indexed in Google Scholar, SINTA, and Scopus. The search strategy was conducted using Boolean operators to combine keywords such as “demonstration-based instruction,” “modeling in music education,” and “music learning outcomes.” This approach ensured a more focused and relevant selection of studies across the databases. The publication date range was set for 2019 to 2026 to obtain the most relevant, contemporary research. An initial search of the articles yielded thirty-five results. Following the elimination of duplicates and the title and abstract relevance screening, the relevant articles remaining were subjected to a full text review. In applying the inclusive and exclusive pre-defined criteria, a total of twenty articles were eligible to be included in the synthesis. The process was done sequentially in stages of identification, screening, assessment of eligibility, and inclusion to ensure consistency and transparency in the process.

2.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The studies reviewed were peer-reviewed articles available on Google Scholar, SINTA, or Scopus, published between 2019 and 2026, and written in either Indonesian or English. Each article was required to explicitly discuss demonstration or modeling as an instructional strategy in music education. Preference was given to empirical studies examining the effects of demonstration on learning outcomes such as performance, technical precision, coordination, and musical understanding. Conceptual studies were included if they were closely aligned with the pedagogical framework of demonstration. Studies conducted outside the context of music education, non-peer-reviewed publications, and studies lacking sufficient methodological description were excluded. These criteria were established to ensure the relevance, consistency, and academic quality of the selected literature.

2.4 Data Analysis

The thematic analysis aligned with the comparative approach in integrative review framework. Each of the selected articles was read in detail in order to extract units of meaning pertaining to the practice of demonstration and the instructional context and the learning outcomes that were reported. In the process of data reduction, information that did not have direct relevance to the focus of the study was excluded. Subsequently, through systematic comparison, codes that reflected the same meaning were sorted into conceptual categories. These categories were then integrated into overarching themes that illustrate the patterns, contextual diversity, and emerging trends regarding the effectiveness of demonstration in music education. In the final synthesis, the methodological rigor of each study was considered to ensure that the interpretations were aligned with the strength of the prevailing evidence.

2.5 Quality Appraisal

Each included study was evaluated based on criteria such as clarity of research design, methodological consistency, and transparency of reporting. This evaluation was used to assess the strength of evidence and to ensure that the synthesis reflects the quality of the included studies, in line with contemporary standards of integrative review methodology (Snyder, 2019; Xiao & Watson, 2019).

2.6 Trustworthiness

The study findings have been supported by an organized evaluation of the methodology of every included article, which considers the clear articulation of research questions, procedural consistency, and reporting transparency. In addition, source triangulation involved comparing results from different contexts and methods to find patterns of relatedness and unrelation. Also, the coding and synthesis were discussed as a group during peer debriefing to minimize the interpretative bias. All of these were done to demonstrate that the conclusions drawn were the result of thorough analysis and the evidence was the result of a process of trustworthy methods.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 The Effectiveness of Demonstration in Technical and Psychomotor Development

The synthesis of twenty reviewed studies consistently indicates that demonstration-based instruction contributes significantly to the development of psychomotor skills and technical accuracy across various music learning contexts. This pattern is evident in instrumental, vocal, and ensemble-based learning, where students rely on visual and auditory modeling to construct coordinated relationships between movement and sound.

In instrumental contexts, such as guitar, keyboard, percussion, and gamelan, demonstration enables learners to directly observe fingering techniques, hand coordination, posture, and rhythmic execution. Studies report improvements in tempo stability, coordination, and precision, particularly when demonstration is integrated with guided practice and repetition (Arifin et al., 2026; Fasa et al., 2025; Febrianto & Samosir, 2024; Sembiring et al., 2025). In drum learning contexts, for example, demonstration combined with progressive drills supports the development of motor coordination and rhythmic consistency. Similarly, in vocal instruction, demonstration enhances intonation accuracy, articulation clarity, and expressive performance. Learners benefit from direct exposure to modeled sound production, enabling gradual imitation and refinement of vocal techniques (Endah, 2022). These findings suggest that demonstration plays a central role in supporting early-stage skill acquisition, particularly in domains requiring synchronization between auditory perception and motor execution.

3.2 Demonstration and Musical Literacy Development

Beyond technical skills, several studies indicate that demonstration contributes to the development of musical literacy. By linking symbolic notation with auditory realization, demonstration helps learners understand rhythmic and melodic structures more effectively. Students are better able to interpret notation when they can associate visual symbols with modeled sound, reducing abstraction in the learning process (Aryani, 2019; Askarova, 2024). In this context, demonstration functions as a bridge between conceptual understanding and practical execution. Learners not only reproduce what is demonstrated but also develop internal representations of musical structures. This supports both reading skills and performance accuracy, particularly in early and intermediate stages of music learning.

3.3 Variations in Higher-Order Learning Outcomes

Despite consistent findings in technical domains, variations emerge in relation to higher-order learning outcomes such as creativity, interpretative independence, and critical musical thinking. While some studies report increased engagement and creative participation when demonstration is combined with exploratory learning, others indicate that demonstration alone does not sufficiently support these dimensions (Lam, 2024; Pereverzeva et al., 2021). In contexts where demonstration is implemented without opportunities for active engagement, learners tend to rely on imitation, which may limit the development of independent musical interpretation. Conversely, studies integrating demonstration with

student-centered approaches report more balanced outcomes, including creativity and collaborative engagement.

3.4 Comparison Across Study Designs

Differences in research design reveal variations in how the effectiveness of demonstration is reported. Quantitative studies tend to focus on measurable improvements in technical accuracy, coordination, and performance outcomes. In contrast, qualitative studies provide insights into student motivation, engagement, and experiential learning processes. Mixed-methods studies combine these perspectives by linking observable performance outcomes with internal learning processes such as self-regulation and reflection. This variation suggests that demonstration-based instruction influences both observable performance and internal learning processes, although these effects are captured differently depending on methodological approach.

3.5 Demonstration in Relation to Other Instructional Strategies

The reviewed studies indicate that demonstration is rarely implemented as an isolated strategy. Instead, it is frequently integrated with other instructional approaches, particularly active learning and goal-oriented instruction. Studies involving ensemble learning and collaborative activities show that combining demonstration with active learning increases student engagement, creativity, and participation (Widyaswara et al., 2024). Similarly, problem-based and exploratory approaches allow learners to extend modeled knowledge through practice and experimentation (Wong et al., 2024). Goal-oriented instruction provides structure by defining clear learning targets, enabling measurable progress in both technical and theoretical domains (Sembiring et al., 2025). However, several studies highlight that excessive emphasis on performance outcomes may restrict creative exploration when not balanced with flexible instructional approaches.

3.6 Alignment Between Instruction and Assessment

Another consistent finding is the importance of alignment between instructional strategies and assessment. Demonstration is often linked with performance-based assessment, where students are evaluated through practical performance tasks. This alignment supports the achievement of learning outcomes by ensuring that instructional practices are directly connected to evaluation criteria (Herdiati & Saputra, 2022; Permata, 2023). Studies also indicate that performance-based assessment allows for the evaluation of both technical and expressive aspects of musical learning, providing a more comprehensive understanding of student achievement.

3.7 Discussion and Future Research Directions

The findings of this study provide a nuanced understanding of the effectiveness of demonstration-based instruction in music education when interpreted through multiple theoretical perspectives. From the perspective of social learning theory, the consistent effectiveness of demonstration in developing technical and psychomotor skills supports the role of modeling as a primary mechanism of observational learning, as originally proposed in Bandura's social learning theory, and further elaborated in recent studies (Amsari et al., 2024; Ou et al., 2025). Learners acquire performance behaviors through observation and imitation of expert models, particularly in contexts requiring coordination between perception and action. This explains why demonstration is highly effective in early stages of learning, where learners depend on external references to guide performance.

However, the findings also indicate that demonstration alone is insufficient for developing higher-order learning outcomes. This aligns with constructivist perspectives, which emphasize that meaningful learning requires active engagement, exploration, and reflection (Jabsheh, 2024). The limited impact of demonstration on creativity and interpretative independence suggests that learners must move beyond imitation toward active knowledge construction. From a motor learning perspective, demonstration facilitates the development of movement schemas that support coordinated action and reduce execution errors (Hadjiosif et al., 2021). This is particularly relevant in music education, where performance depends on precise motor control. However, as learners progress, reliance on demonstration must decrease to allow for internalization and flexible adaptation of skills.

The concept of embodied cognition further explains the effectiveness of demonstration in music learning. Musical understanding is not purely cognitive but emerges through the integration of bodily movement and perceptual experience (Bremmer & Nijs, 2020). Demonstration facilitates this integration by providing a model that links visual, auditory, and kinesthetic information, enabling learners to align perception and action. Importantly, the findings indicate that the effectiveness of demonstration is highly dependent on instructional context. When demonstration is integrated with active learning strategies, goal-oriented instruction, and performance-based assessment, it contributes to a more coherent and effective pedagogical system. Conversely, when used in isolation, its impact remains limited to procedural skill acquisition.

The integrative perspective developed in this study represents a conceptual contribution to the field of music education. Rather than treating demonstration as a standalone method, this study positions it as a foundational component within a broader instructional sequence involving modeling, exploration, and evaluation. This perspective helps explain variations in effectiveness observed across studies and provides a more comprehensive framework for instructional design. Nevertheless, several limitations should be acknowledged. The review is limited to twenty studies, and variations in research design, context, and reporting may affect the comparability of findings. In addition, the reliance on published studies may introduce publication bias. Future research is needed to empirically test the proposed framework and to examine how factors such as learner characteristics, instructional settings, and cultural contexts influence the effectiveness of demonstration-based instruction.

4. Conclusion

The synthesis of twenty studies indicates that demonstration-based instruction is effective in enhancing performative skills, technical accuracy, coordination, musical literacy, and interpretative ability across various music learning contexts. However, the findings indicate that its effectiveness is not uniform and is strongly influenced by instructional design. Demonstration shows greater impact when integrated with active learning strategies, goal-oriented instruction, and performance-based assessment. This study contributes to the literature by proposing an integrative pedagogical framework that positions demonstration as a foundational component within a structured instructional sequence consisting of modeling, exploration, and evaluation. The findings suggest that effective music pedagogy is not determined by a single instructional method, but by the alignment and interaction of multiple pedagogical elements. Despite these contributions, this study is limited by the number of reviewed articles and the variability in research designs, which may affect the comparability of findings. Future research is recommended to empirically test the proposed framework through experimental and longitudinal studies, particularly in diverse educational contexts. Further investigation is also needed to examine how learner characteristics and instructional settings influence the effectiveness of demonstration-based instruction.

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Biography

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