



Should Keyboard Accompaniment (KA) Skills be a Compulsory Subject Given Marks at ALL Grade Levels?

KA is an advantage for teachers:

When students want to play a song they like, we can say: “The past x years you have provided accompaniment routinely - play your chosen song(s) for me with several accompaniments and embellishments.”

The **problem for KA** is:

when an examination student asks: “Are there marks for creating accompaniment for a melody at my exam?” If the answer is ‘**no**’, KA will most likely go to a **back burner** and that’s it for the best hearing years.

Something needs to be done if students are to be comfortable performing/teaching ‘Creative Accompaniment.’

During my teaching years,

I noticed a stigma attached to teaching music that could be considered main-stream *or* basic. Maybe it is seen as an insult to ‘master works’ *or* it is teacher apprehension (subject was not included in formal training).

There are many **benefits of KA - at the keyboard** (p iii, KA Basics Series). To sum them up:

KA can give students a lifetime of satisfaction exploring their creative skills. Continually applying accompaniments to a wide variety of melodies, students not only learn to anticipate chord changes fast, they acquire a repertoire of chords, chord variations, styles, rhythms, embellishments and progressions - all pressuring the brain to retain their name & their sound.

For Teachers, the **important features** of the **KA Basics Series** are:

- 1. Progresses equally with sight-reading and technical** abilities
- 2. Written as a self-study and therefore requires minimal lesson time.** Simply assigning 2 *or* 3 new melodies at the beginning of each lesson (*never time at the end*), students’ **hearing skills are targeted during their practising** - in the same way routine practise targets sight-reading, technical and almost any other skill.



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As we all know, there are students reluctant to practice scales! The same **teacher encouragement** may be needed **in the beginning**, to give confidence for KA. It's helpful that simply 2 chords are needed well into the 2nd book - if one chord does not work, the student is 100% sure the other chord will be fine. In fact, **students, teachers and audiences can be amazed by how much 'color' can be achieved with only two chords!**

Although **KA skills** in the QuenMar program **progress to include advanced chords and advanced chord progressions**, the exact material for each grade level cannot be given until examination institutions put Keyboard Accompaniment on the curriculum and outline the requirements!

PLEASE, any thoughts from piano teachers on this subject would be much appreciated:

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