

Caval

Response to Bennett Reimer

While taking more than one very deep breath, I have read your paper several times and have seriously listened to you today. I can begin by saying I am disappointed. I had hoped that we would have dignified and direct interaction about how music might best be taught in the schools. By incorporating page-long quotes from educational philosophers, you ignore our topic in the first two-thirds of your paper and you use impressive words that are elusive. Let me name a few: ". . . knowing, understanding, cognizing, thinking, intelligence, consciousness, percipience, thoughtfulness." By endorsing those words you cannot, as a music educator, absolve yourself of the responsibility of contributing to students' development of music skills. I should like to know how you define those words and how you would specifically put them to use in developing a music education curriculum. Perhaps then we could clearly exchange ideas about music education.

Over the years, you have specialized in using and arranging impressive words. They may make teachers feel good momentarily, but have almost no sustaining power and allow too many music educators to convince themselves that they are doing "the right thing" even though no direction is offered. What was once packaged as music appreciation became aesthetic music education, then broadened to aesthetic arts education partially to mask the fact that we were unsuccessful in what we were attempting musically. Today, it is further broadened in multicultural dimensions. There was a time, not too long ago, when music teachers were told to correlate music with social studies for the enhancement of social studies, not music. Now, rather than developing music skills to enable students to hear and understand tonalities and rhythms that are unfamiliar in western culture, you are being politically correct. Old fads that don't work are wrapped in new ribbons and presented as "emerging truths." Yet, you continue to philosophize about music and neglect teaching to each student's individual musical potential.

Not only do you employ trendy educational jargon, you create new words to assist in confounding thoughts. For example, rather than using "sequential learning" to describe my work, you prefer "specificationism." Do you deny there

is a need for listening as a readiness for performance? Do you really want to convince music teachers that singing and moving are unimportant as readinesses for learning to participate fully in all aspects of music achievement?

Near the end of your paper you eventually address yourself to me and music learning theory. Accordingly, you state that I and my work are ". . . almost completely uninfluenced by the great contemporary debates in education relating to new concepts of learning, new approaches to research, new evidence about transfer, diversity of learning styles, metacognition, cognitive processing, emotion as cognitive, creativity, critical thinking, the influences of culture on learning and achievement, authentic assessment, new findings in developmental psychology," and so on . . . Were you to add that litany of words and terms to your previous listing and define them all, particularly as they apply to music education, that is, to music learning, we might be able engage in a credible discussion about music education in the schools. In that broad array of enticing nouns and adjectives, I need at least one verb, a verb that could illuminate the process of making and teaching music. That is what we truly care about, isn't it?

Throughout my career, I have done considerable thinking, continuous teaching of very young children and older students, and have engaged in research. As a result, I have made judgments and drawn, I think, some relevant conclusions. I cannot be daunted simply because you accuse me of standing alone even though there are practicing teachers here and scattered throughout the world who embrace my ideas and have found success in their use. You either have not taken the time to read my work or as you have said, it is too mysterious to understand. Is it really that you cannot understand it or have you simply perused a small sampling to which you have affixed the denigrating description - - "musicoid?" Those enthusiastic educators who use music learning theory, along with me, recognize that positive change often initially endures ridicule and rejection.

With minimal comprehension of my work, you would discover that sequential learning presents a model that offers teachers and musicians with open and curious minds many options. The curriculum includes context as well as content, and none of its components are, as you suggest, "afterthoughts." They represent

extensively researched integral dimensions of the whole, and a whole-part-whole process. Teachers who use my ideas in the classroom have taken time to understand them, and often avail themselves of qualified instruction. You would be astonished by the remarkable achievements in musicianship students acquire who have been taught in accord with music learning theory.

The criticism you have of my work is not new. Generated mostly by fear of change and lack of musicianship, it has been around for years, and most recently summarized in an entire issue of *The Quarterly* (1991, Volume II, Numbers 1 and 2). For example, you reject the teaching of tonal patterns and rhythm patterns instead of melodic patterns. A documented detailed explanation can be found in a subsequent issue (1991, Volume II, Number 4) of why tonal patterns and rhythm patterns should not immediately be combined. Not only do I have the courage to face the threat of standing alone for what I believe in the company of esteemed supportive teachers, but I am proud not to be swayed by opinions that prevail in some professional groups. Remember, **one who stands alone has standards.**

You justify your sentence of death on music learning theory and write its obituary to some extent on the basis of a group of psychologists being embarrassed some years ago by the term learning theory. The embarrassment, a **symptom**, not a cause, came about because the group was unable to acknowledge that learning theory has genuine meaning far beyond the principles of behaviorism.

I have three final remarks. You take me to task for the "old five-fold curriculum." I think you have us confused. Did you not identify yourself with that program for years, a program generated by philosophers who don't teach but nonetheless tell others who do teach how to teach? You participated in the five-fold program, gave it up because you and others found it unworkable, and now you push it into my court. A recent 23-year longitudinal study, published by the Gordon Institute for Music Learning, suggests that program was not and is not the best, and still maintains a strangle-hold on the development of music literacy. That is precisely why I seek to improve music education through music learning theory - - even at the risk of standing alone.

Second, I question how you could have availed yourself of my research, read

a detailed chapter on eight types and six stages of audiation, and ignored the verb "to comprehend?" Moreover, you casually dismiss audiation as inner hearing. Once again, audiation is the ability to hear and to comprehend music for which the sound is not physically present (as in recall), is no longer physically present (as in listening), or may never have been physically present (as in creativity.) Have trust, audiation goes far beyond inner hearing.

*I would go through the definition again. I know it. I will save time that way.*

Third, you say we now have "newly emerging potentials for authentic assessment." Am I given to believe that you are of the opinion that the almost forty years of my research in measurement and evaluation, particularly in music aptitude, is unauthentic? You suggest that my music aptitude tests are invalid because "there are no significant relationships between recent creative thinking measures in music and Gordon's music aptitude tests." Whatever your reasons, you choose to ignore the one-, two-, three-, and five-year longitudinal predictive validity studies of these music aptitude tests, praised by knowledgeable scholars in and outside of our discipline as being exemplary. The research demonstrates that music aptitude test results are invaluable for the improvement of instruction and for teaching to students' individual musical differences. Do you not understand that it is a positive finding when scores on music aptitude tests and scores on tests of creative thinking in music do not, without intent, correlate highly? If they did, it would probably invalidate one or both tests. The basis of music aptitude is audiation, and a music aptitude test is not designed to measure creativity. If a music aptitude test has merit, it only points to creativity, and to a host of other music capacities as well, including the potential to listen to, perform, improvise, read, and write music. Only music achievement tests, not music aptitude tests, can measure music creativity.

When you speak of testing, do you mean to use the term "authentic assessment?" Do you actually prefer assessment to measurement or evaluation? Assessment, I think you know, is a compromise for not wanting to, or not knowing how, to, validly measure or evaluate. Literally, to assess means to estimate. Consequently, the term "authentic assessment" itself becomes an oxymoron.

In conclusion, my opinion is that any conscientious teacher develops a

theory of learning through the teaching procedures he or she follows in the classroom, regardless of current educational terminology. But, not to be open to a new music learning theory is to be possessed by an old one. However, if, as you say, I stand alone, it is with a forward vision, sustained by longitudinal research and enthusiastic and intelligent music educators and students whose musical development and understanding validate music learning theory as my research and experience have guided its design.