

MUSIC LEARNING THEORY IN PREPARATORY AUDIATION *

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Music learning theory, in terms of preparatory audiation for young children who are still receiving structured and unstructured informal guidance in music, can be most readily understood if it is thought of in two parts. The first part, the actual music learning theory, constitutes a learning model. The second part, learning sequence activities, constitutes a teaching model. The learning model has a theoretical foundation. The teaching model has a practical foundation, and is based upon the learning model. The emphasis of this paper is on the learning model.

Both the learning model and the teaching model deal with a process rather than a product. How a young child naturally uses his intuitive music aptitude, regardless of how rapidly or slowly he may progress from one type or stage of preparatory audiation to the other, is the core of the learning model. How a young child is given paced structured and unstructured informal guidance in music to develop his cognitive music achievement is the core of the teaching model. The pace at which many children phase themselves through the sequence of the types and stages of preparatory audiation is usually not ideal. A child's inclination and his readiness to engage in a given type or stage of preparatory audiation do not always coincide.

There are two important differences between audiation, as it is typically associated with children who have emerged from music babble and are receiving formal instruction in music, and preparatory audiation, which is typically associated with children who have not emerged from music babble and are receiving structured and unstructured informal guidance in music. 1) Whereas the seven types and six stages of audiation are referred to as audiation, the three types and seven stages of audiation - acculturation, imitation, and assimilation - are referred to as preparatory audiation. The types and stages of preparatory audiation, which are the bases for both the learning model and the teaching model, serve as readinesses for the types and stages of audiation. The child's transition from preparatory audiation to audiation takes place at the junction of the seventh stage of preparatory audiation and the first stage of audiation. 2) The types and stages of audiation are distinctly different from the levels of music learning theory that are associated with older children, whereas the types and stages of preparatory audiation are themselves the levels of music learning theory that are associated with younger children. It must be understood, however, that a child's ability to engage in a given type or stage of preparatory audiation is more indicative of his musical age than of his chronological age. Musical age and chronological age are not necessarily related to each other. Moreover, a child is capable of engaging in either preparatory audiation or in audiation whether he is in the developmental music aptitude stage or in the stabilized music aptitude stage.

* The material for this paper has been taken from Chapter Four of a forthcoming book: Edwin E. Gordon, A Music Learning Theory for Newborn and Young Children. (Chicago: GIA, 1990). The information is based upon the writer's more than seven years of experience teaching music to and engaging in music research with children from one to three years old.

Children should progress through the types and stages of preparatory audiation sequentially. Although he may appear able, a child with high levels of developmental music aptitude should not be encouraged to progress more quickly through the sequence than will one with low levels of developmental music aptitudes. A child with high levels of developmental music aptitudes should remain long enough in each type and stage of preparatory audiation to derive as much benefit from structured and unstructured informal guidance in music as his high developmental music aptitude will allow. Within a given period of time it is much more valuable for a young child to learn a great deal from having engaged in one type or stage of preparatory audiation than to learn a little from having engaged in many types and stages of preparatory audiation. If a young child does not appropriately advance himself from one type of preparatory audiation to another or from one stage of preparatory audiation to another, the responsibility of deciding when to encourage him to move on must be undertaken by a knowledgeable adult.

It is not unusual for a young child to have the musical readiness but not the emotional readiness, or vice versa, to progress from one type or stage of preparatory audiation to another. Sometimes young children are reluctant to allow themselves to progress in preparatory audiation because of self protection; it is more comfortable for them to deal with something that is familiar than with something that is unfamiliar. The importance of having a knowledgeable adult to oversee the progress of a young child through the types and stages of preparatory audiation cannot be overemphasized. The adult must be aware that it will be a challenge to sustain the young child's attention in order for him to move forward from one type to another and from one stage to another of preparatory audiation. Of particular concern will be the young child who demonstrates an extreme in tonal developmental aptitude or rhythm developmental aptitude. Typically the child will choose to give more attention to his musical strength than to his musical weakness. The adult must be sure that the lower of the child's two developmental music aptitudes is given as much attention as the higher, if not more, in at least the child's initial exposure to structured and unstructured informal guidance in music.

Types of Preparatory Audiation

There are three types of preparatory audiation. They are acculturation, imitation, and assimilation. There are three stages of preparatory audiation within acculturation. There are two stages of preparatory audiation within imitation. There are two stages of preparatory audiation within assimilation. The chart that you have been given is a summary outline of the types and stages of preparatory audiation. It is found at the end of this paper.

Acculturation

A young child acquires music acculturation in much the same way that he acquires language acculturation: he does a great deal of listening and formulating. In language, for example, he begins to hear and to discriminate between the sudden shifts in "ba" and "da," and he begins to understand the different ways in which the two sounds are used. The more and the more varied the speech that he listens to, the better he will learn to communicate when he is older. The young child's acquired listening vocabulary serves as a basis for the development of his babbling vocabulary, and for the later development of his

Imitation

Because imitation is a necessary readiness for learning how to audiate, the transition from music acculturation to music imitation in preparatory audiation is a significant occurrence in the musical development of a young child. The younger a child is when he is prepared to make that transition, the better he will learn to imitate. If a child of any age engages in music imitation without the benefit of first having sufficiently engaged in music acculturation, his ability to engage in music imitation will be limited. On the other hand, as soon as a child engages in music imitation, his continued development in music acculturation (all three stages) typically begins to slow. That is unfortunate, because the development of a child's preparatory audiation and audiation ultimately depends upon the extent to which he develops his music acculturation. We never outgrow our need to engage in music acculturation. Even as adults, we are always engaging in some type of music acculturation.

In music acculturation, a child reacts almost without thought. In music imitation, a child acts with some purpose, musical or otherwise. Whether he imitates correctly or incorrectly, a child profits greatly from engaging in music imitation. Unless the child engages in music imitation, his ability to engage in music assimilation will be limited. It is the good confusion that the child experiences in the first stage of the imitation type of preparatory audiation that enables him to participate successfully in the second stage of the imitation type of preparatory audiation.

The first stage of the imitation type of preparatory audiation is best referred to as the first of the two transition stages within the seven stages of preparatory audiation. In that stage, the child is making his initial transition from preparatory audiation and music babble to audiation. He becomes aware, in terms of sameness and difference, that what he is singing and chanting is not what another child, a teacher, a parent or another adult is performing. In a sense, he is emerging from his egocentricity as a result of discovering that what he is singing and chanting in supposed imitation is actually not what another child or adult is singing or chanting. The realization that he is singing or chanting only what he is attending to, and not what another person is singing or chanting, is crucial for his further development in preparatory audiation. The child in his own way must become aware that he has been engaging in a sense of subjective preparatory audiation (what he communicates to himself) and that he must acquire a sense of objective preparatory audiation (what he communicates to others). Without that breakthrough, the child will not possess the proper understanding to proceed to the fifth stage of preparatory audiation, which is the second stage of the imitation type of preparatory audiation.

In the second stage of the imitation type of preparatory audiation, the child begins to imitate with some precision arpeggiated tonal patterns and longer rhythm patterns that a peer or an adult is singing or chanting. As a result of "breaking the code" of the music culture that surrounds him, he is able to recognize and to discriminate among tonal patterns and to recognize and to discriminate among rhythm patterns as he attempts to imitate them. The quality as well as the quantity of the tonal patterns and rhythm patterns that the child is exposed to is of particular importance at this stage of preparatory audiation. As he is learning to imitate tonal patterns, he may be audiating the tonic of the key quality or the resting tone of the tonality in which the tonal patterns are being performed. Similarly, as he is learning to imitate rhythm

performing. The child will in time be capable of truly enjoying music, because he will be able to give meaning to music through audiation. His developmental music aptitude probably will have reached as high a level as hoped for by his teacher and parents. He is prepared to learn how to understand and to appreciate music as a musician, though not necessarily as a professional musician, throughout his life. When he is older, he will become part of the great audience that will demand that good music be performed under the best of conditions.

When examining the summary outline of the types and stages of preparatory audiation, it should be kept in mind that 1) the types and stages of preparatory audiation overlap, 2) the chronological ages are only approximations and that there are significant individual musical differences among children as a result of their music aptitudes, music experiences, and personalities, and 3) children may move from one type or stage of preparatory audiation to another without giving any outward evidence of when the change takes place.

Summary Outline of the Types and Stages of Preparatory Audiation

Type	Stage
ACCULTURATION Birth to age 2-4: engages with little consciousness of the environment.	1 ABSORPTION: hears and aurally collects the sounds of music in the environment.
	2 RANDOM RESPONSE: moves and babbles in response to, but without relation to, the sounds of music in the thought.
	3 PURPOSEFUL RESPONSE: tries to relate movement and babble to the sounds of music in the environment.

IMITATION Age 2-4 to age 3-5: engages with conscious thought focused primarily on the environment.	4 SHEDDING EGOCENTRICITY: recognizes that movement and babble do not match the sounds of music in the environment.
	5 BREAKING THE CODE: imitates with some precision the sounds of music in the environment, specifically tonal patterns and rhythm patterns.

ASSIMILATION Age 3-5 to age 4-6: engages with conscious thought focused primarily on self.	6 INTROSPECTION: recognizes the lack of coordination between singing and breathing and between chanting and muscular movement, including breathing.
	7 COORDINATION: coordinates singing and chanting with breathing and movement.