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Citation

*Sound Connections*

Chapter 2: From Theory and Research to Practice

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Summary

- Developing students' comprehensive music literacy skills is a profound and challenging task that requires extensive knowledge and skills
  - Effective teaching involves understanding how students learn and why some strategies work and others don't
  - Modify strategies to fit students' needs
- I. The Relationship of Theory, Research, and Practice
    - A. Many teachers opt out and simply "teach the way they were taught" because learning theories are always evolving, which perpetuates less effective instructional methods and results in low standards of achievement
  - II. General Learning Theories
    - A. Vygotsky emphasized behaviorist theories versus cognitive theories
      - i. Behaviorist theories emphasize stimulus- response connections, viewing learning as progressive modification of specific behaviors via external means
      - ii. Cognitive theories stress the importance of self-determination and readiness, recognizing the impact of human development and individual perception on the learning process
  - III. The Musical Learning Theory of Edwin Gordon
    - A. Focused on auditaion
    - B. Learning takes place by discrimination and inference
    - C. Initial learning and notating behavioral as by rote
    - D. Begins with aural/oral
    - E. Music reading and notating begin at symbolic associations stage
  - IV. Research on Music Learning
    - A. Readiness for learning
      - i. Begins early
      - ii. Imitation begins at age 4
      - iii. Singing range of an octave by age 6 or 7
      - iv. Maturational development of singing ability culminates at about 8 years of age
      - v. Primary school years are crucial developmental period for vocal and aural skills
    - B. The Role of Memory in Learning
      - i. Sensory register- no more than 1-4 seconds; records and holds all stimuli briefly, providing learner with the choice of attending to it or disregarding it

- ii. Working memory (short-term memory)- 5-20 seconds; 7+/- 2, limited capacity to retain information, chunking is important
  - iii. Long-term memory- capacity is unlimited, but new information must be properly processed, tonality and meter are perceptual organizers
- C. Music Perception and Cognition
- i. Perception- process of sensing the environment
  - ii. Cognition- the internal processes of assimilation, organizing, remembering, and recalling information
  - iii. Rhythm- essential organizing element for music, foundational component of all music; by age 5, rhythmic organization is developed and they are able to perceive and reproduce rhythm sequences in both binary and ternary subdivisions
  - iv. Dalcroze time signatures
- D. Tonal Perception and Cognition
- i. Tonality provides the framework for pitch
  - ii. Krumhansl- tonal hierarchy made up of scales and common chords, tonic triads, diatonic tones, major versus minor modes
  - iii. By 5, tonality develops, by 8, melodic perception has stable tonal system, distinguish between pitches of tonic triad and other pitches in a key
- E. Sequencing Music Literacy Instruction
- i. Requires coordination of skill and content
  - ii. Listening, audiating, and singing aid in transferring patterns into long-term memory
  - iii. Reading and notating skills allow students to be independent musicians
  - iv. Young children should be guided in music-listening, music-making and related motor activities, to develop contexts of tonality and meter
  - v. Should begin with development of aural/oral vocabulary via rhythm- and tonal-pattern instructing
  - vi. Tonal and rhythm separate at first, then combined; simple and compound separate at first, then combined; major and minor separate at first, then combined
  - vii. Tonal and rhythmic syllable patterns to store and recall information
  - viii. Syllable patterns should associate with the corresponding symbols
- V. The *Sound Connections* Approach
- A. Sound before sight- connect sounds to symbols
  - B. Symbol to syllable to sound; sound to syllable to symbol
  - C. Translation: sound to syllable
  - D. Transformation: syllable to sound
  - E. Skill learning sequence:
    - i. Developing a sound vocabulary

- a. Neutral echoing- echoing patterns on a neutral syllable
- b. Syllable echoing- echoing modeled neutral syllable patterns on correct syllables
- c. Connecting sound to symbol- reading and notating
- d. Improvising and Composing

### Discussion

This chapter was full of theories that came to be in order to teach music to students. It was very informative to see what types of theories were formed to teach music in the past, and how they have evolved to how they are today. It gives specific details about when students are ready to learn, and when they are most susceptible to retaining information they are taught. It is amazing to see how young children are when they obtain the most information, and how important it is to begin teaching them at this young of an age. To see that the primary school years are the most crucial developmental period for vocal and aural skills is intriguing and exciting. I desire to teach elementary-aged students. So I will hopefully be teaching them during their most crucial period of development, and start them off in the right direction for them to succeed. Since everyone should develop a proper singing voice as a part of music literacy, it is a teacher's responsibility to be the guide and aid that leads students to do this. The sequence for music literacy instruction was also very beneficial to me to know how to approach teaching and what guidelines to follow to achieve the best results. The *Sound Connections* approach develops tonal and rhythm skills, and is the most beneficial system of instruction to use with students of all ages. In my classroom in the future, I will be sure to follow this approach so that my students are given the best opportunity to develop their music literacy skills, and become independent musicians.