

Reimer's opening statement (excerpt)

We are living today in the midst of a scientific, philosophical, and educational movement that is perhaps the most important and most positive in history for the field of music education. The most useful term to portray the essential character of the major changes now taking place in our scientific and philosophical concept of the human condition and the implications of that concept for education is, I would suggest, the cognitive revolution. Now, I borrow that term from the title of Howard Gardner's award-winning book, *The Mind's New Science: A History of the Cognitive Revolution*. In this book Gardner explains the massive paradigm shift that has occurred during the past couple of decades toward an image of human functioning so different from the one that preceded it as to warrant the description "revolution," and so influenced by the concept of the human mind as being the source of all human meaning as to warrant the characterization "cognitive."

Words descriptive of the human functions that define mind are knowing, understanding, cognizing, thinking, intelligence, consciousness, percipience, thoughtfulness. Each of these and their many interrelations are being pursued in the research and scholarship of a great many people in a great many fields, ranging from neuroscience to linguistics, from ethnography to computer modeling, from social psychology to philosophy, and on and on. Most relevant for us are two major ideas stemming from the cognitive revolution. The first is that music and the other arts are prime instances of mindfulness—of human cognitive functioning. The second is that education, if it is to be humanly relevant, must focus on, and give full nurturance to, the mind's characteristic qualities. To develop the capacities to represent and understand the diverse modes of human meaning—to know as humans are peculiarly and characteristically able to know—education must, above all else, provide the occasions for those capacities to be both deepened and broadened.

These two ideas have the power to transform music education in both its status and its operations. As cognitive endeavors, music and the arts can now assume full parity with those subjects formerly thought to be the cognitive ones. What were formerly called "the basic subjects" were called that because people believed they were the ones that engaged minds. Music and the arts were not part of the old cognitive domain but were relegated to the "lesser" domains, the affective and the psychomotor. Now, these were lesser because at least since Plato Western cultures have valued conceptual thinking over perceptual thinking, feeling, and acting, and clearly, the arts are founded in perceptual thinking, feeling, and acting. Now with a revolutionary shift in our concept of mind, we are recognizing that the kinds of thinking, feeling, and acting essential to the arts are cognitive in the deepest possible senses, allowing humans to know, to be thoughtful, to be intelligent, to create, and to share meaning as only the arts can do. Our status in education can now be raised dramatically as a result, and I believe we are now seeing the results of that, as our status in fact is improving. But it will not be if we continue to operate as if we were an activity suitable for the extra-curricular subjects, rather than a curriculum suitable for a basic subject.

Gordon's opening statement (excerpt)

Good afternoon. Many of us listen to and perform music as a temporary escape from the experience of reality. The aesthetic and comforting experience we seek may be, and often is, referred to as music appreciation. Regardless of how sophisticated the name or however we choose to explain what for what now we will call music appreciation, one simple fact remains: music appreciation that goes beyond simple emotional reaction and mood swing requires some degree of musical understanding. Music appreciation relates to the recognition of the value of music. Music understanding relates to the comprehension of music itself. To fully appreciate music, it must be understood. To that extent, appreciation and understanding are inseparable. It is possible, however, to understand music but not to appreciate it. For example, we can understand how many prejudices are acquired but not appreciate seeing them in action. What is of prime interest is to realize that to teach music appreciation without teaching music understanding as a readiness for that music appreciation is, in my opinion, shallow pedagogical procedure.

My use of the term music understanding may seem arrogant. Nonetheless, let me say that, for me, music understanding and meaning in music are one and the same. Then, what is meaning in music? I have pondered this question as a musician, performer, teacher, and researcher. Subsequently, I developed the concept of audiation and feel certain that it, audiation, embodies the essence of meaning in music. Audiation takes place when we hear and comprehend—may I emphasize, and 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. In contrast, aural perception takes place when we hear sound that is physically present. Audiation must not be confused with aural perception. Audiation deals with musical events. Aural perception deals with sound events. Sound that is aurally perceived cannot be comprehended as music until audiated after it is heard. Because of its broader musical implications and requirements, audiation is to music what thinking is to language. We audiate while listening to, recalling, performing, interpreting, creating, improvising, reading, and writing music. Though it may seem contradictory that we can be listening to and at the same time be audiating a piece of music, we know that as we are hearing words spoken, we can be thinking about the words that were just spoken. As you are listening to me speak now, if you are not remembering what I have just said, you will not be able to put in context nor understand what I am saying. Music has syntax. The process is the same for audiating and giving meaning to music and for thinking about and giving meaning to language.

A literate person has four vocabularies: a listening vocabulary, a speaking vocabulary, a reading vocabulary, and a writing vocabulary. During the first year of life, we listen to speech all around us. Although we engage in speech babble and can't actually speak the language we are hearing, we absorb it. The more opportunity we have for listening and the more words we become familiar with and retain in our listening vocabulary, the better we learn to speak when we receive formal instruction. Listening becomes the readiness for speaking and all other communication skills we develop throughout our lives. Then, when ready, we begin to speak with words and progress to phrases and sentences. We speak words we have heard, and that provides the ability to hear and to speak new words. Next, our progress in learning to read is based on our ability to speak. Speaking has become the readiness for reading. We learn to read words with which we are familiar. We bring meaning to, not take meaning from, the printed page. Think of the folly of trying to teach young children how to read words they do not understand. Finally, we learn to write the words we can read. Reading has become the readiness for writing. The four vocabularies are best developed hierarchically: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Reimer's response (opening excerpt)

Now, I read Gordon's paper carefully and found myself baffled by it. First, I had naturally expected that some reference would have been made to my own work. Not in philosophy particularly, because Gordon has never worked seriously with philosophical matters, but certainly in matters relating to what I have written on teaching and learning, on curriculum, on research, on composition, on performance, on listening, on musical experience as a cognitive endeavor, and on and on with a host of issues I would have thought he could have tackled fruitfully. I especially assumed he would have studied my teaching materials—the Silver Burdett music textbooks for grades one through eight, the textbooks for college-level listening courses called *The Experience of Music* and *Developing the Experience of Music*—and my research that developed detailed secondary general music courses, because all this would have given him a very clear basis from which he could discuss contradictions and complementarities, if any, with his own work. So, I was baffled and also disappointed that no reference whatsoever to my work appeared in his paper.

I was also puzzled by his emphasis on music appreciation as a clear and present danger to music education, because the concept of music appreciation has been notable in music education largely by its absence, at least since the Leonard and House textbook of 1972, which defined it as “the perception of music's embodied meaning,” a definition most educators, I think, including Gordon, would accept as one important music education goal. The term appreciation almost never appears in the contemporary philosophical literature of music education. My own philosophy book doesn't mention it, in either the original 1970 edition or the 1989 revision, and I'm not aware of its appearance as a central or even peripheral concept in any recent philosophical work. And music appreciation has not seemed to be a guiding idea in any modern teaching and learning approaches or materials of which I am aware. Now, there are so-called music appreciation courses for non-music majors at the college level, of course, but even here the term is usually avoided. I never used it in my textbooks, and it is absent from other texts written by music educators. The recent MENC statement of beliefs doesn't mention it, nor do the present music education standards. So, it's a little hard to figure out at what windmills Gordon is tilting.

Another baffling aspect of Gordon's paper has to do with his ultra-formalistic equating of audiation with musical meaning, completely ignoring the context of shared beliefs out of which musical meaning and all other culturally-derived meanings spring. Now, I would not go so far as to argue for a purely contextual theory of musical meaning which completely ignored the factor of expressive form as meaningful, but surely it goes too far in the opposite direction to completely ignore context as an essential aspect of meaning in music. After all, if context was not a factor, there would be no different musics in different cultures and all musics would be equally accessible to all people. Gordon would argue, I suppose, that all music would be accessible to all people able to audiate the particular tonal and rhythmic pattern fragments he employs, which would seem, in Gordon's thinking, to be universally applicable to all music. Of course, they are not, in that they are based on one particular style of musical expression. Further, if, as he insists, musical meaning resides in the listener or the performer, not in the music itself, why would we bother to interact with music at all? Surely it is the interaction of music with the listener, the performer, the improviser, the composer, all within a particular cultural framework, which determines musical meaning.

Gordon's response (opening excerpt)

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, too. I had hoped that we would have 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, and 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 have a clear exchange about ideas in music education.

Over the years, you have specialized in using and arranging impressive words. They make teachers feel good momentarily, but they 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 meters 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 music 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 that 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 [quote] ". . . 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 development 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 to 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?