

# 15

## Chapter Fifteen

### CONTEMPLATING WHY IN MUSIC EDUCATION

#### A Personal Philosophy of Music Education

One of the definitions of "philosophy" is: "a system of principles of guidance in practical affairs . . ." (Stein, 1988). Too often people think of a philosophy as something esoteric, an interesting exercise of college professors and philosophers, but not something that will influence the daily work of a teacher in the classroom. Some would echo the statement by David J. Elliott (1995): "As one suspicious colleague put it: 'Philosophy is like a pigeon: it's something to admire, as long as it isn't directly over your head'" (p. 9).

Humor aside, let's consider the definition that a philosophy gives us guidance in practical affairs. We all make many decisions every day, and those decisions are based on what we know and believe. In other words, our daily decisions are based on our "philosophy." Many of us have not taken time to actually write out a statement that summarizes our beliefs about a certain topic, but we do already have a belief system in place because of our educational training, our personal experience, and our conscious or unconscious deliberations about that topic.

If we already make decisions based on our belief system, why do we need to develop our thoughts into a formal philosophical statement? A thoughtfully written personal music education philosophy will be the product of a period of reflection about your most basic beliefs concerning

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music and music education. Taking time to ask the questions of what, why, how, when, where, etc., as it relates to music education will enable you to create a “lighthouse” document—one that lights your way through your future work in music education. It becomes an invaluable tool to use as you make the daily educational decisions that affect your students and their music education. Developing and refining a personal philosophy of music education will allow you—in the words of Stephen Covey—to “Begin with the end in mind.”

Several years ago, while watching a stage version of the book *Treasure Island*, I was struck by a line from Long John Silver as he told his men that it was not yet the right time to take over the ship. He said: “We can steer a course, but who’s to set one?” (p. 69). In other words, anyone can steer a ship (or teach music?), but who’s to chart the course? If you want to be a complete music educator, one who helps “set the course” for yourself and your students, then you must develop a fine personal philosophy of music education.

A philosophy of music education is an evolving document. The document you write as an undergraduate student without the benefit of significant teaching experience undoubtedly will be different from the one you will write after your student teaching experience. And that document will differ from the one you will write after five years of teaching, and after 10 years of teaching. Your personal philosophy of music education reflects your education, your training, and your own experiences—and all of that changes and grows.

The topic “Philosophy of Music Education” is substantial enough to constitute a complete graduate-level course. It is a topic deserving of in-depth study and reflection. However, because it is so essential for all new teachers to have spent time developing their own personal statement, we will now consider this topic from the viewpoints of four major philosophical positions related to education: Idealism, Realism, Existentialism, and Pragmatism.

## Philosophical Positions

396 Idealism—identified with Plato, René Descartes, and Immanuel Kant—encourages people to search for the truth, to hold high standards, and to

realize the importance of personal experience. Idealists believe that course content should focus on the accepted primary knowledge in a subject area. They also see the teacher as an important model for students.

Aristotle, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, and Johann Friedrich Herbart are associated with the Realist position. Realists advocate a more “rules and procedures” approach, with an emphasis on accountability by students and teachers.

The Existentialist focuses more on the individual student, and encourages experimentation and exploration. Friedrich Nietzsche and Jean-Paul Sartre were Existential philosophers. The influence of Existentialism in education is seen in open schools and aesthetic education. In Existentialism, students and teachers commonly work together as collaborators.

Pragmatism, associated with John Dewey, views the classroom as a community of learners, and encourages hands-on, problem-solving learning in a democratic classroom. Pragmatists stress process over product and believe that learning is a lifelong process.

These educational philosophies have served as the basis of a number of educational theories. Many of the beliefs of Perennialists—who focus on the humanities, acquiring knowledge, and developing intellectual skills—refer to Realist thought. Essentialism—a conservative approach to education focusing on the liberal arts and rigorous academic standards, and exemplified by the “Back-to-Basics” movement of the 1970s—comes from both Idealism and Realism. The influence of Essentialism can be seen in the call for national standards and required competency testing.

Pragmatism led to the development of the theories of Progressivism and the related theories of Experimentalism and Social Reconstructionism. Progressivism is noted for collaborative learning, learning by doing, self-directed learning, and use of the scientific method. Experimentalists also stress the testing of ideas, child-centered curricula, and interrelated curricula. Social Reconstructionists stress democratic procedures in the classroom and the role of education in making societal changes.



## Contributions to Music Education Philosophical Thought

Many valuable contributions have been made to music education philosophy and research into the way students learn music. Such research and thought has given us important information about what we might do in music and why we should be doing it.

Two groups dominate much of the field of music education philosophy: those who espouse an aesthetic experience through listening activities, and those who favor a performance-oriented philosophy. The work of Bennett Reimer (1970) and of Charles Leonhard and Robert W. House (1972) has clearly and articulately presented the case for aesthetic education, with listening activities being central to developing aesthetic response. David J. Elliott (1995) has proposed an approach to aesthetic experience in which active involvement in the music making (through performance, composition, arranging, improvising, and conducting) is the key methodology (p. 121).

Reimer (1970), in *A Philosophy of Music Education*, wrote, "Aesthetic education is the systematic attempt to help people explore and understand human feeling by becoming more sensitive to (better perceive and react to) conditions which present forms of feeling" (p. 143). He wrote that "When art is experienced aesthetically and understood aesthetically, it delights in a way that few experiences in human life provide" (p. 85). As to the importance of listening activities, Reimer believes that "Listening is the essential mode of musical experience. Some people will achieve a musical listening experience as they perform or compose, but *all* people will share the art of music directly through its peculiar sense modality—listening" (p. 120). He continues: "Yet it is impossible to ignore the fact that a great many people have experienced their most satisfying, most fulfilling, most significant musical experiences as *performers*, and that at least some children who perform have had similar experiences. The power of such experience is so great and its satisfaction so deep that those who have shared it are likely to be changed fundamentally in their relation to music" (p. 131).

Elliott (1995) states "In summary, past music education philosophy is remarkably weak in a fundamental regard: it neglects to consider the nature

and importance of music making” (p. 32) and “The best preparation for listening to musical performances in the future is full participation in music making in the present” (p. 104). He promotes universal music education by affirming that “music making is a unique and major way of gaining self-growth, self-knowledge, and optimal experience, both now and in the future. . . . For these reasons, music making is something worth learning to do well by *all* students” (1995, p. 122). He believes that there are four basic values of music and music education: self-growth, enjoyment, self-knowledge, and self-esteem (1995, chapters 5 and 12).

According to Elliott, “This praxial philosophy of music education holds that all music education programs ought to be conceived, organized, and carried out as ‘reflective musical practicums’” (1995, p. 267). He also writes “In sum, musical experiences are not impractical, purposeless, disinterested, or intrinsic—or the one-dimensional outcomes of perceiving aesthetic qualities. And music experiences are not ‘experience for the sake of experience.’ People may well and rightly continue to describe musical experiences as beautiful and moving. But a truly musical experience is not aesthetic in its nature or value, as conventional music education philosophy maintains” (Elliott, 1995, p. 125). David Elliott’s writing makes a strong case for genuine musical experience for all children through the personal performance of music. The rehearsal and performance of ensembles needs to include the “what,” “when,” “where,” and “why” kind of questions so that our students begin to know for themselves, and understand, the music they are preparing. It seems to be a logical extension of “comprehensive music education.” I believe that this philosophy recognizes and embraces the important work of bands and orchestras in our schools, work that has attracted widespread support from the public and from ensemble members for music in the schools. The public performances of these groups in the schools and in the communities have been of great benefit to the entire music education program. Elliott recognizes and endorses informed performance as a route to aesthetic experience. Your work in music education—and your students’ learning—will benefit from a study of *Music Matters*.

Edwin Gordon has made valuable contributions to music education through his research and writing about how children learn music. Darrel L. Walters and Cynthia Crump (1989) write that Gordon’s “Music Learning Theory is unique in several ways. First, it is based upon a student

view rather than upon a teacher view, i.e., it is based upon the premise that the nature of learning must dictate approaches to teaching. Second, it is supported by substantial educational research. Third, it includes the collective wisdom of previous music educators and educational theorists. And fourth, Music Learning Theory is conceived by Edwin Gordon to be subject to constant growth and revision" (p. v). The design and delivery of sequential instruction is a central component to Music Learning Theory. Gordon (1988) writes that:

music learning theory is the structuring of the logical order of sequential objectives which include the music skills and content that students must learn in order to achieve the comprehensive objective of music appreciation (p. 29). He also believes that while all students are capable of learning music, their success will be affected by their music aptitude; and that the individual learning differences in students must be taken into account by teachers. (p. v)

The interesting work of Howard Gardner in his Multiple Intelligences Theory ("MI Theory") gives all educators valuable insight into the way people learn. Gardner (1990) defines intelligence as "an ability to solve problems or to fashion a product, to make something that is valued in at least one culture" (p. 16). He explains further that "an *intelligence* is a biological and psychological potential; that potential is capable of being realized to a greater or lesser extent as a consequence of the experiential, cultural, and motivational factors that affect a person" (Gardner, 1995, p. 202). An important concept in the MI Theory is that everyone possesses an array of intelligences, but that each person is more proficient some intelligences than in others (Gardner, 1993, p. 27). He originally identified seven intelligences (1990, pp. 18–20)—although he has written of his consideration of two additional intelligences:

- Linguistic (the use of language to communicate and inform)
- Logical-mathematical (recognizing and solving problems)
- Musical (thinking, acting, and reacting musically)



- Spatial (accurately perceiving the visual world, being able to transform or modify your perceptions, and being able to recreate aspects of your visual experience) (Gardner, 1983, p. 173)
- Bodily kinesthetic (the ability to use the body to solve problems or make things)
- Interpersonal (understanding other people)
- Intrapersonal (the understanding of oneself)

In response to a question on a website (<http://multipleintelligencesoasis.org/conversation/>), Gardner clarified his current list by stating "In my original work, I proposed 7 intelligences; about 15 years ago, I added a 'naturalistic intelligence,' and 'pedagogical intelligence'" (collected 9/26/2014).

MI Theory has heavily influenced teaching in the general classroom, especially at the elementary school level, and in music classrooms. It is a valuable theory that helps us understand how students learn based on their dominant intelligences; and it is helpful for music educators as they explain the significance of music as a central element of general education. David Elliott (1990) wrote:

Howard Gardner's (1983) theory of multiple intelligences, if it becomes widely accepted, will likely result in a return in this country to a more child-centered approach to public education than has been the case in the past decade. Gardner's theory, however, has an added advantage—it calls for fundamental philosophical reform in public education *based on scientific evidence*, a consideration rare in most educational reform. (p. 142)

As you study the various philosophies you will discover that you agree primarily with one, but you still may value some aspects of others. Some people may urge you to adopt only one philosophical approach, but a more eclectic philosophy may be most appropriate. After all, it is *your* philosophy, and it may not fit into a nice, neat predetermined box. In fact, the nature of instrumental music education may *require* a more eclectic

philosophy. Certainly instrumental music teachers should stress leading students to a fuller understanding of, and aesthetic response to, the music they perform; but we cannot deny or discard the high level of public and student support that has been earned by the social and civic elements of these school ensembles. Students do learn important life skills through participation in band and orchestra, skills that make them better citizens. We are part of a decidedly eclectic enterprise!

## Sample Philosophies

As you begin to write your personal music education philosophy, you may find help in reading some sample philosophies from a variety of sources. The first two examples (figures 15.1 and 15.2) are philosophies written by undergraduate students prior to their student teaching experience.

*Figure 15.1. Sample Philosophy #1*

### Philosophy of Music Education

Music education is an essential part of any child's education. Very few people live a life in which music does not play a part. Music is a gift meant for worship, communication, and celebration. Education in such a vital subject enables a student to more fully understand, appreciate, use, participate in, and enjoy music, to the benefit of themselves and those around them.

A student who is well educated musically has had an opportunity to develop and apply skills that are important to all of life. Music is a subject that is a synthesis of all other academic subjects and engages all other types of intelligence—from logical-mathematical and kinesthetic, to linguistic. It is, by definition, a hands-on, experiential learning process. Students who are musically educated have acquired a love of learning that will continue after their formal education is complete.

Students should experience and learn about music with the help of a teacher who models social and life skills as well as musical ones, in an atmosphere of emotional safety, encouragement, love of learning, and enough order to make this possible. Students should be encouraged to cooperate with and be supportive of each other, and to recognize and appreciate the various areas in which they and others excel.

(Used with permission of Carla Richardson.)



Figure 15.2. Sample Philosophy #2

### Philosophy of Music Education

I believe that every child has the right to a music education. Every child needs an outlet for creativity and expression. A music education provides this and allows students to become well-balanced individuals. Music helps bring joy, hope, and emotional healing into a child's life, enhancing the quality of their life overall. Music provides an opportunity for students to grow, build their self-esteem, and reach their full potential.

Music is basic to our culture and is a vital part of any school's curriculum. It is the responsibility of the school to provide a music education for any student that shows interest. Within the school system, it is the responsibility of the music teacher to impart a love and passion for music. The teacher is to be a role model, exhibiting integrity and positive character in all that is said and done. The effective teacher will be straightforward and clear as to what is expected, yet be encouraging and sensitive to the students' needs. I believe in challenging students and pushing them to reach their full potential. At the same time though, they need to be given an enthusiasm for learning and develop a positive attitude towards music.

I believe the music teacher has a responsibility to create musically literate and musically sensitive students. The teacher should prepare students to become independent musicians. Students should become aware that music is a skill and hobby they can carry with them the rest of their lives.

Learning occurs through a variety of modes, but I believe the most effective learning will take place when students are able to experience music for themselves. Involvement in any ensemble is a necessity for students to truly understand music. I believe it is important for students to have a basic understanding of the major time periods of music, as well as key composers. Students should be exposed to a broad range of styles of music, including music of other cultures. I believe students should be able to explain the basic elements of music (melody, harmony, rhythm, form, timbre, etc...). I believe technique and skill are important if students are to function as independent musicians. However, I firmly believe that the quality of the music experience that is given them will far exceed extrinsic things such as grades or trophies. The music experience that students carry with them should impart a joy and satisfaction for their entire lives.

(Used with permission of Lisa Stoltzfus)

Figure 15.3, an example of a philosophy from a veteran music teacher, reflects an eclectic educational view.

*Figure 15.3. Philosophy of a Veteran Music Teacher*

**Philosophy of Music Education**

I believe that the transmission of cultural heritage, knowledge, skills, attitudes and ideals to create a responsible citizenry are appropriate goals for schools in our contemporary society. By helping students develop problem solving and logic skills we will enable students to meet and solve the problems of today, and those they will meet in the future. The study of music in a fine school music program can greatly benefit the achievement of those worthy educational goals.

I believe that the music program in the schools should be diverse, offering performance and non-performance classes, to meet the diverse needs of the student population. I believe that the core musical experiences for all students should be in performance-based classes. It is through performance experiences that students will gain significant, lasting understanding and insight about music, about the world around them, and about them. They will develop the skill of personal discipline and reap the reward of goals accomplished.

Music making encourages personal growth, enjoyment, and improves self-esteem. Students who develop fine musicianship in school ensembles will become knowledgeable and insightful listeners—and, hopefully, life-long performers—as adults. The key to musical enjoyment—as school students and adults—is musicianship. Musicianship may be attained in a music education program that moves students through increasingly complex musical discovery and decision-making—from the beginning music program to levels of higher musical proficiency in our secondary schools.

A well-educated student is educated musically. In the study of multiple intelligences, music is identified as a subject of significance for all children at every grade level. Every child in every school district in this country deserves a quality music education that is rigorous and of high quality, and is taught by skilled teachers who have high expectations of students.

Be sure to review the philosophies in chapter 1 by Holz and Jacobi, and from the Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association. They are well-written philosophical statements.

## Writing Your Music Education Philosophy

As you begin to develop your personal philosophy of music education, make a list of what you believe about music and why you believe it. Make a list of what you believe about the value of music in the schools and explain why you believe it. List what you think students should know, understand, and be able to do, and what they should experience in a fine school music program, and list why each is important.

As you develop your lists you will begin to see connections, and you may discover through reading and contemplation that some considerations are not as important as you originally thought. Be sure to consider the information in earlier chapters of this book, your class discussions, and related readings and materials from other education courses. You may also find that this process leads you to unexpected issues. Transfer your lists into concise and clear sentences.

The central questions are: why should music be in the curriculum, and what knowledge, skills, and understanding should students learn in a school music program? Most teachers, especially new teachers and pre-service teachers, will find that their philosophy of music education fits on less than one single-spaced page. Eventually, after numerous revisions, you will develop the kind of scholarly, thoughtful, "lighthouse" document that will give you guidance and direction as a new teacher, and will explain your core beliefs about music education to school administrators, parents, and students.

## Some Quotes for Reflection

It will be helpful to read the thoughts of some of the great music educators and others of the past and present as you begin to formulate your personal philosophy of music education. The quotations below will enrich your thoughtful deliberation, and may even challenge, or support, your current thoughts and beliefs about music and music education.



As a universal language music builds a deeply human understanding between one person and another, be it man to man or teacher to student, but to *speak* the language of music—well, one has to do that for himself. (Green, 1966b, p. 84)

Not everyone who is taught how to read and write can become a Shakespeare or a Robert Frost. But schools still attempt to teach all students to read and write well. Not everyone who is taught math can become an Albert Einstein. But schools still attempt to teach everyone to do math well. Not everyone who is taught music can become (or is expected to become) a Mozart or a Jessye Norman. Nevertheless, all schools should attempt to teach all students to make and listen for music well. For the values inherent in knowing how to make and listen for music intelligently are central to making a life; self-growth, self-knowledge, self esteem, creative achievement, humanistic and cultural empathy, and enjoyment are central life goals and life values in all human cultures. (Elliott, 1995, p. 236)

When we educate our artistic intelligences, we awaken our perceptions and levels of awareness. We put more of our mind to work. We develop our capacity to view the world from different perspectives and to absorb from it more broadly. We immediately open windows to understanding. (Fowler, 1990, p.165)

Musicianship is not a talent; it is a form of knowledge that can be taught and learned. It is a form of knowing and thinking. Just as most people can learn to “do mathematics” (and science and so on), most people can learn the procedural musical knowledge required to make music musically. (Elliott and Rao, 1990, p. 32)

Music is a part of who we are from our very creation. It is in our God-given nature to be musically inclined. The first rhythm we are exposed to is the heartbeat in our

mother's womb. From almost the moment we are born and throughout infancy we are exposed to parents and caregivers who instinctively sing to us and communicate their affection and information such as the alphabet through music. Children are soothed by music, and the familiar refrains of a lullaby are as comforting to a child as food. (Huckabee, 2007, p. 52)

Music exalts the human spirit. It enhances the quality of life. It brings joy, satisfaction, and fulfillment to every human being. It is one of the most powerful, compelling, and glorious manifestations of human culture. It is the essence of civilization itself. (*Performance Standards*, 1996, p. 9)

It has always seemed strange to me that we as music educators seem to be the only branch of education to deprecate performing in favor of observing and philosophizing. Who ever heard of a course in history appreciation? chemistry appreciation? or football appreciation? (Britton, 1991, p. 184)

Austin A. Harding, Joseph E. Maddy, Marguerite V. Hood, William D. Revelli, and thousands of others have demonstrated over many years that the way to win children to music is to give them as much of the best of it as the day allows. (Britton, 1991, p. 187)

There is a serious need to match instruction in music with the interests of today's students, particularly in terms of drawing on the musical environment and culture outside schools, where music is such a large part of student life. (Boston, 1995, p. 20)

There is also a challenge, when writing curricula, to sustain a balance between knowing about music and doing music. (Boston, 1995, p. 21)

I believe that the quality of the music we give our students will play a significant role in the public's perception of the quality and value of music education itself. That is, if we present music which is not serious to our students, we are simultaneously educating the public to understand that what we are doing is not serious. (Whitwell, 1993, p. 157)

Whether a teenager will want to devote a great deal of time to studying chemistry or music depends also on the quality of the experience he or she derives from working in the lab or practicing an instrument. (Csikszentmihályi, 1993, pp. 7-8)

A major goal of music education is to develop students who are musically independent and can progress to the next level by themselves after they leave school. (Thomson, 1995, p. 11, quoting John Whitwell)

A teacher must work from some basic beliefs about the importance and purpose of music in order to provide direction, consistency, and insight. (Metz, 1980, p. vii)

Because discipline problems often arise in class as a reaction to the teacher's obvious lack of a sense of purpose, the teacher-to-be needs a workable philosophy. (Metz, 1980, p. 3)

Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that musical aptitude is a product of both innate potential and musical exposure. (Gordon, 1971, p. 4)

One of the greatest assets a man can have in his adult life is the ability, when need arises, to shake the dust of reality momentarily from his feet, and to step, by way of his own imagination, through Alice's charmed mirror into the exquisite Wonderland of Music. (Green, 1966a, p. 91)



The National Goal of the National Coalition for Music Education: Every child in every school will receive a well-rounded education that includes a comprehensive, sequential, high-quality program of music taught by a qualified music teacher. (Boston, 1995)

Just as words can describe events we have not witnessed, places and things we have not seen, so music can present emotions and moods we have not felt, passions we did not know before. (Langer, 1957, p. 222)

The aesthetic experience occurs when information coming from the artwork interacts with information already stored in the viewer's mind. The result of this conjunction might be a sudden expansion, recombination, or ordering of previously accumulated information, which in turn produces a variety of emotions such as delight, joy, or awe. (Csikszentmihályi, 1990, p. 18)

Enjoyment of an activity for its own sake is, in my opinion, the most important educational process that happens in school. (Csikszentmihályi, 1995, p. 18)

In one definition, a skilled teacher is a person who can open a number of different windows on the same concept. (Gardner, 1991, p. 246)

Thinking, discussing, and establishing priorities for the culture is as much the responsibility of the music teacher as of the history teacher. If students can see the importance and priority of music in relationship to other subjects *while* in school, music will retain its priority after graduation. (Colwell, 1994, p. 32)

I have come to a frightening conclusion. I am the decisive element in the classroom. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher I possess tremendous power to make

a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated, and a child humanized or de-humanized. (Ginott, 1972, pp. 15-16)

Sarcasm is not good for children. It destroys their self-confidence and self-esteem. Like strychnine, it can be fatal. Bitter irony and biting sarcasm only reinforce the traits they attack. (Ginott, 1972, p. 66)

Learning depends on the emotional climate engendered by empathy and civility. In their daily contacts with children, teachers must preserve these vanishing virtues. (Ginott, 1972, p. 77)

Children often live up to what parents expect them to be, and what teachers tell them they are. It is damaging to tell a child where he will end up. Destinations may become destinies. (Ginott, 1972, p. 102)

Teachers often ask psychologists how to motivate children to learn. The answer is "Make it safe for them to risk failure." The major obstacle to learning is fear: fear of failure, fear of criticism, fear of appearing stupid. An effective teacher makes it possible for each child to err with impunity. To remove fear is to invite attempt. To welcome mistakes is to encourage learning. (Ginott, 1972, p. 242)

Teachers have a unique opportunity to counteract unhealthy influences in a pupil's early childhood. They have the power to affect a child's life for better or for worse. A child becomes what he experiences. While parents possess the original key to their offspring's experience, teachers have a spare key. They too can open or close the minds and hearts of children. (Ginott, 1972, p. 301)

Performance can no longer sell itself on the basis of its contribution to social skills or physical health or moral behavior or citizenship training or the need for rewards such as uniforms, medals, "A" ratings, and the like. If such unsupportable and irrelevant claims are all that performance has to offer then performance is in deep trouble. (Reimer, 1970, p. 129)

Music education, for many people, consists of material learned and skills gained. It is being suggested here that music education should consist of musical aesthetic experiences. Of course reading, writing, practicing, talking, testing, are legitimate and necessary components of music education. But when they become separated from musical experience itself they have become separated from that which provides their primary reason for existence. (Reimer, 1970, p. 86)

Music education has a dual obligation to society. The first is to develop the talents of those who are gifted musically, for their own personal benefit, for the benefit of the society which will be served by them, for the benefit of the art of music which depends on a continuing supply of composers, performers, conductors, scholars, teachers. The second obligation is to develop the aesthetic sensitivity to music of all people regardless of their individual levels of music talent, for their own personal benefit, for the benefit of society which needs an active cultural life, for the benefit of the art of music which depends on a continuing supply of sympathetic, sensitive consumers. These two obligations are mutually supportive: the neglect of either one inevitably weakens both. (Reimer, 1970, p. 112)

In sum, educating competent, proficient, and expert listeners for the future depends on the progressive education of competent, proficient, and artistic music makers in the present. (Elliott, 1995, p. 99)



In summary, music making is a unique and major way of gaining self-growth, self-knowledge, and optimal experience, both now and in the future. . . . For these reasons, music making is something worth learning to do well by *all* students. (Elliott, 1995, p. 122)

Accordingly, a school that denies children a sustained and systematic music education curriculum is not simply incomplete; it imperils the quality of students' present and future lives by denying them the cognitive keys to a unique and major source of fundamental human life values. If a society wishes to invest in a basic education for every child, then public schools must center on the domains of thinking and knowing that are accessible, achievable, and applicable to all. MUSIC is one of these basic cognitive domains. (Elliott, 1995, p. 130)

In the process of overselling science, mathematics, and technology as the panaceas of commerce, schools have denied students something precious—access to their expressive/communicative being, the essence of their personal spirit. (Fowler, 1990, p. 166)

Development of successful teaching techniques, a meaningful philosophy, and appropriate attitudes often takes years of diligent effort. (Forsythe, 1987, p. 333)

Developing a thoughtful personal philosophy of music education will be one of the most beneficial and far-reaching actions you will take as a teacher. It will help guide you through the unexpected challenges you will meet as an instrumental music teacher. Make the time to develop a first-rate and scholarly document.

### ***For Assignment or Discussion***

1. Read "A Sound Decision" in the book *Case Studies in Music Education* (2005) by Frank Abrahams and Paul Head. As a class, discuss how you would handle this situation.

2. Write your own thoughtfully considered Philosophy of Music Education. Use the content of this course and your other music education courses, your college ensemble and conducting class experience, your high school band or orchestra experience, etc., as the basis of your deliberation. This should be about one page long, single-spaced, with one-inch margins all around.

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