https://doi.org/10.37193/BSFF.2019.28.21

MUSICAL INTELLIGENCE AND ITS ROLE IN EDUCATING EMOTIONS AND ATTITUDES IN THE CLASSROOM

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Abstract: The following study is dedicated to a theoretical and a practical approach of the role of music in human beings' emotional and mental development. Music has multiple benefits in the learning process. Therefore, keeping this in mind and the psychological background on Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, we propose the application of a program based on music in teaching students about human values and empathy.

Keywords: *music, learning, teaching, purpose, Gardner*.

The publication of Howard Gardner's theory on multiple intelligences in 1983 led to numerous commentaries and divisions among the professionals of psychology. The theory seemed very interesting, some of the principles had been tested out on many subjects, and the empirical evidence suggested that Gardner had done a very well-based work in proving his postulates. Nevertheless, from the very beginning this theory had two types of reactions that are still present with many professionals today: an overly optimistic one, and a rather pessimistic one. The optimists considered that this was a breakthrough and that much of what was considered to be painful and unintelligible when it came to human intelligence, suddenly had a convincing set of solutions. The pessimistic ones considered – and they still do – that Gardner's theory did not have much to do with intelligence, but with natural inclinations, or talents. The IQ-type of tests is the only ones that can establish intelligence, and that is what professionals should continue to favor.

To return to the optimistic side, as with many other discoveries of the last few decades, Gardner's theory suffered a kind of 'detour' from its initial propositions and solutions, and was used by dilettantes, who abused the theory and who started writing 'all-purpose' motivational literature, the

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'you-are-perfect-the-way-you-are'-texts which considered the theory of multiple intelligences a kind of aid in finding convincing science.

Nevertheless, there is one category of professionals who embraced the theory and put it to very good use, in the spirit of how it was conceived, even if the science is different: teachers. The theory of multiple intelligences proved to be very valuable in teaching, as it gave perspective, solutions and techniques which helped many students improve their knowledge and abilities. Gardner's theory was developed into a set of learning styles, entitled VAK, or VARK. This model of learning was developed by Neil Fleming in 1987, and it is based on the idea that the teachers should have an inventory, which might help students (or any other people who want to learn) understand their own learning preferences. In *Frames of Mind*, Gardner considered not only the development of intelligence per se, but everything that such development entails: learning styles, behavior, personality, and how these might be enhanced in education or in any other aspect of human life. His interest in developing the human being more than just intellectually might have come from his own predicament; according to his very short biography, published in a paper entitled "One Way to Make Social Scientist" (2003), he described himself in his childhood as being: "cross-eyed, myopic, color-blind and unable to recognize faces". Dealing with such issues, it is obvious that his lifelong struggle to use his own inclination in order to make up for his shortcomings helped him very much.

Gardner's initial 'set of intelligences' included a number of seven: linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, spatial-visual, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. By devising this list of seven types of intelligence, by no means did Gardner exclude the possibility of other types to exist – he even defined another three: naturalist, spiritual/existential, and moral. Still, the group of initial seven has become the core of multiple intelligence tests, as well as the adaptation of these intelligences to teaching. Thus, by taking into consideration the preferred and more successful type of learning, the VARK learning style theory – in Fleming's model – arrived at the conclusion that there are four types of learners: visual learners, aural learners, reading and writing learners, and kinesthetic learners.

Aural learners – that is, learners endowed with musical intelligence – are those who prefer auditory learning. They will much rather listen to lectures and presentations – audio-books, YouTube podcasts, speeches -, they will need to read aloud in order to remember certain cognitive items, and if the reading aloud also has rhythm and even rhyme, they will memorize such content very easily -, they will associate tones, tunes, songs, sounds to things they learn, they will appreciate the musicality of the words, they will make audio associations between the content and the form of cognitive items, etc. Musical intelligence is described by Gardner as the "ability, awareness, appreciation and use of sound; recognition of tonal and rhythmic

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patterns, understands relationship between sound and feeling" (Chapman 2003-2014). The roles that people can have, if endowed with musical intelligence (developed) are singers, musicians, and composers, but also sound engineers, music producers, music directors, different types of entertainers, as well as voice and instrument coaches. The specific tasks that can be associated with this type of intelligence, according to Gardner, entail to sing vocally, play an instrument, compose a tune, but also be a critic of musical performances, develop acoustic systems, etc.

The benefits of learning music are known to educators, and they do not refer solely to being able to appreciate music, playing an instrument or singing, but to a variety of cognitive and emotional outcomes. Children who learn how to play an instrument at an early age, those who do theoretical activities in music, will have a better understanding of patterns in general, and, consequently, will develop their logical-mathematical intelligence. Using wording in the lyrics of songs, and observing how words sound, rhyme, how they can split into syllables, and also being able to hear the sonorous form of various languages will help children with their linguistic intelligence. Benefits, though, run even deeper than these rather automatic ones; those who play music understand rules, they can take directions (especially those who play in an orchestra, or a choir), develop their capacity to contain their emotions, have a better self-esteem, they are more inclined to work in a team and accept a role that fits their inclinations and capabilities, they learn to listen before speaking, and they will try to understand what they are told before they react. Besides the fact that such students also develop their brain, and that is seen in test results and exam scores, more often than not, such students will be capable of empathy, will understand other people's emotions, as well as their own emotions.

Considering such benefits of using music in education, many teachers tried to find the proper 'musical means' to teach a variety of subjects – from physical knowledge to math, from biology to history. Still, the idea that music educates emotion should be exploited from another angle, as well. As Jeremy Begbie argues, in his *Theology, Music and Time*, music should play in children's life the same role as fairy-tales and stories for children. As we get our children to love or hate the characters in the stories we read to them, we should also offer them the possibility to listen to a wider range of emotions in the music they hear. Starting from a Roger Scruton remark, according to which emotions are not "located solely in some inner or 'subjective' life" (Scruton qtd. by Begbie, 2000:17) and that music only externalizes such emotions through a kind of objectifying, Begbie shows that:

> Though emotions may have an 'inner' aspect, they are publicly recognizable states of an organism, displayed in desired,

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> beliefs and actions. […] … they implicate the whole personality and are intrinsically bound up with our relation to other people. Emotions become what they essentially are through their public expression – they are formed and amended through dialogue with others. Hence, the expression of an emotion is also to some extent the creating of an emotion, and this is one of the 4 ways in which a human subject comes to self-awareness and maturity. (Begbie, 2000:17)

In other words, we *learn* emotions by interacting with them, by observing them, by trying to understand them in others, and by noticing how others react to our emotions. Feelings are mostly shown in actions, because our actions are many times determined by an array of feelings: fear, joy, happiness, love, sadness, or anger. What is more, emotions are often an expression of intention:

> Normally, though emotions may include feelings, they are also motives to actions – we act *out of* fear, joy, sadness, or whatever. Emotions are also intentional states: they are *of* or *about* an object, and the most immediate object of an emotion is a thought – about an external object or about the subject who has the emotion. (Fear involves the thought that something threatens me, joy the thought there is something which is good, beautiful, or whatever). (Begbie, 2000:18)

Roger Scruton, who is a conservative philosopher but also a refined musician and art lover, builds from such observations a theory of the 'sympathetic response' (cf. Begbie), which is a very complex structure that makes us 'share' into other people's emotions, thus learning how to manage and express such emotions. If the child is exposed to stories about love and care giving, they will not only learn to recognize acts of love and care, but also learn the emotion and how it is to feel love and the need to take care of others – feminist thought has 'punished' the anonymous authors of Snow White and considered her intervention in the dwarfs' house as proof for the inferior state of women; nevertheless, her reaction may also be interpreted by children, if they are guided correctly, as a sign of compassion, as the character takes pity on the little people who are so tired that they have no time to clean and cook for themselves, and need help. Consequently, if we expose our children to many characters, who are confronted with many situations and emotional responses, they will learn much about emotion, without being exposed to an actual necessity to act upon such emotion: they cannot start helping Snow White, they cannot hug the dwarfs, and the reality of the emotions remains there, though. The same happens with music, as Scruton maintains, the type of 'sympathetic response' is also refined, it does

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not remain 'inside', but, at the same time, and it does not require any kind of gesture, or words while it enriches us:

> As far as the emotions are concerned, through a sympathetic response they are *exercised* – and we must exercise our sympathies if they are to be alive at all. Moreover, we are emotionally *educated* – our emotional life is enriched, deepened, and perhaps even re-formed. Hearing music can mean 'the reordering of our sympathies'. Scruton remarks: "The great triumphs of music….. involve[s] this synthesis, whereby a musical structure, moving according to its own logic, compels our feelings to move along with it, and so leads us to rehearse a feeling at which we would not otherwise arrive". Music can therefore not only reflect an emotional disposition already experienced… but can also enrich, nuance and even reshape our emotion, affecting subsequent emotional experience. This would in part account for music being so emotionally beneficial and why we can derive pleasure again and again from the same piece. We can be emotionally exercised and educated. (Begbie, 2000:18)

Consequently, using music in education should not be only in terms of enhancing intelligences, giving information in a nice manner, helping students develop their brain and exercise their cognitive abilities and memory; music should be used not only to help students be less self-conscious, more confident and willing to perform in front of an audience. All of these are extremely important, but they are not the only benefits of music. Music, then, can be used to educate emotions, and that is a benefit that we do not consider so much in our educational systems. Just listening to music that is inspiring, just exposing our students to the emotions that such music carries with it, in a safe environment, in which they can repeat the experience over and over as it does not require a 'physical' or exterior reaction, is a benefit that is difficult to measure, obviously, but very important and of great value. Such benefits are also associated with *pleasure*, because it is known that while listening to music that one likes, his/her brain releases dopamine, which is the hormone and neurotransmitter which brings happiness and pleasure.

Not only does music enhance the process of making students sensitive to a certain matter, but it can improve their learning on other levels, as well. It is not only about students absorbing a certain kind of information, but also about finding out more about a topic that should be studied in psychology, history, English literature, personal development, philosophy, or even in fields like chemistry or physics. What is even better in using music when teaching. is that fields can mingle and thus, students learn several facts at once rather than studying everything separately.

Music has great advantages when used in the classroom. According to Elizabeth Peterson, the learning process activates when music starts playing.

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It is the emotional and mental impact that makes students focus, stabilize the acquired information on one topic, increase the power of creating a connection with previous experiences, as well as trigger their need for curiosity. Music speeds up the learning process by helping students memorize various notions in an easier way. In this sense, it is the power of lyrics, rhythm and even the interpreter's voice that facilitate the process of learning. Students can get so engaged in what they are taught through music that it can help them become more confident and overtly involve themselves in open discussions without being afraid to express their opinions. When using music as a teaching tool, we can link together various forms of art, but still put a stronger emphasis on music. Thus, music can work as a guide that increases interest in literature, for instance.

In order to prove all these benefits music has while teaching, we propose an application of the theoretical notions approached here. We come with the idea of a program that is concerned with increasing awareness regarding war and its consequences on individuals through rock music. The aim of such a program is simple: giving students a more accurate perspective on what the war really meant for individuals. The program is designed for four weeks (with one class per week) and is oriented towards twelve graders. Each week has its purpose and implies more than just music: it compresses history, psychology, literature, philosophy, art or politics.

The Learning Program – Step-by-Step Plan

The purpose of our program in the first week would be to make students sensitive regarding the war and the meaning beyond it. The teacher will start the first lesson by simply writing a word on the blackboard / whiteboard: *hara-kiri.* Starting from a discussion on the meaning of the word (the teacher asking students to give a definition to the word), the teacher comes with a follow up, namely a brainstorming exercise: students will have to say words that come to their minds in relation to *hara-kiri.* Consequently, the teacher will invite the students to read the lyrics of the song *Harakiri* by Serj Tankian:

We're the day birds
Deciding to fly against the sky
Within our dreams, we all wake up
To kiss the ones who are born to die

We're the greying herds
Hurting each other with our lives
Within our dreams, we all wake up
To kiss the ones who are born to die
Born to die, born to die

The drum fish
They beached themselves in Hara-kiri
The blackbirds
They fell in thousands from the sky
Their red wings

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Streaming down from the higher seas
Deflected by the grounds

They crowned the sun
They crowned the sun
But I believe that they are free
When their time was done
They were drowned by the only One
But I believe that they are free
Washed by the sun

Our statues
The soaring edifice of our times
Detracted from the ways of the wise
The future will view all history as a crime
So father, tell us when is time to rise

They crowned the sun
They crowned the sun
But I believe that they are free
When their time was done
They were drowned by the only One

But I believe that they are free
They crowned the sun
They crowned the sun
But I believe that they are free
And we believe that they are free
'Cause I believe that they are me
Washed by the sun.
(https://www.lyrics.com/lyric/26786692/Harakiri)

Starting from these lyrics, a discussion is initiated. The teacher will invite students to highlight lines that have attracted their attention. Questions referring to the meaning beyond the lyrics are supposed to orient the discussion, as well as motivate students to come with their own interpretations:

- Could *birds* also be a metaphor for humans?
- Who could be *the ones who are born to die?*
- *The future will view all history as a crime.* What does he mean by this line?
- Could we look at the last lines as being related to the way we are more similar to each other than we think?

Then, the teacher will show the students the video for the song. At the end of it, the teacher will present all the messages and quotes selected from the video:

- *"The human race will eventually die of civilization". Ralph Waldo Emerson*
- *Millions of animals have perished in recent mass die-offs.*
- *Plastic is believed to be causing cancer in millions.*
- *GMOs are multiplying and unleashing lethal food allergies.*
- *Radiation levels are rising across the globe.*

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- *"These are the stakes. We must either love each other or we must die."*
- *Pollution from cities kills over 2 million people a year.*
- *The last time man lived in a world without war was 2925 BC.*
- *MOTHER NATURE VS CAPITALISM.*
- *"We are at war with the most dangerous enemy that has ever faced mankind in its long climb from the swamp to the stars. There's no place to escape to, this is the last stand on Earth."*
- *The last decade was the hottest in recorded history.*
- *There are two billion overweight or obese people in the world while 25000 people die of hunger every day.*
- *There are an estimated 19000 nuclear warheads in existence.*
- *"Man is fully responsible for his nature and his choices." Jean-Paul Sartre* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQtRXqBQETA)

Consequently, the teacher will insist only on the following:

- *"The human race will eventually die of civilization". Ralph Waldo Emerson*
- *"These are the stakes. We must either love each other or we must die."*
- *The last time man lived in a world without war was 2925 BC.*
- *MOTHER NATURE VS CAPITALISM.*
- *"We are at war with the most dangerous enemy that has ever faced mankind in its long climb from the swamp to the stars. There's no place to escape to, this is the last stand on Earth."*
- *"Man is fully responsible for his nature and his choices." Jean-Paul Sartre*

A task will be given to each student: they will all have to comment upon these lines. Before the class finishes, all opinions will be discussed. This first lesson could be considered a warm-up for the students to make a connection with the great topic that is approached: the war. At the end of the class, the students are not completely disconnected with this program, as they will be assigned with the task of reading John McCrae's poem "In Flanders Fields".

The target of the second week would be to try and make students understand that war victims were not only ordinary people, but also soldiers who fought within the army. Therefore, the second meeting of this program would start with the teacher involving the students in a discussion based on John McCrae's poem. Students should be given the opportunity to talk openly about their personal interpretations and favourite parts in the poem, whereas the teacher will have to orient and monitor the students' activity. The discussion should also imply answers to questions, such as:

- What is the significance of the poppy in the poem?
- How do you picture the images we have in the poem?
- Do you think the poet was himself a soldier?

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Then, the teacher will play the song *Fortunate Son* by Creedence Clearwater Revival and ask for the students' opinion: if they were to hear this song in a pub, would they think it is a song related to war in any way? After listening to it, the teacher will provide the lyrics of the song:

Some folks are born made to wave the flag
Ooh, they're red, white and blue
And when the band plays "Hail to the Chief"
Ooh, they point the cannon at you, Lord
It ain't me, it ain't me, I ain't no senator's son, son
It ain't me, it ain't me, I ain't no fortunate one, no
Some folks are born silver spoon in hand
Lord, don't they help themselves, no
But when the taxman comes to the door
Lord, the house looks like a rummage sale, yes
It ain't me, it ain't me, I ain't no millionaire's son, no
It ain't me, it ain't me, I ain't no fortunate one, no
Yeah, some folks inherit star spangled eyes
Ooh, they send you down to war, Lord
And when you ask them, "How much should we give?"
Ooh, they only answer "More! More! More!"
It ain't me, it ain't me, I ain't no military son, son
It ain't me, it ain't me, I ain't no fortunate one, one
It ain't me, it ain't me, I ain't no fortunate one, no no no
It ain't me, it ain't me, I ain't no fortunate son, no no no
(https://genius.com/Creedence-clearwater-revival-fortunate-son-lyrics)

The teacher offers initial orientation by asking the students questions based on the song:

- Who could this *fortunate son* be?
- Who are the *unfortunate* then?
- Is there any connection with politics?
- Could there be any similarities with this text and "In Flanders Fields"?

In case students are not already familiar with the song, the teacher explains how it was composed and what it mainly covered: *Fortunate Son* was a reference to the Vietnamese war and the people sent to fight there. It was a strong emphasis on how the poor end up going to war whereas the wealthy people (people belonging to high class families) remain in safe places. At the end of this discussion on the song, the teacher will propose a creative assignment for the students. Students are supposed to think of a battlefield and answer the following questions:

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- Has it been a recent battle there or is it just a monument now?
- What colours do you see?
- What do you smell?
- Is there any plant around you?
- You see a man. What is he doing?

Like in the previous week, the students are not left without an assignment for the following meeting. Their next task is to read Stephen Crane's poem, entitled "War is Kind".

During the class happening in the third week, the objective is to let students understand the horrors of a war. Just like in the previous meeting, this session starts with a discussion on the poem oriented by the teacher with questions and tasks, such as:

- List the situations described in the poem.
- Why do you think the poem used this phrase – "war is kind"?

Then, the teacher shows the students Pablo Picasso's masterpiece, *Guernica*. While listening to Bob Dylan's song, *Masters of War*, their task is to identify everything they see in the painting. When they finish, the teacher familiarizes the students with the lyrics of this song and starts a discussion based on it:

Come you masters of war
You that build the big guns
You that build the death planes
You that build all the bombs
You that hide behind walls
You that hide behind desks
I just want you to know
I can see through your masks

You that never done nothin'
But build to destroy
You play with my world
Like it's your little toy
You put a gun in my hand
And you hide from my eyes
And you turn and run farther
When the fast bullets fly

Like Judas of old
You lie and deceive
A world war can be won
You want me to believe
But I see through your eyes
And I see through your brain
Like I see through the water
That runs down my drain

You fasten all the triggers
For the others to fire
Then you sit back and watch
While the death count gets higher
You hide in your mansion
While the young people's blood

Flows out of their bodies
And is buried in the mud

You've thrown the worst fear
That can ever be hurled
Fear to bring children
Into the world
For threatening my baby

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Unborn and unnamed
You ain't worth the blood
That runs in your veins

How much do I know
To talk out of turn
You might say that I'm young
You might say I'm unlearned
But there's one thing I know
Though I'm younger than you
That even Jesus would never
Forgive what you do

Let me ask you one question
Is your money that good?
Will it buy you forgiveness
Do you think that it could?
I think you will find
When your death takes its toll
All the money you made
Will never buy back your soul

And I hope that you die
And your death will come soon
I will follow your casket
By the pale afternoon
And I'll watch while you're lowered

Down to your deathbed
And I'll stand over your grave
'Til I'm sure that you're dead. (https://genius.com/Bob-dylan-masters-of-war-lyrics

The teacher will, then, familiarize the students with the origins of *Guernica* and ask questions by using the meaning of the lyrics in order to start a discussion. Possible questions could be:

- Could you identify similar points between the song and the painting?
- Even if this painting was inspired by a certain war, would you say that it presents situations that can occur in all wars, not just in a specific one?
- Could you connect this song to money and politics again? Why?

As a final task before the end of the third session, the teacher will separate students in groups. Each group will be assigned a war-inspired song. The task of every group will be to find as much information as possible about the song and about what war it is about (if it is the case). The selected songs for this activity are: *War Pigs* by Black Sabbath; *Zombie* by the Cranberries; *One* by Metallica. Each song will be played during the class. All teams have to come up with their own ideas and with the information they have found. A debate can also generate from this exercise. Before the class is dismissed, the students are assigned with the preparatory task for the last week of the program: they are supposed to read Kurt Vonnegut's "Slaughterhouse Five".

The purpose of the forth and last week of this program would be to discuss the psychological consequences on individuals. Like in the second and third meetings, the literary work students were supposed to read is brought into attention. The teacher orients the focus on the discussion through questions, like:

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- What do you think about Billy? Is he hallucinating or why is there a shift from one world to another?
- Are all these worlds real?
- If he suffers from PTSD, can you list some of the things that affected him?
- Have you known about the bombing in Dresden?

At the end of the discussion on the novel, the teacher plays the song and video for *Rooster* by Alice in Chains. When the video ends, the students are asked to point out the scene that got stuck to their attention. The teacher brings the students' focus back to the conversation from the beginning of the video by addressing a few questions:

- Why do you think the father has never talked about the war?
- Do you think that in the end, the war is about survival or the need to fight for your country?

Then, the teacher hands the students the lyrics of the song:

Ain't found a way to kill me yet
Eyes burn with stinging sweat
Seems every path leads me to nowhere
Wife and kids household pet
Army green was no safe bet
The bullets scream to me from somewhere

Here they come to snuff the rooster, oh yeah,
Yeah here come the rooster, yeah
You know he ain't gonna die
No, no, no, you know he ain't gonna die

Here they come to snuff the rooster, oh yeah,
Yeah here come the rooster, yeah
You know he ain't gonna die
No, no, no, you know he ain't gonna die

Walking tall machine gun man
They spit on me in my home land
Gloria sent me pictures of my boy
Got my pills 'gainst mosquito death
My buddy's breathing his dyin' breath
Oh, God, please won't you help me make it through

Here they come to snuff the rooster, oh yeah
Yeah here come the rooster, yeah

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You know he ain't gonna die
No, no, no you know he ain't gonna die (https://genius.com/Alice-in-chains-rooster-lyrics)

The teacher encourages students to come with their personal opinions and express their thoughts about the lyrics and the topic. Right before the end, the teacher returns to the brainstorming exercise completed in the first meeting of this program. The teacher checks all the words written by students when asked about the words they would associate to the term *hara-kiri*. The last discussion within this program concerns the following issues:

- The consequences of the war;
- The injured;
- The involvement of politics;
- Is violence an answer?;
- Is democracy still working?;

Even if the program is a combination between various forms of art, the one with a stronger role here is still music. It proves that in choosing one topic and deconstructing it piece by piece, music comes and makes information and facts clearer in the students' mind. As in the case of any form of art, music is meant to make people aware of everything that surrounds them, as well as to have an impact on the human soul.

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