

LINDA LANIER-KEOSAIAN

WHAT EDWIN GORDON DOES NOT WANT IN A MUSIC LESSON

Information and Quotes from Learning Sequences in Music

1) Gordon does not like tapping the foot to keep count because it “counteracts sustained movement.” It emphasizes time, and ignores weight, space, and flow. If a student performer cannot audiate weight, then foot-tapping may solve his immediate need of “keeping time,” but it will contribute little to his long-term needs of developing musicianship. It is like a conductor who merely marks time, or the jazz ensemble that cannot function without a drummer.

2) Gordon does not like teaching appreciation of music merely by giving the historical information about it along with testimonials about its worth. He believes that through understanding of music, students become tolerant and appreciative of many types of music.

3) Gordon says that for teachers to define music symbols and to describe music abstractly, is to avoid the music itself. To define mechanically a key signature, a measure signature, or music form, or to describe music metaphorically or programmatically, suggests one’s literary prowess or theoretical knowledge only. To audiate the way key signatures and measure signatures interact with tonality and meter, and how tonality and meter interact with form in music, attests to one’s musicianship.

4) A music scale has little, if any, value for teaching audiation skill. It is too long, has too many patterns within it.

5) At the aural/oral level, students should be taught tonal patterns and rhythm patterns independently of each other, not simultaneously.

6) “Unless students perform tonal patterns and rhythm patterns in solo, they will not learn to audiate. If all they do is perform music in ensembles, most of them will at best learn only how to imitate. They will always be imitating within a fraction of a second what the student next to them is performing.”

7) “Rhythm is movement and cannot be understood apart from movement as it interacts with breathing. Thus, rhythm, movement, and breathing are inseparable.” from, Rhythm, Contrasting the Implications of Audiation and Notation, by Edwin Gordon.

Construe from this quote that what Gordon would NOT like is teaching rhythm in an abstract sense, without movement.