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ABSTRACT

This paper presents ways art educators can participate in a more holistic approach to education. The document outlines the following premises: (1) students will be consumers of art and determine what art they choose to consume, which requires a systematic and thorough grounding in critical evaluation if they are to make good decisions; (2) students will learn to respect and value the arts as they become adept at making sophisticated aesthetic judgments and learn an arts vocabulary; (3) typical music and arts appreciation programs are taught from the historical perspective, which may add to the students' general knowledge of history but may not allow them to confront a work of art and decide whether it is meaningful to them; and (4) students need methods of evaluating works of art and music. Two evaluation models are given; a listening model for music criticism and a viewing model for art criticism. The paper examines similarities and differences between the two models and discusses ways of including them in appreciation classes. (DQE)

LISTENING AND VIEWING: MODELS FOR INTERACTING WITH MUSIC AND THE VISUAL ARTS

The arts can provide significant and pleasurable experiences for children as well as adults. We, as teachers of the arts, are aware that pleasurable experiences are not valid justifications for an arts program in the public schools; nor are they the only desired outcomes of such a program. Something more valuable must be both the justification for and result of an arts education.

In many schools across the country educators (both arts specialists and classroom teachers) are incorporating arts experiences and arts vocabularies into other academic areas. In place of the old-style correlation of coloring pictures of birds, teaching Japanese songs, preparing scenery for a class play, or showing a movie about music in Colonial Williamsburg, an attempt is being made to enhance and enrich the academic classroom using the concepts and language of the arts.

Arts educators are being asked to participate in a more holistic approach to education. Without giving up that significant body of knowledge which only our disciplines can teach, we must find ways to connect the arts to other subjects in logical and meaningful ways. A comparison of the arts standards (dance, music, theatre arts, and visual art) to each other and to those of the other academic disciplines as they become available will show us that such connections are possible.

The young people who are our students may or may not become creators of art, but they will all become consumers of art. What we do in our classes will, to a large extent, determine what art they choose to consume. We must help them develop a taste for the finest the arts have to offer. They cannot accomplish this through a casual exposure to art works ("This is a great painting. Next slide please."). Acquaintance with the arts implies more than recognition of historical monuments in the arts. It involves understanding what one is seeing or hearing [1]. Our students must learn how to digest the arts through a systematic and thorough grounding in critical evaluation.

It is our responsibility to help students make value judgments about works of art. As they evaluate art, they grow aesthetically. They learn an arts vocabulary and become adept at making sophisticated judgments [2]. They also learn to respect and value (appreciate) the arts.

Most programs teach music and art appreciation from the historical perspective [3]. Teachers discuss each stylistic period, usually in chronological order, and show slides or play recordings of great works of art. Through these courses students may learn some bits of trivia to add to their general knowledge of history (if either they or their teachers make that connection). They may learn to recognize by sight or sound certain works of art considered outstanding by their teacher. Most likely they will never confront a work of art, study it on anything more than a cursory level,

and decide whether or not they feel the work is meaningful to them.

In order to interact with works of art, students need methods of evaluating them. This article will discuss two evaluation models, one for music criticism and one for art criticism. It will examine similarities and differences between the two models, and will discuss ways of including them in appreciation classes.

Listening Model

Of all the arts, music is at the same time the most distant and the most accessible. Its mysteries can be penetrated only by those possessing special skills, yet it is capable of evoking a response in every listener, no matter what his or her level of experience [4]. Most of the music around us is meant to function as background music. We are not supposed to focus on it. Therefore, we find it difficult to concentrate on music meant to dominate the foreground of our consciousness, to "focus in rather than [tune] out [5]." Even good performers have to be taught to listen, since it involves skills somewhat different from those needed for performance [6].

Aaron Copland, who created some of the most enjoyable and interesting music written in the Twentieth Century, also wrote and lectured extensively about music. He believed everyone listens on three levels: the sensuous, the expressive, and the intellectual [7].

On the sensuous level we listen "for the sheer pleasure of the musical sound itself [8]." We listen without thinking, without considering what is going on in the music. We revel in the sound and the way it stimulates our senses. When we listen on the expressive level we sense that the music creates a mood for the listener. When we listen at the intellectual level we key on the specifics of the music, identifying the elements and principles which the composer has used to organize his/her musical thoughts.

Uninformed listeners are prone to overemphasize the expressive side of music. They come up with a description so concrete that it creates "the illusion of getting closer to the music's meaning [9]," substituting the listener's fantasies for the composer's realities. On the other hand, professional musicians may become so concerned with the technical side of the music (the intellectual level), that they forget there is a deeper meaning underlying the notes. All listeners will benefit from developing an awareness of both the technical and expressive aspects of music.

Copland believed that we do not listen on one plane alone. Our minds and ears correlate all three levels so that we listen sensuously, expressively, and intellectually all at the same time [10]. This author believes it is possible to choose one level and concentrate on it. Children can learn to objectively evaluate music on each of the three levels, one at a time.

The listening model (figure 1) uses Copland's three levels (sensuous, expressive, and intellectual) as the titles for the first three interactions with the music. These words are excellent points for beginning the listening experiences.

While it would be possible to begin by listening to either the expressive or technical aspects of the music, the logical starting point is the sensuous experience. This allows the listener to begin with the least demanding and most personal interaction. It is important that the students have no information about the composer or the music before the lesson begins. The teacher instructs the students to relax their bodies and their minds, get into a comfortable position, and allow the music to flow over, around, and through them. Of course, the students are not allowed to talk. The writing begins when the music stops. Students record their immediate reactions to the selection. Typically, the words chosen by the students will be adjectives. By asking for individual words rather than complete sentences it is possible to avoid writing a story or creating a descriptive scene.

The second time the students hear the piece, they listen for the expressive qualities of the music. They are to be attentive to the mood of the music, and should be able to answer two questions:

What mood do you think the composer is trying to create?

What mood does the music create for you?

Again, there is no talking, moving, or writing while the music is playing. When the music is over, they record their answers. They are encouraged again to write phrases rather than complete sentences. As in the sersuous experience, most of the answers center around adjectives. In the expressive experience, the adjectives will most likely describe feelings and emotions.

The third listening experience concentrates on the elements of music. This is the intellectual experience. It is the most difficult level for the average student since it requires a certain amount of specialized musical knowledge. The list of elements and their definitions will differ depending upon the training of the educator, and the level of students with which he/she is working. The following list is one which has proved successful with middle school students.

.Rhythm-includes beat, meter, tempo. The organizing of tones of different lengths into patterns.

.Melody-the tune or theme. Technically, a horizontal row of tones rhythmically controlled.

.Harmony-Groups of tones occurring at the same time. A vertical row of tones.

.Dynamics-The loudness or softness levels of the music, and the ways the music moves from one level of loudness to another.

.Timbre-Tone quality. The different instruments used to make music. In its broadest possible usage it

includes any sound source used by any musician in any musical composition.

.Form-The organization or structure of a musical composition; the way the composer uses repetition and contrast to achieve structure or organization.

.Texture-The number of different lines of music in a composition. Traditionally, there are three textures:

Monophonic (one sound)-one line of music.

Homophonic (alike or similar sounds)-two or more lines of music which move more or less together (usually takes the form of melody and subordinate accompaniment).

Polyphonic (many sounds)-two or more lines of music which move independently.

Other lists may be used depending on the age and experience of the listeners or the personal preference of the teacher. Any list of elements used for the intellectual experience should be modified by the teacher to meet the maturation and experience levels of the students. Students will need to learn the necessary vocabulary and listen to compositions which emphasize each element and the various ways in which composers use the elements. A series of lessons which teach these skills would be an excellent preparation for using this model.

During the third hearing the students answer specific questions about each element. The questions should be chosen carefully to reflect the important aspects of the specific

composition, and to correspond to the sophistication level of the students. Usually, there will be at least one question for each element. Except in very rare circumstances the teacher should ask no more than two questions for any one element.

Because of the complexity of the task (so many questions, so little time) the students write while listening. They may also need more time after the music stops. Unlike the first two hearings, where the answers provided an overall impression, the focus here is on specifics. This makes it both necessary and proper for the students to write while the music is playing.

After the third hearing the teacher tells the students the title of the piece and the name of the composer. He/she also provides any information necessary to understand the historical and social setting of the music. This may include information about the compositional process, the occasion for which it was written, pertinene bibliographic information about the composer, or current performance circumstances. The students then write a short paragraph telling whether, in their opinion, the composition is successful. They also tell why or why not they feel the composer has succeeded. It is important that the information supporting the students' decision (successful or not successful) come from the description of the music itself (third hearing) and not from the student's impression of the music (first and second hearings).

Which musical selections are most effective depends on the preferences of the individual teacher, the experience level of the students, and the goals of the listening program. Each teacher will have selections which he or she prefers, either because of an affinity for a particular piece or other personal or professional reasons. Selections which work with one class may not work with another. Adjustments may be necessary due to the social, intellectual, or personality differences between classes.

Perhaps the most important determinant factor in choosing selections is the goal of the listening program. If listening is part of a music history approach, then selections should outline the history of music. If the approach is critical rather than historical, the selections may be chosen on their individual merits. If the purpose of the course is to teach or reinforce the elements of music, the selections will be chosen for their ability to highlight one or more of the elements.

The most effective selections are those that are highly evocative. If a piece has the ability to stimulate, to cause students to react, it will catch and hold their interest. Some pieces which have been used successfully by the author are:

Brubeck, *"Thank You"* (from "Jazz Impressions of Eurasia)

Chopin, *"Revolutionary" Etude*

Copland, *Circus Music* (from *The Red Pony*)

Mozart, Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro*

Rossini, Overture to *William Tell* ("storm" and "Dawn" sections)

Stravinsky, "The Infernal Dance of King Katschei", and "Berceuse" from *The Firebird*

This list is far from exhaustive, and is intended to stimulate the reader's imagination. One practical suggestion is to keep the selections short enough to allow four hearings in one class period. This creates a unified lesson. Excerpts of larger works are acceptable if they constitute an aesthetic whole. They must, by themselves, be a complete work of art.

There are two positive aspects of this approach. First, it does away with passive listeners. Each student must respond to the music, and within certain very broad limitations, any response is at least partially correct. While responses on the intellectual level may be incorrect, it is unusual for responses to be wrong on the sensuous or expressive levels.

Second, this approach gets past the "my music/your music" controversy. The teacher does not introduce the selections as "great works of art" or his/her favorites, but as means to elicit responses. If time permits, the written responses may become the basis for a class discussion. The teacher acts as facilitator. Each class member should be made to feel that his/her contribution and point of view is valued by the teacher and other members of the class.

Viewing Model

Mittler's criticism model (figure 2) for the visual arts provides parallel experiences to the listening model described above. In contrast to the art historical approach (the method used by most art appreciation teachers), Mittler uses a phenomenological approach, in which students learn all that is possible from a study of the art work itself before discussing its background. This is the same approach taken by the music listening model discussed above.

In his book Art In Focus, a textbook for secondary art classes, Mittler cites four types of art learning [11]. These are:

.learning to be aesthetically aware and sensitive to a broad range of visual forms,

.learning from works of art (criticism),

.learning about works of art (history), and

.learning to make art (studio).

Through his experience of working with elementary and secondary-aged students, Mittler feels that the most effective method for developing aesthetic awareness begins with aesthetic/art criticism and studio (creative) experiences. Students first approach art works, not as masterpieces (so labeled by an art historian/teacher), but as expressions of a creative mind. They learn to evaluate these works and make educated judgments about them.

Mittler uses the elements and principles of visual art as the starting point for approaching art works. The

elements of art function in much the same way as the elements of music. They are the basic building blocks which the artist uses to create his/her art work. The elements of art are [12]:

Color

Hue-blue, red, green, etc.

Intensity-saturation of the color, the brightness or dullness of the hue.

Value-the lightness or darkness of the color.

Line-the path of a moving point. It may be real or implied.

Shape-the area enclosed by a (real or imagined) line. The viewer can concentrate on the boundaries of the shape or on its inner space.

Texture-the surface quality (smoothness, roughness, softness). It may be real or implied.

The principles of art are the techniques the artist uses to organize the elements. They are: balance, complexity, simplicity, repetition, rhythm, gradation, contrast, and space.

Mittler follows his introduction to the elements and principles with a four-step approach to art criticism.

1. Description: discovering what is in the work--studying the work to identify the subject matter (literal qualities) and the elements.
2. Analysis: How is the work organized, or put together? The emphasis is on the principles

and how the artist has used them (the formal qualities).

3. Interpretation: Discovering the meaning, mood, or idea of the work--studying its expressive qualities.
4. Judgment: making a decision about the work's success or lack of success.

If students use the viewing model individually, they mark the squares on their copies of the model whose coordinates best represent their evaluation of the use of elements and principles in the art work being studied. If the teacher is guiding a class evaluation of an art work, a copy of the model is placed on an overhead projector, and markers are used in the appropriate squares[13].

The work may be deemed successful or unsuccessful in terms of the aesthetic qualities stressed by one or more of the following theories on the nature of art:

- .Imitationalism (literal qualities)-do the objects and figures in the work appear real? If so, to what extent?
- .Formalism (formal qualities)-are the elements and principles used in such a way that the work is successful from a structural point of view?
- .Emotionalism (expressive qualities)-does the viewer have an emotional reaction to the work?

Only after this process is complete is the art work placed in its historical/cultural setting. The teacher tells

the students who the artist is, when he/she lived, and important information about his/her life. The teacher may also include, where necessary, circumstances surrounding the creation of the particular art work as well as other works by the same artist, and significant events and persons in the same period. This information serves as a backdrop against which the student can place the work and, perhaps revise or refine decisions about the work. This step corresponds to the fourth hearing on the listening model.

The choice of art works will depend, as with music listening, on the goals of the course, preference of teachers, and the needs of the individual class. A list of artists and art works suitable for use might include:

Imitationalism

Rembrandt: *Self Portrait* (any one)

Vermeer: *The Kitchen Maid*

Formalism

Whistler: *Arrangement in Gray and Black*

Velasquez: *Las Meninas*

Emotionalism

Van Gogh: *A Cornfield with Cypresses*

El Greco: *The Opening of the Fifth Seal*

Integration of the Listening and Viewing Models

Many of the terms used in Mittler's viewing model (color, line, form, texture, contrast, rhythm, repetition, harmony) are directly related to terms used in the evaluation

of music. While most, if not all, of these terms have different meanings when used in musical evaluation, it should be clear that parallels can be drawn between the two fields. Composers use timbre in much the same way visual artists use color. Rhythm in visual art refers to movement. In music, rhythm occurs over time, and is that element which controls movement from the beginning to the end of the piece.

Mittler's model is designed to be used by the elementary or secondary classroom teacher--not necessarily by a visual art specialist. With a little practice, it is easy to evaluate visual art works using this model. Visual art works and listening examples can be chosen which emphasize similar elements, stylistic periods, or points of view. Imitational art works (those attempting to appear realistic) might be compared with selections considered to be program music. Formalistic art works might be combined with music from classical periods in a lesson on structure and form. Expressiveness in music and visual art works could be explored in another lesson.

While both models can be used by elementary classroom teachers, and by secondary teachers in a variety of disciplines, consulting with specialists in the music and visual arts fields might be desirable when approaching these models for the first time. Music or visual arts specialists, attempting to correlate the models, might wish to consult with a specialist in the opposite field before the first undertaking.

While the differences between the listening model and the viewing model are clear, they are due to the technical differences inherent in the art forms. Both models encourage students to value the arts more by allowing them to study works of art, interact with them, and come to their own conclusions about the success of those works.

Kenneth L. Sipley

Notes

1. Edmund Burke Feldman, *Varieties of Visual Experience*, basic edition. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., undated.
2. Gene A. Mittler, *Art In Focus , Teacher's Resource Book* (Peoria, Illinois: Glencoe, 1989), 5-15.
3. Most art and music history textbooks are organized by historical periods. While this is a logical approach, it does encourage a superficial to art and music appreciation. One art series which organizes its material from a phenomenological approach is:
   Guy Hubbard and Mary J. Rouse. *Art: Choosing and Expressing*, and *Art: Discovering and Creating*. Westchester, IL: Benefic Press, 1977.
4. Schwartz, Elliot. *Music: Ways of Listening*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982, 3.
5. Ibid., 4
6. Crocker, Richard L., and Basart, Ann P.. *Listening to Music*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1971.
7. Aaron Copland, *What To Listen For In Music* New York: Mentor, 1963, 18-21.
8. Ibid., 18.
9. Ibid., 21.
10. Ibid., 22
11. Mittler, note 2 above
12. Much of Mittler's work is based on that of Edmund Burke Feldman (see note 1 above, and also books such as:
    Becoming Human Through Art. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970.)
13. The group approach is also possible for the listening model. It is especially useful in introducing the model to students with no prior experience in using the model.

Figure 1.

Listening Worksheet

First Hearing

Listen on the sensuous level. Let the music speak directly to your emotions. Don't think about the music--feel it. When the piece is over, write a few words describing your emotional response.

Second Hearing

Listen on the expressive level.

What mood is the composer trying to project?

What mood does the music put you in?

Third Hearing

Listen on the intellectual level. Write a few words about each of the following elements of music as you hear the piece. Your teacher will give you specific instructions for each element.

Instruments

Rhythm

Melody

Harmony

Dynamics

Form

Texture

Fourth Hearing

Your teacher will tell you a little about the music you have been listening to, and what the composer was trying to accomplish. When the piece is over, write a short paragraph answering the following questions:

Do you feel the composer accomplishes what he/she says he/she wants to?

Why or why not? Use specific examples from the music (third hearing) to support your conclusion.

Figure 2. Used by permission