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SERIE DE BLOGS INVITADOS: INTELIGENCIAS MÚLTIPLES EN LA MÚSICA, PARTE III

Recientemente recibimos tres entradas de blog de invitados sobre el uso de la teoría de las inteligencias múltiples en la educación musical. El primero, sobre MI y composición, está disponible en clic (http://multipleintelligencesoasis.org/guest-blog-series-multiple-intelligences-in-music/)king aquí (/blog?tag=part%20one) . La segunda, sobre cómo MI puede tener efectos

positivos sobre la participación y el éxito de los estudiantes de música, está disponible por c (http://multipleintelligencesoasis.org/can-multiple-intelligences-theory-save-music-education/)lamiendo aquí (/blog?tag=part%20two) .

En la tercera entrega, impresa a continuación, los Dres. Cecilia Martin Hoyos y Luis Ponce de León, investigadores de España, delinean una estructura para la educación musical que combina la pedagogía de Edgar Willems con la teoría de la MI.

Las inteligencias múltiples y el enfoque de Edgar Willems para la educación musical

Por la Dra. Cecilia Martín Hoyos y el Dr. Luis Ponce de León

Do we want a well-rounded education for our children? Most any parent would most probably give an affirmative answer. This idea of a balanced, well-rounded education, where attention is paid to the child's intellectual, social, sportive, artistic and humanistic development, is fully represented in Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences (1983). Arts, and music in particular, have a fundamental role in artistic and humanistic development; but what if we had empirical evidence showing that music could have more than an aesthetic mission? What if music instruction had a positive effect on all intelligences?

As music teachers, inspired by Gardner's theories, we have asked ourselves what it is about music and music instruction that helps children develop each and every intelligence. What happens in the music lesson that make students grow in so many different directions?

We have attempted to answer this question taking a specific approach to music education into account: Edgar Willems' (1890-1978) music teaching system. Apart from the fact that Willems had a special significance in our own training as teachers, we decided to turn to his approach because of the detailed breakdown of music instruction that Willems and his followers, especially Jacques Chapuis (1926-2007), have published. Willems showed a profound knowledge of children and their developmental stages, finding links between the elements of music and the nature of the child.

Building bridges between music instruction and MI was our mission for several years. We will briefly share some of these relationships in the following paragraphs, hoping that they will provide food for thought and debate.

Willems' teaching system

One of Edgar Willems' main goals as a teacher was to design an approach to music education that would prove most beneficial to the development of the child, an approach that still has a significant impact in music education in several European and Latin American countries.

Willems' concern was making parents and educators understand "the importance of music education, which, going beyond the apprenticeship of an instrument or music itself, has a direct influence on the principal faculties of the human being." Willems offers a musical education accessible to all children, ideally from an early age. Through the joy of discovering the language of music one achieves sensory, affective and mental development, all this without needing to add "extra-musical" elements to the lesson, such as colors or stories.

So, how do MI relate to a Willems-based music lesson?

Linguistic Intelligence

Words often play a significant role in music and music education. When singing with words or playing with the rhythm of speech, our linguistic intelligences are obviously put to work. However, music is a language by itself, and even when words are absent in a Willems-based lesson, making and reacting to music can eventually help with the learning of other natural languages.

When children are asked to listen to ascending and descending melodic contours, following melodic movement with their hands, or when asked to recognize and imitate sounds, students are developing phonological skills, skills concerned with how sounds are organized and used in languages. Fostering good aural discrimination will pave the way for an easier acquisition of foreign languages, improving pronunciation and listening skills. In tonal languages this is even more evident. Mastering the different *shēng* or tones in Mandarin-Chinese is all about melodic contours.

Bells used for aural discrimination

Logical-Mathematical Intelligence

Working with patterns and sequences successfully is just one of the many aspects of logical-mathematical intelligence that finds its place in music instruction. Willems' teaching approach, especially towards its third stage of the scheme, focuses on the many patterns and cycles that one can find in music.

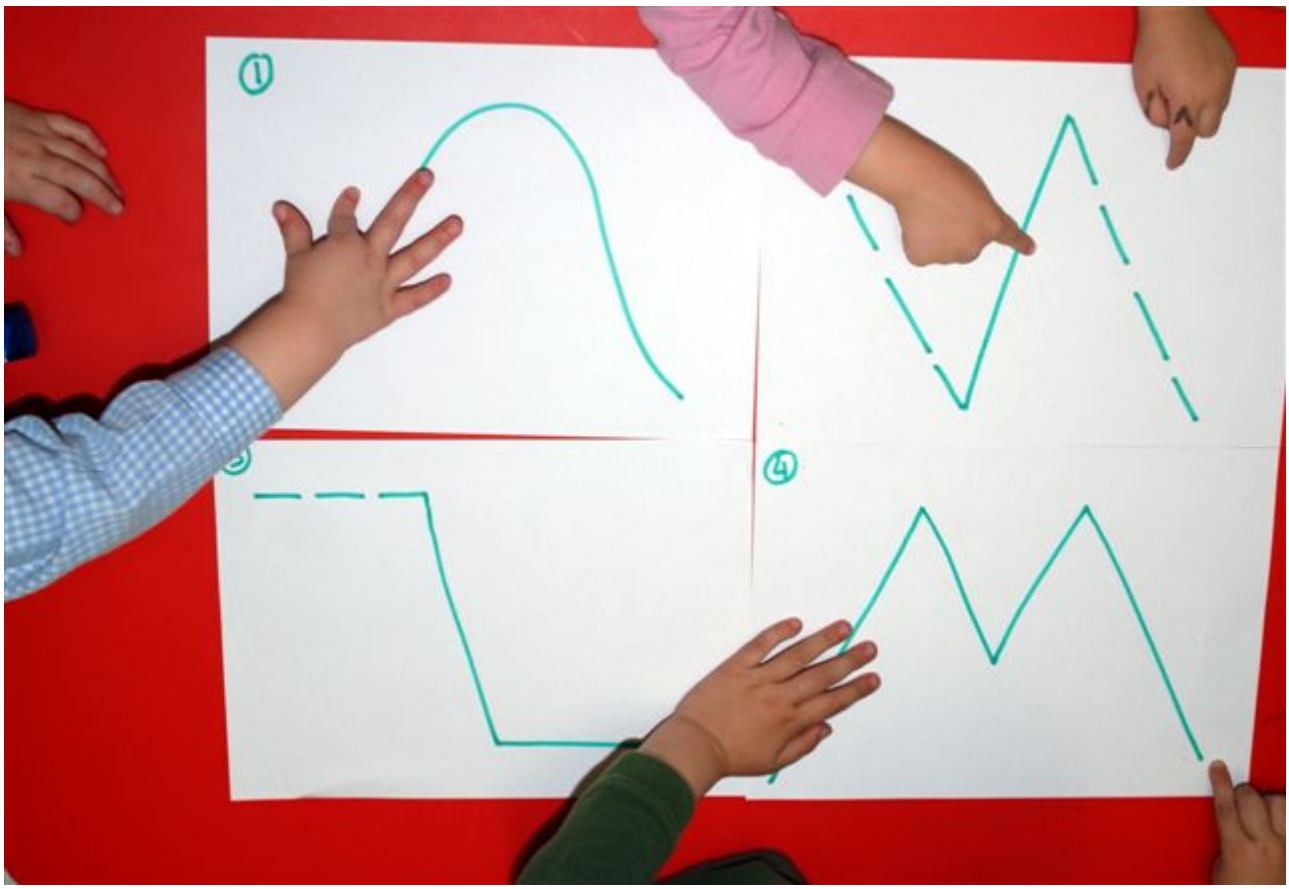
Scales are just one example. Children will learn to sing a host of scale "cycles", from Do to Do, Re to Re, Mi to Mi, and so forth, in every key, singing all sounds to the same syllable, such as "no", in order to focus on the cycle of pitches. They will also recite the "cycle of names" on one same pitch, focusing on the order and pattern of the words we use to label sounds. A short musical idea can be sung and repeated, starting from the next note of the scale in ascending order each time, until we reach the original motif. These "ordering" exercises not only help understand the order and hierarchy that tonality comprises, but are likely to develop the "logical mind".

The scale cycle drawn by a student

Spatial Intelligence

Enrique Granados, one of the greatest Spanish composers of the nineteenth century, described music as architecture in movement. Let us dwell on this beautiful image. Why not turn on some music? Instrumental music preferably, so that words and their meanings don't take up our attention. With our eyes closed, let us try to visualize all that we hear.

Our doctoral research showed us the strong links between spatial intelligence and music intelligence. One important link is graphical representation of music, a significant step in the second stage of Willems' scheme. Five-year olds will graphically represent musical features such as melodic movement, sound duration or variation in intensity. The simple line graphs that are drawn are indeed "visual maps" to music, maps that will be increasingly refined until children become proficient sheet music navigators.



Students reading melodic movement in graphics

Bodily-kinesthetic Intelligence

Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence transpires in music when we pay attention to the accuracy and virtuosity of instrumental touch. Anyone that has seen a good musician perform will have observed the long and complex sequence of movements that take place at great speed.

We also become aware of this when observing how the plasticity and flexibility of movements can help convey musical content, such as the mood of a musical work. Have you ever watched an orchestral conductor on television while muting the volume of your set? Could you actually imagine the music taking place just by observing his gestures? You could most probably feel the character and tempo without listening to a single note.

Great attention is paid to bodily-kinesthetic aspects, especially in the development of rhythmic skills and the introductory work to instrumental performance. Activities involving corporal movement are featured in every lesson.

Corporal movement with music in class

Corporal movement with music in class

Personal intelligences

Given the emotional nature of music, personal intelligences are at its core. Unfortunately, this is sometimes ignored in music education; we can still find music lessons around the globe where the main emphasis is put on technique and where students are made to sing or perform on instruments

without fostering expressivity. The umbilical cord between the child's emotional core and her expression through music can't be taken for granted.

In Willems' approach to music education children are encouraged to take part actively in the lessons. Children are frequently asked to express themselves musically through melodic and rhythmic improvisation. Personal intelligences also play a significant role when students are asked to move to the music chosen because of its emotional content.

Conclusion

After opening a small window to the "transfer effects" of musical intelligence to all other Multiple Intelligences, through the lens of a specific approach to music education, we keep on asking ourselves: shouldn't music education be taken more seriously by school administrators and political authorities worldwide?

When granting scholarships, the majority of the most prestigious Anglo-American schools and colleges take musical background into account. . Why is this so, even when the institution's aim is not to help students pursue a career in music? Could it be that principals and deans are aware that students with a significant background in music are often good listeners, empathic, with considerable analytical and synthetic skills, with a predisposition to learn foreign languages more easily, with good spatial organization skills, great control over their bodies, a great capacity for self-motivation, discipline and a sense of responsibility? Who wouldn't want to have this kind of students!?

Even if it just for practical reasons, given the positive "side-effects", music education should have a much greater importance than what it has today. Having said this, let us put aside the benefits of music education and training, the effects on academic performance or the prospect of a coveted scholarship. The beauty, the grandeur and the value of music by itself can't be stressed enough. We couldn't agree more with Gardner's words when he states in this same blog that "if the arts help with math or SAT scores, that's just a bonus".

Should we start encouraging teachers to use mathematics "instrumentally", to help improve musical intelligences?

Tagged: music (/blog/tag/music), education (/blog/tag/education), part three (/blog/tag/part+three)

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