

BOOK REVIEW

The Psychology of Teaching and Learning Music by Edward R. McClellan, Taylor and Francis, 2023. Pbk, 182pp, £35.99. ISBN: 9781003038474
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The Psychology of Teaching and Learning Music provides a comprehensive overview of how people learn and teach music in contemporary education settings, linking existing theories and research findings with considerations about their application in the music classroom. The text therefore makes a modern contribution to the Western music education landscape that is suitable for both teachers and learners of music, while also developing concepts that may be applicable to other disciplines, especially in the distribution and development of knowledge. The book comprises 12 chapters divided into four parts: Introduction (Chapters 1–2), Theories of Learning and Teaching Music (Part 1, Chapters 3–7), Theory Applied to Practice (Part 2, Chapters 8–10) and Applications to the Music Classroom (Part 3, Chapters 11–12). Part 1, which contains the largest number of chapters, provides a necessary context for the applications that follow in Parts 2 and 3. McClellan provides a set of learning objectives and activities in each chapter across the whole text to provoke thought and reinforce information, encouraging the reader to further explore music pedagogy within their own circumstances and reinforcing the practical emphasis of the book. Throughout, the discussion draws primarily upon the American music education system, reflecting McClellan's native background; however, ideas could be applicable to other settings.

At the outset of the book, McClellan discusses the concepts of teaching and learning. Teaching is defined as 'engagement with learners to enable their understanding and application of knowledge, concepts, and processes . . . [including] design, content selection, delivery, assessment, evaluation and reflection' (p. 3). Learning is defined as 'the activity or process of acquiring new understanding, knowledge, skills, values, or attitudes by studying, practicing, being taught, or experiencing something' (p. 3). Music education is then defined as 'a field of study that focuses on the teaching and application of music in the classroom' (p.5). There are of course other applications of music teaching beyond the classroom that may arise within or outside school settings, including one-to-one and small-group instrumental teaching as well as ensemble coaching, so this book is bound tightly by its focus on schooling in music classrooms in Western education systems.

Two issues merit particular attention for their relevance in contemporary education: pupil-centred learning (Chapter 1: The Study of Teaching and Learning) and culturally responsive teaching (Chapter 9: Sociocultural Characteristics of Learning in the Music Classroom). In relation to pupil-centred learning, McClellan emphasises that teaching is about creating environments where students can acquire knowledge themselves. Even though this approach is not new (e.g. Mackworth-Young, 1990), he argues that it is necessary for educators to continue to develop ways to facilitate pupil-centred learning, particularly where the motivation and engagement of young musicians are concerned. This point is echoed in other recent studies (e.g. Park, 2022) and is relevant across different music education systems. In fact, a pupil-centred pathway features in the new National Plan for Music Education in the UK, where 'identification and support for individual talented young musicians should be tailored to the young person's need' (HM Government, 2022).

McClellan acknowledges both anecdotal and empirical evidence regarding pupil-centred learning, and this serves as a lens through which to discuss related issues, such as the relationship between the individual and the environment as well as behavioural learning theory, where learning is defined as ‘the process leading to relatively permanent behavioural change or potential change to behaviour’ (p.25). Key approaches are identified, including classical and operant conditioning, types and schedules of reinforcement, cognitivism and other conceptualisations of learning as a process. By way of expansion, social learning theory is introduced to emphasise the various internal processes assumed by learners, which may be supported by music teachers through direct instruction or observation. McClellan also addresses self-determination theory as a theory of motivation, which is already well represented in a large body of research (e.g., Evans, 2015; Krause et al., 2019). Other forms of motivation, including the hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943), are discussed in relation to the formation of self-concept (see Chapter 2: Becoming a Reflective Teacher).

A discussion of culturally responsive teaching is crucial for contemporary music educators, for schools are powerful contexts of socialisation because of the many subcultures that may exist within them. McClellan claims that ‘what happens in the music classroom is fundamental to teaching for social justice’ (p.116). He argues that traditional music education, which tends to focus on European classical music composers, needs to evolve to allow for a more multicultural perspective than previously provided, not least because music serves as an ideal vessel with which to celebrate diversity. Importantly, McClellan acknowledges and appreciates the value of studying different musical cultures and signposts resources with teaching methods that are responsive to different culturally specific knowledge bases.

Overall, *The Psychology of Teaching and Learning Music* provides an engaging overview of psychological theories related to music education with a practical emphasis on those working in school classrooms. The discussion recognises the ever-changing music education landscape and is both accessible and relevant to a variety of readers. The book is particularly well suited to the next generation of music educators who wish to explore contemporary issues in teaching, such as pupil-centred learning and culturally responsive teaching, and should be applauded for its emphasis on cultivating music education with an open mind through collaborative and reflective approaches.

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