

**Westminster Choir College of Rider University  
Department of Music Education**



# **ME 723: Psychology for Music Teachers**

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# Course Overview

The study of psychology and particularly the mastery of learning theory is paramount for music teachers.

Understanding how children learn, and specifically how children learn music is important to successful music teaching. If the goal of music instruction is to empower musicianship, then the theories which comprise the domain of educational psychology are key components of every music teacher's knowledge base.

The inductive strategies that comprise the constructivist model and experiential learning will be emphasized in the teaching of this course.

# What to expect

Since this is a course within a professional sequence of graduate level music education courses, I expect that you will commit to the course expectations and master the course content with a professional attitude. I expect prompt and regular attendance at all classes and I will lower grades when you are absent, late or leave early. I expect that you will be prepared for class and that the work you submit will be your very best effort. I expect that work will be submitted on time. I expect that you will not bring cell phones, pagers, beepers or beeping watches to class and that you will not make or receive cell phone calls during class. I expect that if you bring a laptop to class, that you will not be doing other work. In the event you wish to record the class, you must obtain permission from the instructor and all the members of the class.

You may expect that I will also approach the course with the commitment of a professional. In that regard, you may expect that each class will be thoughtfully prepared; that the materials selected for your purchase will be chosen with care and are important to your success in this course and beyond; and that your individual and collective learning needs will be addressed as appropriate. You may expect that each class will begin and will end on time. You may also expect that the course content will be thoroughly covered and that your work in class and outside of class, i.e., assignments, will be assessed fairly.

# Learning Goals

1. To know and understand how children learn music.
2. To know, understand and be able to apply learning theory to music teaching and learning.
3. To know, understand and be able to apply the principles of experiential learning, i.e., learning styles to the development of music lessons that are student-centered.
4. To know, understand and be able to apply the tenets of Critical Pedagogy for Music Education to music teaching and learning.
5. To know, understand and be able to apply the principles of constructivist teaching to music lessons and presentations.

# What to buy

Wink, Joan & LeAnn G. Putney. *A Vision of Vygotsky*.  
Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2002.

McPherson, Gary E. *The Child as Musician*.  
New York: Oxford, 2006.

You will need a Blackboard account for this course.

# What else you may wish to have

A General Psychology Text.

A laptop for this class is not required, but is recommended.

# E Mail Accounts

Consistent with University policy, I will send e-mail only to your Rider account. Similarly, I will respond to e-mail sent only to my Rider e-mail account. It is recommended that students have an IM account and an account on SKYPE.

# Grades

In Class Presentation I	40 points
In Class Presentation II	40 points
In Class participation, attendance and preparation	20 points

# Schedule of Classes

*(Subject to Change)*

**January 27**                      **Class One:**                      ***On the Nature of Learning and Teaching Music:  
Philosophy, Psychology and Praxis***

Psychology and Praxis  
The Philosophy, Psychology, Praxis triangle  
A View of Critical Pedagogy  
The Importance of the Brain  
Experiential Learning  
Constructivist Learning

**February 3**                      **Class Two:**                      ***Learning Styles Day 1***

Who teaches whom?  
What can research tell us about music learning?  
What are learning styles? What is the 4MAT System?

**February 10**                      **Class Three:**                      ***Learning Styles Day 2***

The Brain  
What are the implications for learning and teaching styles in the classroom?  
What are the implications for learning and teaching styles in the applied studio?

**February 17**                      **Class Four:**                      ***Teaching Very Young Children***

LuAnn Longenecker will be our guest to discuss teaching music to infants, toddlers and pre-school children

**February 24**                      **Class Four:**                      ***Vygotsky***

Please read the entire Wink and Putney text prior to this class  
What are the implications for Vygotsky in the classroom?  
What are the implications for Vygotsky in the applied studio?

**March 3**                              **Class Five:**                      ***Critical Pedagogy for Music Education***

Constructivism as teaching model in classroom instruction and the applied studio

**March 10**                              **Class Six:**                      ***Howard Gardner and Musical Intelligence***

Musical Understanding and the implications of Gardner's work in the music classroom and the applied studio.

The members of the class will devote the remaining classes to significant presentations of the textbook content. Students will have 60 – 90 minutes for each of two presentations. Presentations must reflect an understanding of:

1. Critical Pedagogy for Music Education
2. Learning Styles
3. Constructivist strategies
4. The important concepts of the topic from the perspective of music psychology

Presentations must model exemplary teaching and must include some form of musical experience—making music, listening to music, creating music and must engage the musical imagination, intellect and creativity of each member of the class. Students may not rely on lecture and direct instruction as the sole means of transmitting knowledge. Students are encouraged to resist “banking.” Each presentation must be centered on a focusing question(s) and must include a technology component. The presenter must show a practical application to the theory. Each presenter must provide a handout including a comprehensive bibliography in the

correct format. **TEACHING COUNTS!**

Classes will meet for presentations on

*March 24*

*March 31*

*April 7*

*April 14*

*April 21*

*April 28*

# References

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