ACTIVE LEARNING THROUGH COMPOSITION FOR THE MUSIC MAJOR

By

Elizabeth J. Malewska

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Major Subject: Music

West Texas A&M University

Canyon, Texas

August 11, 2017

ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on how active learning impacts music students, specifically through music composition. Various forms of active learning, which involve composition, are defined and the benefits for the student are described. Active learning increases the student's ability to retain and utilize information while creating a synthesis of learning between all subjects the music major studies: theory, history and performance.

The paper will review the literature supporting the use of active learning through composition for the music major. This research gives insight into the numerous ways in which composition works as an active learning tool. Case studies in the second chapter show how active learning is currently used in different universities across the United States showing how instructors incorporate active learning through composition in their history, theory and performance courses.

Approved:

[Chairman, Thesis Committee]   [Date]

[Member, Thesis Committee]   [Date]

             [Head, Major Department]   [Date]

             [Dean, Graduate School]   [Date]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I

SCHOLARLY DEFENSE OF ACTIVE LEARNING

Music composition in the university classroom encourages active learning. Composition

is a beneficial activity for music theory courses and can serve as a constructive learning tool for

music history courses, private lessons, and ensemble participation. Active learning promotes

synthesis in learning, and applies music analysis and theory to activities outside of the classroom

such as musical performance and composition.

Benjamin Bloom explored active learning in his educational theory, which outlined the

stages of learning as shown in the shape of a pyramid in Figure 1.[1] This shape aptly presents the

structure of his learning theory in which each level builds on the one below it.

Figure 1. Bloom's Taxonomy, 1956.[2]

---
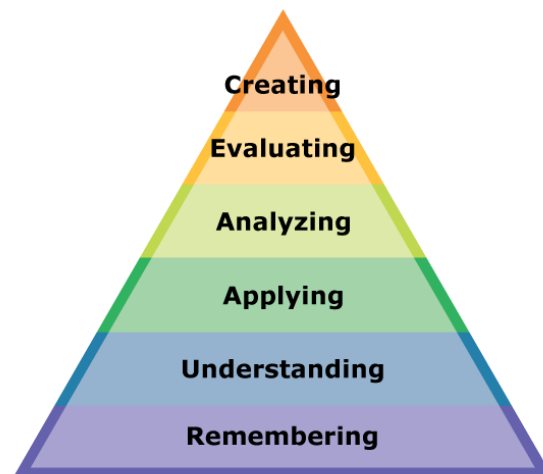
[1] Benjamin Bloom, ed., *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (New York, NY: Longman Inc., 1984), 201–207.
[2] Ibid., 201.

Music composition incorporates each of these levels of learning and can be as complex or as simple as necessary for the level of student. For example, the first level involves remembering, the most basic level of learning where students are asked to simply memorize and recall pieces of information such as musical concepts, names in music history, or chord names in music theory. At the next level, "understanding" students explain the meaning and the why of remembered information such as the function of the chords they learned to name in music theory, or some specific details about the names in music history. "Application", requires students to implement the information, as in using the memorized chords in an exercise in music theory. "Analysis" requires students to compare and contrast information. Students can review two pieces using theoretical analysis to discuss differing forms or styles, or contrast the lives and works of composers throughout music history. "Evaluate" students critique information and find value in it, specifically to understand its purpose and importance, an activity that can be applied in any music course because all of the information is applied across classes that the music major is taking. Finally, students can "create" something new based on the information they have learned.[3] Music composition activates this last level of learning, which utilizes the previous steps the students have gone through in order to create something new.

Bloom's taxonomy can guide a teacher in creating educational objectives for the class or lesson.[4] For example, if the instructor has a goal for the class to be able to compose a two-minute work for a chamber ensemble at the end of the semester, their curriculum needs to provide the students with the knowledge to do so. Following the theory of Benjamin Bloom, the learning objectives to create a short piece for a chamber ensemble could read as follows: By the end of this class, students will be able to:

---

[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid., 25.

1. Recognize a chamber work, including the typical ensemble size
2. Demonstrate a knowledge of common instrument groupings
3. Participate in a student-organized chamber ensemble, perform for class
4. Complete an analysis on chamber works from two different eras
5. Arrange a chamber piece from the era of your choice, explain the style and why you chose it
6. Compose a two minute long work for a chamber ensemble

Bloom's taxonomy aids in creating an outline for the class, and is something that can be found on many instructors syllabi, not only in music courses. This learning theory encourages the instructor to create specific goals for the students to complete that guide them towards the next goal.

Constructivist learning philosophies focus on student-centered learning, relying on the basis that students will learn through collaborations with their peers. This group style of learning allows the students to acquire new knowledge based off of what they already know, and gain insight from their peers. This idea moves away from teacher-centered instruction to teacher-initiated student discussion.[5]Constructivist theory creates a more open dialogue between the students and instructor, allowing the teacher to better understand what aspects of the material students already know and what they are struggling with. This is similar to Bloom's taxonomy because his belief was that each new level of understanding was reliant on the basis of the previous one.

In a classroom focused on student discussion, the role of the instructor shifts from leader to participant. The curriculum centers/concentrates on experiences that guide students to new knowledge. Classroom experiences inspire active learning: actively participating in class instead of passively absorbing information. To facilitate this, Sheila Scott suggests that we "move away from purely teacher-centered instruction in which students are regarded as passive receptors of knowledge and toward student-centered approaches in which learners explore ideas related to

---

[5] Sheila Scott, "Contemplating a Constructivist Stance for Active Learning within Music Education," *Arts Education Policy Review* 112 (2011): 191.

their own insights. […] Thus, individuals are provided opportunities to apply the content knowledge obtained through teacher-directed instruction to music-making endeavors, thereby integrating newly acquired understanding with what they already know."[6]

Constructivist education theory and Bloom's taxonomy rely on similar values. While both theories value active learning, constructivism focuses on building knowledge rather than acquiring it. Constructivists believe that knowledge is achieved based on an individual's prior knowledge, based on the social development theory of Lev Vygotsky who considered interaction vital to learning.[7] Constructivist learning occurs in a spiral motion: the students' learning expands around their previous knowledge. New concepts are introduced based on prior knowledge and constantly relate back to that foundation. Similarly, Bloom's levels of learning are hierarchical: each stage builds on the one below. The base of Bloom's pyramid, as shown above in Figure 1, involves the most basic cognitive functions that provide a foundation for increasingly complex levels of engagement with the material.

One main difference between these two theories, however, is how the assignments are created. In Bloom's theory, instructors use the pyramid along with their learning objectives to create assignments and lectures. In constructivist theory, teachers form their assignments and assessments with student input. Constructivism will typically not follow specific learning objectives. They may have a guideline of what they student needs to learn, but not necessarily a single way of getting there.

Constructivist theory instructors design assignments based on the students' previous knowledge. The flexibility of creating assignments allow the teacher to move at the pace based on the specific needs of the student. For example, a group of students in a music theory course

---

[6]Ibid.

[7] Yuriy v. Karpov and John D. Bransford, "L.S. Vygotsky and the doctrine of empirical and theoretical learning," *Educational Psychologist* 30, no. 2 (Spring 1995): 63.

would discuss a concept regarding analysis. They are unsure on how a pre-dominant chord functions while they are completing a composition assignment. The instructor will obviously be able to answer their question, however they focus on helping the students back track and utilize the information they already know. The teacher asks each student to reflect on and examine his or her current knowledge. When one of the students comes up with the correct information, the instructor indicates that this might be a useful point for them to consider. The students would then, ideally, be able to find the answer to their question on their own. Afterward, the students and teacher talk about what they have learned, how they were able to find the answer on their own, and how that helped their individual learning. Instructors in constructivist learning contexts also encourage students to continuously assess how the assignments or activities are helping them to gain an understanding of the material. Continuous reflection on the material assists in addressing the parts of the material that are more difficult. This continuous evaluation teaches students to learn from their experiences.

Instructors can facilitate active learning in music by applying information in new ways through composition in instruction. Sheila Scott defends active learning for the music major from a constructivist-learning point of view because it engages the students with their peers, and they learn by communication with one another. Constructivist theory supports active learning because of the group or self-driven attitude that it follows. Scott supports the theory that students who learn in a constructivist atmosphere will likely use the same skills throughout their courses.[8] Because constructivist theory believes that knowledge is based on personal experiences, students will have learned how to self-asses and be aware of their own understanding. This type of thinking will encourage students to learn in their every-day lives, becoming self-propelled learners

---

[8] Ibid., 194. [IYou can't use ibid here: use an abbreviated citations of the Scott article.]

Student-centered learning and constructivism share many values in regards to active learning and the benefits for students. Student-centered learning is similar to constructivism in the sense that students learn more by experience than listening or reading.[9] Julie K Brown defines student-centered instruction in the *Music Educators Journal* as, "when the planning, teaching and assessment revolve around the needs and abilities of the students. The teacher *shares* control of the classroom, and students are allowed to explore, experiment, and discover on their own. Brown explains the values observed by this technique. She notes that an important part of this process is to relate the material to student's educational needs and interests, because this makes learning most meaningful.[10]

The opportunity to create inspires a deeper knowledge of the material and provides the freedom to explore the material on an individual basis. Students are considered "co-creators" of their course, contributing to the learning process and giving suggestions on how something can be taught. Brown explains, "student-centered teachers encourage them to come up with new ways of doing things…some of the best teaching strategies comes from students, because the students are the ones that are being taught."[11] As student creators, they will come to understand the value of the project or lesson, similar to what students gain when composing. An open dialogue in the classroom also encourages students to work together and invites them to ask questions and help teach one another.

An approach that values active learning and the interest of the student is one based on student's curiosity. At Chulalongkorn University in Thailand, ethnomusicology instructor

---

[9] Julie K. Brown, "Student-Centered Instruction: Involving Students in Their Own Education," *Music Educators Journal* 94, no. 5 (May 2008): 30.
[10] Ibid., 31.
[11] Ibid.

Bussakorn Binson developed an active learning program for music students based on educational exercises in what she calls, Curiosity Based learning or CBL.[12]

Curiosity acts as a driving force for students in every step of their educational process. Binson describes curiosity as the motivational fuel for learning, encouraging student-centered learning even in our competitive and complex society. She explains that, "when students have curiosity, they learn more and more about their world and as a result, are closer connected to it. They have a deeper understanding of the interactions and the relationship between various elements."[13] The concept of gaining understanding through interaction is closely related to the values that constructivist educators follow. Characteristics that define curiosity based learning include students curiosity in the topic based on their own personal interests, developing research methods through peer and teacher input, and students working alongside educators to acquire knowledge from a variety of sources. Music composition can be related to this theory because when a student practices composition, they have to relate back to the practice and res …..? (Either complete this sentence, delete it, or move it to the section where you explicitly describe composition in the classroom)

To support her theory, Binson documented her six-step process of curiosity-based learning. To begin, she sought to motivate students who were accustomed to the typical lecture-based mode of teaching in which students were required to simply listen and memorize. She then created learning objectives that focused on experience to increase curiosity in her students. Binson explains her curiosity-based learning objectives as follows:

> (1) Read well and listen well – information input: comprehension and understanding of information.

---

[12] Bussakorn Binson, "Curiosity-based learning (CBL) program," *US-China Education Review* 6, no. 12 (December 2009): 13.

[13] Ibid., 14.

This objective includes comprehension and understanding of information from all available sources, not just journals, books and the internet, but leaders in the field, industry or market place.

(2) Think well – informational processing: analysis, problem definition and multiple solution generation.

This is an important goal for increasing understanding by using analysis along with additional modes such as visual diagramming or brain storming techniques, testing problem definitions and multiple solution or hypothesis generation.

(3) Communicate well – informational output: This end-process goal consists of verbal self-expression, multiple explanatory methods and skills as well as audience awareness, appropriate feedback techniques and rapport building.[14]

Binson's use of learning objectives is somewhat traditional. Like Bloom's taxonomy pyramid she incorporates various levels of learning and understanding. However, she uses this method in a way that facilitates her system of CBL. Based on her learning objectives, Binson's system is most similar to student-centered learning found in constructivist theories, whichput the instructor in a different role as a facilitator. Binson connects her learning objectives directly to the assignments and activities she does in class, all of which are designed to establish a personal interest to the student.

Binson incorporates various learning elements in her own approach, but she has many that are original such as, "activities designed to make the students aware of their original self-limiting baseline of curiosity, activities designed to increase the student's self-awareness of the importance of curiosity and activities designed to increase the student's level of curiosity."[15] Binson has organized her method into six steps:

(a) Observe and examine the object, then compose a written description;

(b) Investigate others responses, then review the differences and similarities;

(c) Acquire more knowledge of the object from additional sources;

(d) Categorize and visualize: create a diagram of knowledge data;

---

[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid., 17.

(e) Communicate verbal and visual presentation with peer review;

(f) Review and discussion: instructor discloses the program's true intent[16]

CBL can be implemented in all music subjects because the student traverses the same steps in their study of each subject. Exercises for each stage as well as an activity and a goal accompany each of Binson's six steps. For example, the activity for the first step, "observe and examine", is to complete a written description for the object, then exchange their answer with another student. Her goal here is to make students aware of their own level of curiosity. By asking them to describe the object, which could be a physical item, a theory term, or acomposition technique, in written form, the students view the object from a different perspective, pushing them to move beyond their first impressions and making them aware of the details they may have overlooked. This creates an active space where students are using the activity to become aware of their own level of curiosity, which encourages them to participate and seek more information.

Her six steps mirror the levels of Bloom taxonomy. As described above, Bloom's foundational step, "remembering" can be compared to Binson's first step, "observing". These two learning objectives both value the students ability to look at something for the first time, observe it and notice important details about it. The second step relates to understanding the subject and describing the details specific to it. Her third point is to acquire more knowledge from other sources, and improves the student's ability to interpret the information. Outside sources give the student a broader knowledge, allowing them to use the material more resourcefully. Categorizing the information is beneficial for the student to be able to compare and contrast and distinguishing its individual qualities. Presentations with visual aids and peer review is beneficial for the student because they will have to know the topic thoroughly before

---

[16] Ibid., 18.

being able to verbally explain it to their peers. At this stage, students will also be able to explain the value of information if their peers have questions or concerns. Binson's final stage differs the most from that of Bloom's learning theory in which students create something new. The final stage, according to Binson, involves the instructor revealing the intent of the assignment. Her belief is that the student will find the information and value on their own, providing guidelines to maintain their curiosity Composition could easily be used with this method because as students become exposed to various types of music, they learn to connect the subjects of their classes to topics that interest them personally and become curious about the background, function, and creation of the music.. Although her own experiments were done with ethnomusicology students in a master's program, Binson's method could be used for any subject.

A similar approach to active learning comes from an article entitled, "Inverting Bloom's Taxonomy: The Role of Affective Responses in Teaching and Learning" that addresses the research which proves that learning does not happen without emotion.[17] Curiosity is a type of emotion that Binson explains is what drives students to learn. In this sense, curiosity induces learning, and without that emotion would arguably eliminate the drive to learn. The author, Robert Lagueux, disagrees with the notion that learning always happens in an orderly, step wise motion, as Benjamin Bloom suggested. Lagueux believes affectivity, or an emotional response towards music dictates how the student learns. Although Binson's theory happened in a stepwise motion, she created the steps to encourage curiosity in her students, and ended with an evaluation of the subject, or a discussion to receive student feedback.

Lagueux has inverted Blom's taxonomy to respond to the student's affectivity to the material. In the classrooms that have adapted Bloom's taxonomy, the common goal is evaluation,

---

[17] Robert c. Lagueux, "Inverting Bloom's Taxnomy: The Role of Affective Responses in Teaching and Learning," *Journal of Music History Pedagogy* 3, no. 2 (2013): 120.

or the final assessment that proves students' knowledge. Lagueux's research has found that the suggestions made to instructors from class reviews and feedback on how to improve their classroom is more guided towards creating a positive experience for the student, encouraging their excitement towards the subject, than changing how the instructor conveys the material.

Figure 2. Bloom's Taxonomy, Cognitive and Affective.[18]

1a) Bloom's cognitive taxonomy.   1b) Bloom's affective taxonomy.
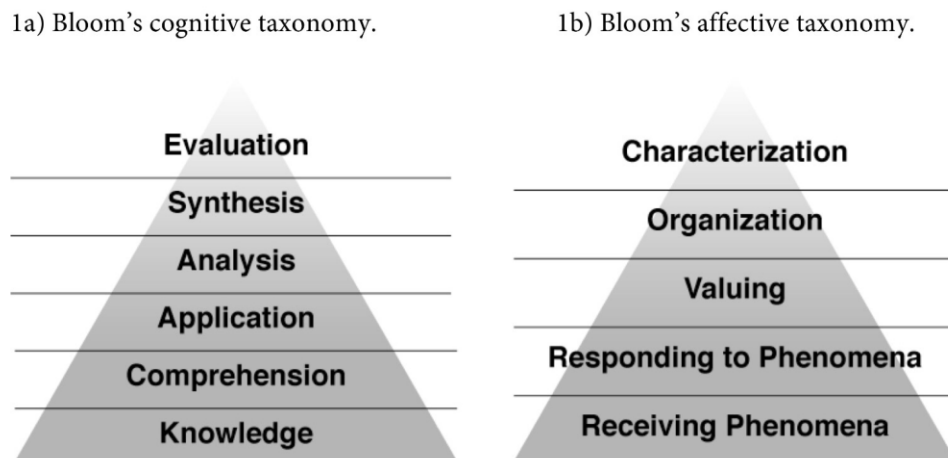
Lagueux uses these two versions of Bloom's taxonomy in order to understand demonstrate the difference between cognitive and affective learning. Lagueux suggests inverting Bloom's system where "evaluation" becomes the base level and therefore changes the taxonomy from a cognitive standpoint to one that values personal engagement, similar to what Binson believes in her approach with CBL. According to Lagueux , "Building mechanisms for personal engagement into course structures helps to re-conceive the function and practice of the Evaluation level and thereby rescue it from its exile in the cognitive realm. After all, we hear and react—receive and respond—to music viscerally."[19] In his example of the inverted pyramid, more value is put on engaging the students and appealing to their emotional reactions to music which in turn will
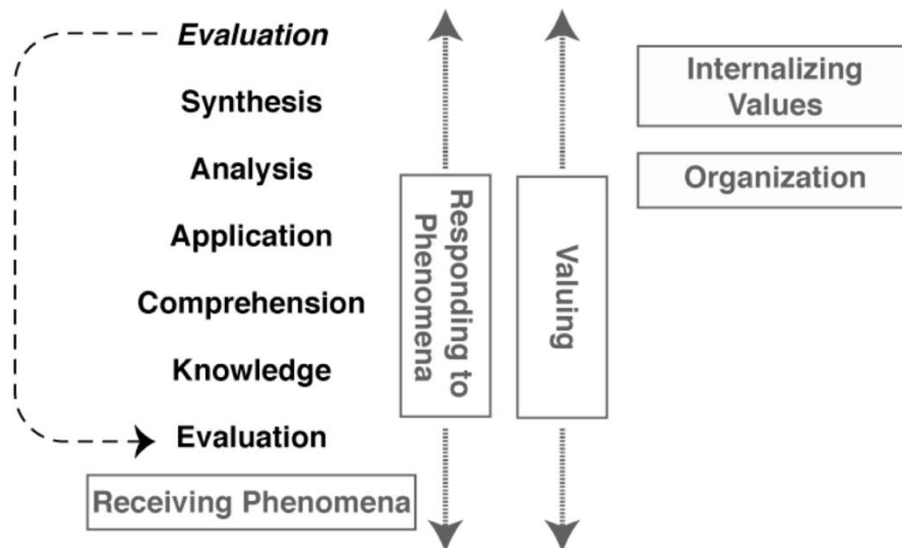
---

[18] Ibid., 123.
[19] Ibid., 127.

change the instructor's approach of communicating with their students. They may take a different approach to the material in order to create a spark. See Lagueux's figure outlining his inversion of Bloom's taxonomy below in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Lagueux's Inversion.[20]

This approach to affective learning connects the student to the material not only on a personal level but also allows the instructor to value their affective or emotional response to the music. According to Lagueux, "If the affective responses of students pave the way for each one individually to be engaged with the same pieces of music, each student can then be called upon to use the same set of intellectual tools and information to articulate his or her own personal affective evaluation of the works."[21] This idea gives the instructor a way to engage the students in the music while also teaching them the language and vocabulary necessary to explain their evaluations. This also creates an active learning space, Lagueux explains, "Such an approach

---

[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid., 128.

validates the fact that all but the most disengaged listeners have some affective reaction to music; it pushes students beyond the affective tendency merely to 'receive and respond' and instead joins it with a cognitive engagement with the material."[22] Lagueux's learning model moves away from the typical structure put in place by Benjamin Bloom while still valuing his stages of learning.

---

[22] Ibid.

CHAPTER II

COMPOSITION IN THE CLASSROOM

Using composition in the classroom encourages a more integrated learning experience for students by serving as a learning tool in performance, history, and theory courses. This will help them understand elements of music such as harmony, texture, melody and rhythm. All concepts from each course are applied in the same activity. This allows students to practice what they have learned and to understand the concepts from the viewpoint of a composer. Composition in the classroom calls on the theoretical ideas described in the previous chapter, and puts them in to practical use. For example, writing a short piece imitating on a specific style of a period or genre the student is studying in their music history course, or arranging a piece the student has been working on in their lessons will engage them in the material and give them a better understanding of the structure and style of the music. Composition connects all of the music courses together by bringing students back to the same foundation of composition as instruction.

Students can benefit from music composition in their private lessons. They will better understand the technical aspects of their instrument such as timbre and range after engaging in activities such as arranging or composing an original piece. Activities such as this give the student a better understanding of style because of the awareness composition requires. For example, an assignment to arrange a piece for one's instrument in a specific style to encourages a more intimate knowledge of the elements of that style. This could be expanded to arranging a piece for a small ensemble, duet, or trio. As the individual gains confidence, they can arrange the

piece to add more instruments or even compose an original work. Other skills gained from this exercise are dexterity of the instrument and instrument family, range, form, style and creativity.

Music history is commonly lecture based; however these courses could very well incorporate skills learned in theory and performance courses. When studying music history, students are frequently required to listen to and analyze works. Active learning through music composition enhances these activities. By incorporating music composition into music history courses, students gain a deeper understanding of the material. An instructor can assign a composition or arrangement based on the era they are studying and ask the student to explain the stylistic tendencies and how they specifically relate to music history. Students achieve a deeper connection to the music because they will be learning the historical aspects such as the style popular of the time, world events (war, politics, etc.) and events going on in the composer's life can inspire the work. The background of the music will help the student compose because they will understand the affective connection to it, and be able to put themselves in the composers shoes. By understanding style, form and texture of the music from a composer perspective, the student gains a rounded view of the subject, instead of a basic list of facts.

Composition in music theory courses teaches students how theoretical concepts such as cadences and chord progressions are used in music. Studying music theory teaches concepts that are identifiable in major works and how to use those concepts in their own writing. Students in music theory courses are commonly assigned exercises that involve composition to implement theory concepts. Active learning takes this to the next level. Composition can be integrated in a theory setting in a myriad of ways. Beyond individual composition exercises, active learning in theory classes encourages creativity and group exercises.

Teachers in theory courses many times assign composition projects to students as part of a final or midterm grade. This is significant because it takes the concepts students learned in a lecture setting, and transform them into a piece of music. Composition in music theory can be expanded by asking students to compose on a regular basis. For example, students who learn how to compose a chord progression with embellishments will easily be able to recognize the same or similar progression when analyzing a piece of music. Group activities ensure that students can effectively communicate theory concepts. For example, students could be assigned to work together to create a four part texture.

Patricia Riley writes on her own experiences incorporating composition into all parts of her curriculum at the University of Vermont and describes of the benefits of composition. Riley has worked with students from elementary through high school levels and now incorporates her experiences into her courses at the University of Vermont. She writes, "During my twenty years in of public school music…I have seen and heard firsthand the powerful impact that composing has on students' musical learning, and on their lives…I infuse music composition assignments in all teaching methods and practicum courses (general music, instrumental music and choral music), as well as in student teaching."[23] Riley recommends that teachers incorporate composition into their courses, even if the school does not require it. She believes that mentoring younger or less experienced students in composition can be an excellent way to learn. By providing and receiving feedback, students will understand music in a new light, employing the values of student-centered learning

Active learning more generally, moves away from the typical lecture style course. Composition gives the music student an active way to learn, and is something they can do on

---

[23] Patricia Riley, "Collegiate Connections; Facilitating Student Music Composition," *Music Educators Journal* 100, no. 3 (March 2014): 22–23.

their own. However, active learning can also be done on a larger scale in group projects and through activities with other students. Whitney Berry argues in an article for *College Teaching* titled "Surviving Lecture," for active learning in music theory courses. Berry explains that music theory is most commonly taught in a lecture format, because of its efficiency to be able to cover a great quantity of material in a relatively short period of time.[24] However, "the reality is that the fundamentals of music theory are best retained if they are learned in small increments through repeated drill practice."[25] Music students rely on this information for the remainder of their academic and professional careers as musicians, teachers, composers, etc. In order to improve student's success in music theory courses, Berry recommends an active approach. Her ideas focus on composition as a group activity, as well as a way of active learning in the classroom.

Active learning is versatile and can be incorporated in various ways, such as games, and group activities. Berry suggests an idea for theory courses that would incorporate an active element, a game for students similar to the TV game show, *Survivor*, entitled "Theory Survivor." She adapted this idea from a group of scholars who used the game as a review method in physiology courses, whose results turned out to be more popular and productive than the review methods previously used in the same course. In the TV game show, contestants compete in teams to complete various challenges, both physical and mental, in order to survive on a stranded island. The winners of the challenges are rewarded with items such as food and water in order to survive on the island longer. Each week, the teams meet in what is called a council and choose what members are eliminated based on how they performed, and helped their tribe during the week. The game show ultimately proves one winner, but "Theory Survivor" has the success of everyone in mind, and there are not eliminations.

---

[24] Whitney Berry, "Surviving Lecture: A Pedagogical Alternative," *College Teaching* 56, no. 3 (Summer 2008):149-150.
[25] Ibid., 149.

The premise of the 'game' is that students break into tribes to achieve group and individual rewards.[26] To create the tribes, students are given a test to determine their level of previous knowledge, and then broken into groups of four or six people. The members of each team have varying levels of ability, and the student with the highest score is named the team leader. The game continuous throughout the entire semester, and the students stay in the same groups. Similar to the TV show, students are given challenges based on the lecture material, and are responsible for ensuring that all team members understand the material.

Throughout the semester, the cohesion of the group improves and they learn to work together. "A typical session of Theory Survivor begins with a challenge communication – a mini lecture – on the content to be covered in the class period. The instructor presents a limited amount of material in a concise manner…for example; the instructor may present a mini-lecture on scales at the beginning of class and then post a list of workbook exercises on the same topic to be completed by the tribes during the remainder of the period."[27] The group exercise implements Berry's belief that information is best given in small amounts and drilled to ensure retention. "Each tribe must complete the exercises within the time limits (a stopwatch is used), check their answers against a key, and calculate individual and team scores. As the goal is for each tribe to achieve the highest average score possible, it is to their advantage to work together to ensure the individual success of each member."[28] In group exercises, it is difficult to ensure that all students understand the material or participate. In Theory Survivor, all students are valued equally, and have the support of their team to succeed. The last element of Theory Survivor is individual quizzes to assess student's comprehension. The challenges in the game are exercises provided by the instructor, as stated above, where the tribes earn points as a team, and quizzes are for the

---

[26] Ibid., 150.
[27] Ibid., 151.
[28] Ibid.

instructor to assess each student's individual knowledge, while still giving them points for their

tribe.

> The quiz scores are compared to students' past averages and points are awarded to each team based on the degree to which each student met or exceeded his or her earlier performances…theory survivor also uses individual assessment to determine team rewards, although in a slightly different way. After a challenge, tribes use a key (provided by the instructor) to check their answers. Each member calculates his or her score and expresses it as a percentage. All members' scores are added together and divided by the number of people present, resulting in a total score for the tribe. The higher each individual score, the higher the tribe score; providing motivation for each member to do his or her best. This also serves as adding an element of individual accountability.[29]

Theory Survivor combines the lecture element where the instructor provides the basis for the

learning, while incorporating active learning and interaction.

The most significant result of Theory Survivor is the lasting effects that are seen by the

instructors. The first is the sense of community generated amount the students. They are more

eager to participate in class and seek out peer guidance on the subjects they are struggling with.

In that same sense, students demonstrated a greater responsibility towards their peers to support

them in class. Students also showed a more positive attitude towards the subject, likely a result

their increased confidence with the material from the course. Instructors saw an increased

musical literacy and ability to quickly recall concepts fundamental to the course, and also their

capability to apply that information in new situations.

Theory Survivor incorporates multiple forms of active learning mentioned above. For

example, the game follows the ideals of Bloom's taxonomy in the sense that students are

completing assignments, each one increasing in difficulty and activating different levels of

learning. Each assignment establishes the knowledge necessary for the next one. Theory

Survivor also shows characteristics of constructivist theory, specifically when the students are

tested of their previous knowledge and grouped based on their results. The group and student

---

[29] Ibid.

teaching aspects of the game relate to both student-centered learning and constructivist theory. Berry mentions throughout her article that the members of the tribe all have the success of each individual in mind. Members of the group will help each other to learn material and ensure that they are retaining the information to be used in assignments and game-related challenges later on. This type of learning activity focuses primarily on learning new information, but by participating in an active learning setting, they are also reinforcing their previous knowledge.

. Based on Berry's results, students master the material at a faster rate with better retention. The students' performance facilitates the use of composition, because instructors now have a documented example proving composition works as a learning tool. This teaching activity also showed active learning as a group activity, and the elements working that with peer's addresses, such as accountability. Composition facilitates retention and understanding, because it not only requires students to apply the new information in an activity, but also to their previous knowledge. Active learning through composition has proven to be successful by requiring students to use a new concept and giving them an assignment to complete both on their own and in a group, as shown in 'Theory Survivor.'

In another defense of active learning for the music major, Renee B. Fisher combines the idea of active learning within a group with composition. "Learning Music Unconventionally" was written in 1968 for the *Music Educators Journal*, but addresses the same elements that Berry found in her "Theory Survivor" teaching activity. At a five-week summer course for music educators at Manhattenville College of the Sacred Heart, Fisher was involved in multiple group activities; the first being a composition challenge to create a two-minute piece performed with everyday objects.[30] Fisher explains, "we came up with a wide and fascinating collection of

---

[30] Renee B. Fisher, "Learning Music Unconventionally," *Music Educators Journal* 54, no. 9 (May 1968): 61.

objects, including things such as a stapler, alarm-clock, bells, pail, nail files, and keys."[31] This assignment also required the participants to write a score so that their piece could be performed as they intended the following day after the assignment. This required them to use their knowledge of notation, rhythm and pitch. They did this same assignment again, but with voice and were required to use sounds outside of the *bel canto* tradition. Similar to the first assignment, the groups had to notate their squeals, whistles and hums onto score, and be able to accurately communicate them for later performance. During the workshop, compositional exercises continued in complexity, and ended with a final assignment to compose "a theme and four variations on an original tone row for an assigned quartet of instruments. These unorthodox combinations provided a real challenge. My assignment, for example, was to write for flute, alto saxophone, cello and piano."[32]

The educators explored the possibilities of incorporating active learning activities into their classrooms. The second section of this seminar focused on curriculum, and was a workshop where educators could come together to discuss common issues, but also to figure out how they could incorporate the activity and excitement they had experienced in the seminar in their own classrooms. They first studied the basic factors of their assignments, "we realized that it was through discovery rather than dictation that concepts and even skills become meaningful and knowledge retained. […] We also recognized that the compositional process provides deep insights into the inner logic of music-that it has immediate application to really appreciative listening and built-in motivation for polished performance."[33] These composition projects required them to use their previous knowledge such as the basics of instrumentation and

---

[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid., 62.
[33] Ibid., 64.

orchestration. Active learning activities that use composition such as this call upon previous knowledge and also creativity in order to create something new.

Renee Fisher's experience in the summer program is similar to the experience of students in 'Theory Survivor'. Both experiences had group and active elements to them, where students and teachers were required to work together for the benefit of the group. Students were encouraged to assist one another on learning the information and receiving high scores. The summer program asked teachers to work together to create pieces of music to be performed by their peers, and by doing so required them to revisit the basics of composition and orchestration. They used each other as support to accomplish the task. The format for information delivery was also similar. In Theory Survivor, students were given one short lecture that they then drilled with their teams to master the information and complete the assignment. The teachers were given one assignment with a specific set of guidelines to follow, and then worked with their team to complete it. Information given in small amounts allows the student to digest the information, and also use it in an active manner. Then for the next class, the student is comfortable applying the information for the next assignment.

Active learning for music majors enhances the physical and emotional experience of creating and listening to music that is not always experienced with the academic assignments of research, analysis and interpretation. Erin E. Kynt argues that music history courses engage students in research papers more actively. In her article for the *Journal of Music History Pedagogy, "*Rethinking the Music History Research Paper Assignment,*"* she explains her personal frustration from students turning in undergraduate research papers that lack enthusiasm for the subject, and some papers that are poorly written in what she believes is a inexperience of

professional writing.[34] She suggests that teachers encourage students to engage with their experience as composers, performers and teachers in their final project. In this example, Kynt is encouraging students to use other resources of knowledge in the history classroom. She explains her process,

> Why not use students' experience as performers or teachers in conjunction with the academic type of knowledge gleaned through research, analysis, and critical interpretation when crafting music history assignments? Why not encourage students who are comfortable with technology to take advantage of their skill by giving options for these assignments—for instance, that they turn in a DVD with a paper, create a multi-media project, or submit a YouTube link to a film they have created? Our assignments can help students think, reason, and research while serving a practical purpose and embracing the musical experience too.[35]

Allowing students to be more active in their projects will feed their curiosity, in line with what Binson's curiosity based teaching model. Kynt is creating an assignment that combines other aspects of the music major's career, and will incorporate the information from the music history course into their personal interests, along the same lines of what Lagueux believed was important when he inverted Bloom's taxonomy. Kynt also addresses the necessity of music history knowledge to each individual's career whether as a composer, theorist, instructor, or performer. In her classes she gives the undergraduate students who have less experience writing an outlined guide of the aspects of the paper she expects and encourages them to choose an alternative format and the use of technology. She requires more experienced graduate students to complete a project proposal as well as give five-minute oral presentations of their project throughout the semester to receive feedback from her as well as their peers. Her experience with these projects has proven positive: "Many of the students creating non-traditional final projects

---

[34] Erinn E. Kynt, "Rethinking the Music History Research Paper," *Journal of Music History Pedagogy* 4, no. 1 (2013): 24.
[35] Ibid.

have told me in person and in student evaluations that the alternate and more practical format was more motivating than the traditional written paper."[36]

Kynt encourages active learning in her course, which includes the opportunity for composition. Various types of projects come out of her assignment one in particular she cites as an example in her article is a composition by a student who plays trombone. This project was for her graduate seminar for Romantic music course: The composition itself was a symphonic poem based on the New German School along with the ideologies of variation taught during the course and "was accompanied by a research paper in which the student documented the compositional process and the way he translated the program into sound."[37] This student used the harp, French horn and cello to imitate early instruments such as the lyre (harp) and bukkehorn (French horn). Another student, an undergraduate, created a film score along with a documentary video and a written paper to document his project: "In the documentary and in the paper, the student described how his film score was informed by his understanding of Wagnerian leitmotifs and their constant variation and development throughout the score in reaction to the drama."[38] Kynt concludes explaining that her goal for these projects is to help students learn and retain information while also having fun, all achieved by incorporating active learning.

Active learning through composition facilitates learning. Students who participate in active learning exercises expand their interests not only in their declared major, but in other subjects. Using composition to understand music history, theory and performance improves their aural perception of music, their creativity and performance practice.

---

[36] Ibid., 28.
[37] Ibid., 34.
[38] Ibid.

In order for active learning to be successful, educators must design the lessons and assignments in a way that students can effectively complete them. In their article, "Songwriting as Musical Inquiry: Examples from the Popular Music Classroom," Travis D. Stimeling and Mark Katz provide examples of assignments for two types of popular music classes: a large lecture-based course regarding rock history for 300 non-music majors at a state research university and an upper level undergraduate country music history course for music majors taught at a small liberal arts college with a class size around 15 students.[39]

The assignment for the non-music major rock history course instructed the students to "write your own rock song!" wherein they composed original lyrics and were required to provide a detailed description of the style, texture, form and instrumentation of the song and how the lyrics related to the music without actually writing music. This assignment was solely an analytical paper and did not require any musical writing; the instructors still incorporated an active element. The assignment was done without composing music, but the students were still required to use the correct grammar and 'musical language' to describe their theoretical song. "Students tended to find the discussion of the musical characteristics of the song the most difficult aspect of the assignment; the particular challenge was to use what they learned of the "grammar" of rock for the creation of something wholly new. In this regard, the best papers offered detailed descriptions of style, form, texture, timbre, and instrumentation; used terminology accurately; related their compositions to songs studied in class."[40] Throughout the course, students explored various types of styles of rock songs and studied their forms and meaning.

---

[39] Travis D. Stimeling and Mark Katz, "Songwriting as Musical Inquiry: Examples from the Popular Music Classroom," *Journal of Music History Pedagogy* 2, no. 2 (2012): 133.
[40] Ibid., 136.

The history of country music course at the liberal arts college is an upper level elective offered to all music majors and enrolls a variety of students from composers to music business majors. Similar to the history of rock course for non-majors, student's complete songwriting assignments based on the form and style of the music studied. Music majors also participate in group songwriting, performance, recordings and write a detailed essay on the subject. Incorporating all of these activities creates a synthesis to the topic. The authors were interested in seeing what kind of learning affect composition would have on students both with and without a musical background. The authors explain, "recent research suggests that pedagogical deploying music composition result in a variety of areas including aural perception, performance, creativity and attitude."[41]

The similarity between these two courses is the focus on history focus and the nature of their assignments. Although the music majors were asked to do more with the compositions, they still experienced the same kind of learning challenge as the students who did not have a music background. The history of rock music course graded students based on their ability to master the vocabulary and also use it in the correct way. For example, "In the non-major course, assessment focused on three areas: lyrics, music, and writing…The explanation of the sound of the song and the discussion of the text- music relationship was given the most weight."[42] The music major course was graded in a similar way but had more focus on the "music-analytic" components. This meant that the instructors were looking at the accuracy of the structure and format of the students' transcriptions, the explanation of their work and how well they executed an original work in the correct style.

---

[41] Ibid., 133–134.
[42] Ibid., 139.

Each course addressed specific learning objectives that align with Bloom's taxonomy pyramid of the levels of learning. The learning objectives in the history of rock course included creating original lyrics of a rock song, describing how they work with the music, and explaining the form and context of the music. The history of country music course objectives included, "develop an understanding of the origins, defining characteristics, and evolution of country music in America, to gain familiarity with a representative repertory of recorded country music from ca. 1922 to the present, and to develop active listening skills in order to respond more fully to music and writing skills to convey what [students] have learned."[43] The authors support their research by accomplishing these objectives through music composition. The active projects the students participated in accomplish levels of learning that can be found in Bloom's pyramid. Both courses work through all six levels of learning, spanning the height of Bloom's pyramid.

In both of these music history classes' students learn the background and application of the music before making something original. Stimeling and Katz believe that through an active assignment, like composition, students gain a better understanding of the history and material provided in the course. The authors conclude, "when combined with strong analysis and reflection components, composition and songwriting assignments offer rich opportunities for students to engage creatively with key musical concepts, to learn about musical structure and style through hands-on activities, and to reach a strong understanding of the various ways that music can signify meaning across time and social settings."[44] This creates additional opportunities for music majors to connect with their other courses because the authors mention that these kinds of assignments can be easily transferred to other courses. This example shows the positive benefits to active learning with composition.

---

[43] Ibid., 138.
[44] Ibid., 139.

Active learning is being used in classrooms across the United States.In his course

'Antiquity to 1600,' at Oklahoma State University Allen Scott assigns a composition project

entitled, "Chant Project."[45] This project focuses on early music, is broken into six assignments,

and requires the students to compose a chant-style piece in various styles. For example, the first

assignment is to select a text of poetry and set the text in a monophonic plainchant style, creating

an original melody. In addition to the melody and music compositions, Scott requires his

students to write short essays to be included with the scores. The written portion requires the

student to explain why they chose the text and their method to set it to the chant. These

assignments are similar to Erin Kynt's assignments mentioned above, in which students created

alternative projects to the common research paper. Students would compose media based on their

personal passion. Scott inspires a similar atmosphere where students are actively creating, with

some freedom, in order to understand all aspects of the music, in this case style, form and modes

are important.

Scott's learning objectives emphasize active engagement with the course material:

1) Widen your knowledge of the musical repertoire from classical antiquity through the
Renaissance and to expose you to the relevant performance practice issues that pertain to this
repertoire
2) Give you a sophisticated understanding of the cultural, aesthetic, and stylistic aspects of this
music, and
3) Help you to develop your research, analytical, critical thinking, and technical writing skills for
dealing with music from classical antiquity through the Renaissance.[46]

Scott achieves many of his objectives through the chant project. For example, the second

learning objective addresses the stylistic aspects of the musical repertoire of the course. Each

---

[45] Allen Scott, 2017. "Department of Music," Oklahoma State University, accessed June 2, 2017,
https://music.okstate.edu/about/faculty-staff/2-uncategorised/61-allen-scott.
[46] Allen Scott, "Music 3753: History of Music from Classical Antiquity to 1600 Fall 2016," Oklahoma State
University, accessed June 2, 2017, https://music.okstate.edu/images/users/dalscot/3753_Syllabus.pdf.

portion of the chant project requires an analysis that includes information such as the mode and intervals. By requiring students to compose within the style they must understand how the style is created and how the music would be performed. Scott also provides guidelines for the project that creates limitations to the student, narrowing the stylistic options to make the project more accessible.

This project calls on the various stages of learning defined in Benjamin Bloom's taxonomy. Composition achieves the highest level of learning, requiring the students to use all of the stylistic, historical and analytical information they learned previously to create something new. The analysis and short essay components reinforce a higher level of learning, asking the students to evaluate and critique their own work as well as the music they are working to imitate. These activities show which aspects of the music are vital to the style and which musical elements might be irrelevant. This chant project also reflects some of the values Lagueux identified in his affective inversion of Bloom's taxonomy. The process of choosing a text and applying their own music to it not only exercises their composition abilities, and their theory and historical knowledge, but engages them with the musical examples on a deeper level. Most significantly, it creates an active learning space in the music history classroom.

Scott's composition project is similar to what Stimeling and Katz created in their project to prove the effectiveness of composition in the classroom. Both of their classes required the student to replicate the style, while creating, or at least conceptualizing, their own original work. Creating boundaries within composition makes the important aspects of the style more obvious and helpful to identify.

A learning initiative at Ithaca College, encourages the incorporation of active learning in their curriculum and student activities to create an environment for students to interact with professors on a one on one basis and also working in groups with other students. One teacher in particular has contributed to this initiative is Deborah Rifkin, a music theory and women's studies teacher at Ithaca College whose article, "A Revised Taxonomy for Music Learning" proposes an adaptation of Bloom's taxonomy geared specifically towards music students.[47] Shown below is Rifkin's Taxonomy (right) compared to Bloom's Taxonomy (left).

Figure 4. Comparison of Bloom and Rifkin Taxonomies.[48]
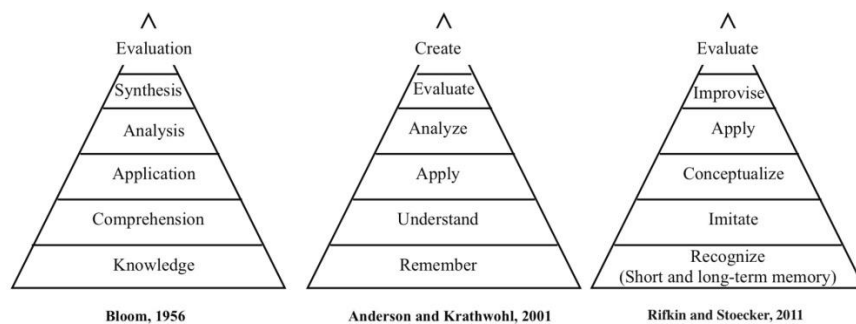
Included in Figure 4 is a third pyramid created by Anderson and Krathwohl in 2001, both educational psychologists who worked with various cognitive psychologists and theorists to revise Bloom's original taxonomy. Their most significant change was to emphasize active learning using verbs rather than nouns in their taxonomy.[49] Rifkin, and her collaborator Stoecker, used Anderson and Krathwohl's taxonomy for their own research. Rifkin and Stoecker wanted to have the pyramid indicate their concentration of active learning, so they reordered some of the levels to reflect that. Rifkin used research in cognitive studies to change the taxonomy to cater to

---

[47] Deborah Rifkin and Philip Stoecker, "A Revised Taxonomy for Music Learning," *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy* 25 (2011): 158.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid., 159.

the field of performing arts. Specifically, she addresses ear-training. Her belief is that the mind

learns quicker than the ear, and her taxonomy is revised to assist music students in their aural

assignments.[50] Her revision addresses aural skills because the way she and Stoeckler have

ordered the pyramid is based on how students process the information when it is presented

aurally.[51] Rifkin explains with an example from her first stage, "When a listener recognizes or

recalls that a musical pattern has repeated, this cognitive act is a specialized type of remembering

that centralizes the aural event."[52] She also explains some classroom exercises that can be used to

accomplish her adapted taxonomy.

The example provided by Rifkin is an exercise she gives her freshman students when she

teaches neighbor notes, the process of which mirrors the steps in her taxonomy. It includes

various pitch sequences that she uses to teach students to sing, embracing her process.

---

[50] Ibid., 159-160.
[51] Ibid., 160.
[52] Ibid.

Figure 5. Rifkin Theory Exercise.[53]

[53] Ibid., 168.

The first step in teaching this concept is to give the student a set of 3 pitches without any rhythmic or meter notation. She then has the student sing the pitches, in order to define the concept of an upper neighbor. The next step is notated in pitch pattern 2, which introduces lower neighbor notes. At this stage, Rifkin then requires the student to sing the upper neighbor note. Pitch pattern 3 introduces a double neighbor, based on the same pitches that were introduced in the first two examples.[54] Pitch pattern 4 introduces a compound melody: the students analyze the music based on their previous knowledge, and are then asked to transpose the melody into a different key, following the same pattern as written in the original. Pitch pattern 5 asks the students to improvise. They can choose where to put the lower neighbor note anywhere in the pattern, they also improvise whether they use lower neighbors, upper or double. Pitch pattern 6 is an example of an improvised melody that a student could come up with. Pitch pattern 7 reveals that the original notes make up the melody of "Happy Birthday," a familiar melody. This exercise follows the previously defined pattern of recognizing the subject, in this case neighbor notes, understanding how they work, asking the student to sing the original note and the neighbors, to further the understanding of the concept and then to transpose the melody, following the same pattern as the original. The ultimate goal of the exercise is to have students sing through these pitches and be able to identify neighbor notes in music.[55]

This exercises mirrors the levels of learning that Rifkin defined in her taxonomy because each pitch stage is dependent on the learned pattern of the one before it. At the base of her pyramid students must "recognize," an activity invoked after students are asked to sing the melody of pitch pattern 1, and then move on to pitch pattern 2 to see that the original and upper neighbor are included in the new melody. "Imitate", the second level, is activated when students

---

[54] Ibid., 168–169.
[55] Ibid., 169.

are asked to sing the pitches, imitating the melody from the first pattern. Pitch pattern 2 also introduces lower neighbor notes, implementing the third level, "conceptualize" when the student starts to grasp the concept of a neighbor note. Pitch pattern 3 introduces the concept of a double neighbor note. The same levels of the taxonomy are at work here, "recognize," "imitate," and "conceptualize." The student will see that the original pitches from the first two patterns are included when asked to sing the melody, as they did in the two previous exercises. By asking the students to analyze the melody in the same way, they will see how the lower neighbor and upper neighbor relate to each other, and the original pitch, the student can then generalize what a double neighbor is and recognize it.[56]

Pitch pattern 4 begins to introduce the next stage of learning: "application." This pitch pattern introduces a compound melody that includes the use of a double neighbor. The student must now analyze the melody on their own. After analysis, the student is asked to transpose the melody into a different key or modes, invoking the stage of learning "apply." Pitch pattern 5 uses the lower levels of the pyramid, they are asked to sing the melody and asked to add in neighbor notes anywhere they want in the melody, and this stage applies the level "improvise." Pitch pattern 6 shows an example of how a student might add neighbor notes into the melody.[57] This stage encourages students to compose, especially in this example where neighbor notes can greatly enhance a simple melody. Finally, pattern 7 reveals the melody "Happy Birthday," Rifkin explains why the melody was revealed at the end. "Ending with an excerpt from the literature is important: it is essential for students to make a connection from the abstract pitch-pattern exercises to real music, and it is crucial for students to realize that an infinite number of melodies

---

[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid.

can be derived from a few melodic gestures."[58] This level applies the stage of learning labeled, "evaluate." After the students have seen the melody, they then analyze their improvised melody to the revealed one. They can analyze if they applied the neighbor notes correctly, if they used them incorrectly, etc. "Evaluate" is the highest level of learning in Rifkin's taxonomy, she believes that students will use this experience and apply it to others. This example shows the process a student will go through to learn a new concept, ask them to improvise based on the example, and then go back and evaluate what they did, right or wrong. This begins the cycle over again when students are introduced to another concept.[59]

Ithaca College provides resources for instructors regarding teaching and active learning, in what they call their active learning continuum. The continuum is a resources website gives a list of examples of ways to incorporate active learning into their teaching methods. The college also provides a teaching space for teachers to utilize called the "Collaborative Teaching Space."[60] This is a place in the library that is set up with smaller tables in order for the class to break into groups. Each one of the tables is set up with an interactive "Eno" board, an interactive white board. The students, and instructors, are also set up with a wireless keyboard. This set up facilitates small group learning in the classroom.

West Texas A&M University uses active learning activities, especially in the music theory and composition courses. Dr. Benjamin Brooks teaches music theory and composition, and is also a composer, creating works for solo performers, ensembles and electro-acoustic

---

[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid., 170
[60] "Collaborative Teaching Space," Ithaca College, accessed July 12, 2017, https://www.ithaca.edu/cfe/resources/gannett_319/.

music.[61] Included in the information for the composition degree is a studio page that showcases student's works. The page explains, "Through active expression with meticulous attention to detail we strive to create new works that speak to ourselves and others."[62] Brooks has created a guideline, the Composition Handbook, for his composition majors who have weekly private lessons with him. The Handbook provides the learning objectives for the student, topics covered each semester and requirements. It also incorporates a self-evaluation where a student can show their progress from the beginning of the semester to the end.[63] For example, two important questions on the self-evaluation are, "what theories or treatises have influenced your compositions the most this semester? […] in what demonstrable ways?"[64] This is a great tool for both students and instructors, to see where their influences are coming from and how they are putting them into practice. Composition majors are also required to attend weekly seminars with their peers where group assignments, performances and discussion happen. This provides an opportunity to work with other students in an active way, learn from one another, and be able to hear what the other members of the group created. Requiring the students to create group compositions and performances creates an interactive learning experience, along with knowledge from experience. These types of activities involve student-centered learning that creates an open dialogue between the students and instructor.

One assignment for Brooks' theory courses is a composition project that he has broken down into steps. The assignment is broken down by chord progressions. Once all of the chords are in place, the student will transfer the progression into the bass clef of a piano staff, and then

---

[61] "B.J. Brooks, D.M.A," West Texas A&M University, accessed July 20, 2017, http://www.wtamu.edu/academics/bj-brooks-bio.aspx.
[62] "Studio Compositions," Benjamin Brooks, accessed July 30, 2017, http://www.wtamu.edu/~bbrooks/Compositions/Compositions.html.
[63] Benjamin Brooks, "Composition Handbook," West Texas A&M University, accessed May 15, 2017.
[64] Ibid., 4.

add texture and melody. Shown below is the table where students add their progression. The first row is labeled by numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4. The student will label their key and write in the chords, one per box/measure, along with jazz symbols, ending on a cadence. The instructions for this particular assignment are to end on a half or cadential 6/4 cadence. The spaces open below the numbered boxes are there for students to be able to prolong the chord progression by adding embellishment chords. This will later assist the student when he composes the melody above the written progression.[65]

Figure 6. Brooks Composition Assignment.[66]

1	2	3	4

___:

     This style of assignment creates an outline for a composition and allows the student to see how to chords need to work together in order to correctly establish a cadence. Establishing a solid progression before writing a melody will also show the student how to write a melody that corresponds to the chord, instead of first writing a melody and struggling to harmonize it. This assignment is more active than a typical composition assignment. This gives the student a better visual representation of how the chords work together towards the cadence, especially with the

---

[65] Benjamin Brooks, "Composition Project 1," West Texas A&M University, accessed May 15, 2017.
[66] Ibid.

embellishment chords. Students have a sold representation of how the melody will align to their progression.

In a presentation given by Brooks for the Professional Music Teacher conference in New Mexico, Brooks discussed how composition and theory could be incorporated into the private performance studio. Brooks notes, "methods to include both theory and composition into the private studio that will allow the student to augment their performance and technique repertoire for the purpose of developing comprehensive musicianship."[67] Included in his discussion are examples of lessons that can be incorporated for music theory and composition. One example is very similar to the example given above in Figure 6 but is an eight measure exercise instead of four.

Dr. Brooks also addresses goals for the student's growth. Brooks classifies this through compositional, kinesthetic, theoretical and psychological goals (See Figure 7).[68]

---

[67]Benjamin Brooks, "Integrating Music Theory and Composition into the Private Studio," (lecture presented at the PMTNM State Conference, Eastern New Mexico University, November 4, 2011), accessed May 15, 2017.
[68] Ibid., 2.

Figure 7. Brooks' Student Growth Goals.[69]

Compositional	Theoretical	Kinesthetic	Psychological
Composition	Notation	Writing	Motivation
Points of arrival	Form	Method	Expression
Clarity	Phrase	Muscle Memory	Catharsis
Consistency	Motive	Finger Patterns	
Notation	Sequence		
Arranging	Progression		
Orchestration	Chords		
Counterpoint	Tonality, A & Neo		

This chart shows all the aspects of learning that are affected by incorporating composition and

theory into the private studio. Interesting aspects of this chart are the kinesthetic psychological

columns. The kinesthetic goals can be applied to students in their private lessons with their

instruments and also the act of writing. The psychological column addresses the creativity and

freedom composition gives the students. The compositional and theoretical columns are learning

objectives and also skill the students will acquire by using theory and composition regularly in

their private studio. Brooks gives a rounded view of the subject of active learning through

composition by showing examples of exercises, student projects on the studio page and the

discussion of the links between composition, theory and performance. Dr. Brooks gave examples

of the ways students are affected by composition and theory in their classrooms and the positive

ways they grow from it.

---

[69] Ibid.

This paper has shown the many ways composition can be incorporated into all subjects of the music major's academic career. Composition acts as the foundation for a comprehensive education and synthesizes the subjects a music major will study. This research has shown various methods in which composition can be utilized as an active learning tool. Scholarly articles regarding methods of active learning show the benefits that composition adds for the student. These benefits include better retention of information, higher motivation, and consistent progress. Music history courses can utilize composition to teach style and foster an understanding of the music of a particular period. Music theory courses can incorporate composition into group activities and use it to teach new concepts. Private lessons can be enhanced by composition because it improves student technique and knowledge of their instrument and instrument family. Active learning through composition for the music major is a learning tool that can be incorporated into all courses and improves learning for music students. This paper has shown that composition is a resource that all students and educators have, that can be utilized to improve the student's education and their ultimate success as musicians, teachers and performers.

REFERENCES

Berry, Whitney. "Surviving Lecture: A Pedagogical Alternative." *College Teaching* 56, no. 3 (Summer 2008):149–150.

Binson, Bussakorn. "Curiosity-based learning (CBL) program." *US-China Education Review* 6, no. 12 (December 2009): 13–22.

Bloom, Benjamin, ed. *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives.* New York: Longman, 1984.

Brown, Julie K. "Student-Centered Instruction: Involving Students in Their Own Education." *Music Educators Journal* 94, no. 5 (May 2008): 30–35.

Fisher, Renee B. "Learning Music Unconventionally," *Music Educators Journal* 54, no. 9 (May 1968): 61 [is this really just one page long? You cite more pages above…]

Ithaca College. "Collaborative Teaching Space," Ithaca College, accessed July 12, 2017, https://www.ithaca.edu/cfe/resources/gannett_319/

Karpov, Yuriy V. and John D. Bransford. "L.S. Vygotsky and the doctrine of empirical and theoretical learning." *Educational Psychologist* 30, no. 2 (Spring 1995): 61–67.

Kynt, Erinn E. "Rethinking the Music History Research Paper." *Journal of Music History Pedagogy* 4, no. 1 (2013): 23–37.

Rifkin, Deborah., and Philip Stoecker. "A Revised Taxonomy for Music Learning." *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy* 25 (2011): 155–190.

Riley, Patricia. "Collegiate Connections; Facilitating Student Music Composition." *Music Educators Journal* 100, no. 3 (March 2014): 22–23.

Scott, Allen. "Music 3753: History of Music from Classical Antiquity to 1600 Fall 2016." Oklahoma State University, accessed June 2, 2017, https://music.okstate.edu/images/users/dalscot/3753_Syllabus.pdf.

Scott, Sheila. "Contemplating a Constructivist Stance for Active Learning within Music Education." *Arts Education Policy Review* 112 (2011): 191–198.

Stimeling, Travis D. and Mark Katz. "Songwriting as Musical Inquiry: Examples from the Popular Music Classroom." *Journal of Music History Pedagogy* 2, no. 2 (2012): 133–152.

West Texas A&M University. "B.J. Brooks, D.M.A," West Texas A&M University, accessed July 20, 2017, http://www.wtamu.edu/academics/bj-brooks-bio.aspx.

West Texas A&M University. "Studio Compositions," Benjamin Brooks, accessed July 30, 2017, http://www.wtamu.edu/~bbrooks/Compositions/Compositions.html.