



---

## **Eclecticism Philosophical Viewpoint of Education: A Teaching Music Philosophy**

***Almighty C. Tabuena\****

*Graduate Student, Philippine Normal University, Manila, Philippines*

---

### ABSTRACT

This analytical essay paper presented the idea of synthesizing the best of several different styles or systems as called eclecticism. Further, it described the eclecticism philosophical viewpoint of education as a teaching music philosophy. The philosophical study of music has many connections with philosophical questions in metaphysics and aesthetics. In this connection, there are three basic philosophical viewpoints in dealing systematically and deeply with the fundamental intellectual issues of life and education; these are not, of course, all-inclusive, such as rationalism, empiricism, and pragmatism. Philosophical viewpoints are examined in relation to four aspects of teaching: curriculum and content, methods of instruction, evaluation, and the roles of teachers and students, to find out the practical effects of these viewpoints on what happens in music classes at a glance. In conclusion, there are different methods and techniques in the teaching of music but there is no definite approach that can be considered the best. There is no standard best procedure for teaching music. Any method, even your own invention, so long as the desired mental effect is produced, is acceptable because, in the teaching of music, reading notes can be syllables, numbers, and letters. The reason for considering philosophical matters or viewpoints is, teachers can do a much better job of understanding fundamental issues and applying them in their teaching, the benefit of the thinking of some of the great philosophical minds - therefore the philosophical viewpoints have devoted their considerable abilities to dealing systematically and deeply with the fundamental intellectual issues of life and education.

---

Keywords: eclecticism, education, music philosophy, philosophical viewpoint, teaching

---

### **1. Introduction**

Philosophy of music is the study of “fundamental questions about the nature of music and our experience of it (Kania, 2017).” The philosophical study of music has many connections with philosophical questions in metaphysics and aesthetics.

Music is the unifying element where man finds adequate expression and inner satisfaction for feelings (Rivadelo, 1987). Aristotle, the great philosopher, saw in music not only enjoyment, relaxation, and recreation, but also a release of tension and an incentive to a positive development of character. Likewise, Plato, another Greek philosopher said, “through music, rhythm and harmony find their ways into the inner-most soul of man which becomes part of his personality.” In this light, it is very important that we should have established our principles towards teaching music and explore music to fully understand and share it with others. John Dewey, the great pragmatist, said that education is change. Likewise, music is also changing. We cannot ignore the tremendous change, but if we are founded with our philosophies in life, specifically in our respective profession, we could set a clear distinction between different knowledge claims, the source/s of knowledge, and on how we make decisions and take actions as a teacher. In a real sense, a teacher’s decisions about what to begin with what he or she thinks is real and true, and how that reality is known and learned. Fundamental beliefs and understandings make a significant difference in what teachers do (Abeles, et. al., 1994).

The idea of synthesizing the best of several different styles or systems is called eclecticism (Abeles, et. al., 1994). Today's teachers are asking different questions because we recognize that there are many teaching methods - expository, inquiry, questioning, discovery, simulation gaming ... the old question

*\* Corresponding author*

E-mail address: [tabuena.ac@pnu.edu.ph](mailto:tabuena.ac@pnu.edu.ph)

“which one should I use?” has given way to a new one: “Which ones should I use? and for what purposes?” Education students, who are now exposed to several teaching methods, know that certain methods work best with certain objectives. Thus, making the learners capable of aquired benefited learning, and understand the nature of every day’s lesson.

Techniques in teaching are very important as it gives a mixture of how well the teacher presents a series of lessons. Especially, it is essential to know the appropriate and effective teaching methods for the students learning progress. Your choice of teaching method depends on what fits you — classroom demographic, subject area(s) and school mission statement, and most especially, your educational philosophy. Once the individual decides the work in life, the decision must be founded on the principles that reflect his/her values, temperaments, experiences, and skills. My choice of teaching as a career was not made lightly; rather, it was the culmination of a process of reflection about what I wanted to do with my life and my education.

---

## 2. Eclecticism Philosophical Viewpoint of Education as a Teaching Music Philosophy

As part of my teaching music philosophy, I emphasize the intellectual understanding the students gain in my music class, as a rationalist; besides, I favor good discipline in the class because more effective learning can take place in an organized situation. Moreover, I am more inclined to engage in question-and-answer sessions with the students, being evaluated not just on factual knowledge or skill development, but rather from more subjective, more probing, and comprehensive evaluations of the students’ work by both students and teachers.

With the inculcation of these things, a student would be able to understand first the context (principles or theories) before they would engage in an applied world of music.

In my case, I am handling different grade levels, therefore, I considered what is most effective in getting the students to learn the particular material (e.g. lectures, authoritarian commands, computer-assisted instructional programs, questions to reinforce the correct answers), as an empiricist. Believing in following the natural development and interests of children relies a great deal on student discovery.

On the other hand, I also emphasize learning how to acquire skills and gather information, and they see experiences as the basis of learning. Because things are always changing, in their view, all knowledge lacks permanence and will need to be replaced -- hence the emphasis on process rather than the product, as a pragmatist. In this philosophical viewpoint, I also place much importance on the means of learning, because that is at the heart of this philosophy. The process of education is similar to Dewey’s steps of thinking: a problem is encountered, information gathered, solutions considered, hypotheses tested, and data analyzed.

In line with this, I used to engage in action researches. In this method, the important is to help the students to learn how to learn - the first pillar of education, to benefit from the opportunities education provides throughout life.

---

## 3. Engaging in Action Research

One of my action researches, entitled, "Effective Classroom Assessment Techniques for Music Lessons and Basic Piano Music Instructions," has been my basis on how individual students may be better suited to learning in a particular way, using distinctive modes for thinking, relating, and creating. The following is the abstract of action research:

The primary objective of this study is to examine, implement, and identify effective classroom assessment techniques that might provide and help teachers through assessment and evaluation processes in teaching World Music and Basic Piano Music. This study used the experimental design (inferential statistical data analysis, paired t-test) to determine the effectiveness of classroom assessment techniques in teaching Music by using purposive sampling of thirty Grade 10 students from the eight sections of Espiritu Santo Parochial School for the school year 2018-2019. The results of pre-evaluation and post-evaluation were compared to determine the effect of classroom assessment techniques on the performance of the students in Music.

The results revealed that the students had a low performance in the pre-evaluation and there was an increase in the students’ performance in the post-evaluation after its implementation with a mean score of 20.77 and a standard deviation of 3.32. The value of t is 6.680 which is significant at  $p < .01$ . The result showed that there is a significant difference in the performance of students in music learning in the implementation of classroom assessment techniques. The obtained value of normalized gain (gain of average) was 0.262 inferred to a moderate gain in scores of the students in music learning. The following are the classroom assessment techniques created and implemented by the researcher (in a large class of 35 to 40 students per class): (1) Music Concept Memory Exercise, (2) Instrumental and Vocal Schematic Processing, (3) Five-Letter Name Pitch Memory Test, and (4) Three-Chord Familiarization Assessment (Tabuena, 2019).

The result of this action research would help the students change their attitude and perception, and freely express their ideas and conceptions in assessment and evaluation processes. Classroom Assessment Techniques allow students a chance to see how they are progressing over time. Along with that, it shows that their feedback can make a difference in what and how they learn and feel more involved in the learning process – become active participants rather than passive learners, learning to do and learning to live together, the second and third pillars of education.

Lastly, pragmatists, as agents who impart to the young the techniques for living and acquiring knowledge, I also instruct students how to meet the new situations that will inevitably arise; in a sense, the students are educated for change. In the course of their education, they are expected to pursue information and to be occupied in constructive activity - learning to be, the fourth pillar of education, so as better to develop one's personality and be able to act with ever greater autonomy, judgment, and personal responsibility.

---

#### 4. Conclusion

As Lord Kelvin said, "To measure is to know. If you can not measure it, you can not improve it." There are different methods and techniques in the teaching of music but there is no definite approach that can be considered the best. James Mursell (1956) in his book, *Music Education: Principles and Programs*, said, "There is no standard best procedure for teaching music. Any method, even your own invention, so long as the desired mental effect is produced, is acceptable because, in the teaching of music, reading notes can be syllables, numbers, and letters."

The reason for considering philosophical matters or viewpoints is, teachers can do a much better job of understanding fundamental issues and applying them in their teaching, the benefit of the thinking of some of the great philosophical minds - therefore the philosophical viewpoints have devoted their considerable abilities to dealing systematically and deeply with the fundamental intellectual issues of life and education.

#### REFERENCES

---

- Abeles, H. F. et al. (1994). *Foundations of music education* (2nd ed). New York: Schirman Books.
- Kania, A. (2017). *The philosophy of music*. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy Archive. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University.
- Mursell, J. M. (1956). *Music education: Principles and programs*. University of Michigan. Silver Burdett Company.
- Rivadelo, R. F. (1987). *Music education materials & methods*. Mandaluyong City: National Book Store, Inc.
- Tabuena, A. C. (2019). Effectiveness of classroom assessment techniques in improving performance of students in music and piano. *Global Researchers Journal*, 6(1), 68-78.