What is the difference between teaching someone to be a musician and simply teaching someone to play an instrument or sing?

Developing Core Musical Skills

Technical
Artistic
Language

Musician
Core Musical Skills
Core Musical Beliefs

...it’s these deep fundamental beliefs and values that drive our behaviour—in this case our thinking about teaching

What is being musical?

Shaping a phrase beautifully
Playing or singing in time/tune
Playing a Beethoven Sonata
Interested in developing technique
Ability to sight-read
Understanding music theory
Regular practice
doing well at exams & assessments
Can our pupils be musical without being or doing these things?

Some people are more musical than others

Playing a Beethoven Sonata

Interested in developing technique

Playing or singing in time/tune

Ability to sight-read

Understanding music theory

Regular practice

doing well at exams & assessments
"Someone told me, that the music has to come from both sides of the family, for a person to be musical."

Jerome

“There’s a well known Irish musician, Professor Michael O’Sullivan, who believes it has to do with our forefathers. He says, if they were not musical, chances are, that those who follow on won’t be musical either."

James

“As with everything, some people got it and some people don’t. Pointless to ask why. My parents and my brother are as non-musical as you get.”

Ailin

Parents often describe themselves as ‘unmusical’. Often the result of their experiences with ‘old fashioned’ teaching
Some people are more musical than others.

Can anyone be musical?

Are we born musical or do we become musical?

“To hear a sequence of rustling noises in dry leaves as a connected pattern of movements is a very primitive version of the ability to hear, say, Mozart's Jupiter Symphony as a piece of music, entire, rather than as momentary sounds which come and then are no more ...” (Jeremy Campbell)
Are we born musical or do we become musical?

Singing, rhythmic stroking, patting, and rocking are primary modes of communicating with infants.

Mother/infant bonding

Are we born musical or do we become musical?

We need music to survive. Music is a species-specific trait of all humans

We all carry beliefs and values about music

Can anyone be musical?
What would we stand to lose if we decided to change our minds?

What is being musical?

we are all, fundamentally, musical

someone who likes, and wants to engage with music
What is doing music?

Learning, Playing, Composing, Listening, experiencing, engaging with and enjoying music, coming to know, play and sing music through exploring and experimenting using instruments or voice, learning to respond to music sensitively, developing an imaginative and creative approach to music making.

What are these Core Musical Skills?

Core Teaching Skills?
Kindness

Instant forgiveness

Teaching Learning

Core Teaching Skills

Core Teaching Skills

What is progress?

Passing an exam
Bowing

Playing in tune

perfection

Getting from A to B

Improvisation

rhythm

aural

theory

movement

technique

Telling is not teaching

...something that they don’t understand

or

...something that is not connected or relevant

Core Teaching Skills

Core Teaching Skills

Core Teaching Skills
Asking is teaching

...something that they don't know

or

...something that they can't work out

What are these Core Musical Skills?

Have an immaculate technique

Play with a highly-developed sense of rhythm

Have a sophisticated control of sound

Instil their performances with deeply felt musical meaning
The 4 Ps

Posture
Pulse
Phonology
Personality

The First Lesson(s)
Explore the

The 4 Ps
First musical internalisation

- Clap pulse and count groups of 4 – aloud
- Continue whispering
- Continue mouthing silently
- Continue internally
- Continue but stop clapping
- Change numbers for internal honk/hooter/noise
- You’ve laid the foundations of a ‘sense of pulse’
Personality

The 4 Ps provide the framework for improvising... and need permanent presence.
AN APPROACH

Simultaneous Learning

gets stuck is restrictive is mechanical
repeat repeat repeat frustrated
the connections we make need to be explicit
not implied

Find new routes
Three stages of learning a new piece

1. Pre-notation activities
   - Memory
   - Notation
   - Key, scale and arpeggio (and related keys)
   - Play in the character/style of the piece
   - Aural: Call and response/question and answer
   - Add dynamic levels and articulations

2. Introducing the notation
   - Rhythm and Pulse
     - Clap pulse in tempo of the piece
     - Explore new rhythms or rhythms from the piece
   - Key, scale and arpeggio (and related keys)
   - Use dynamics from the piece

3. Playing and refining the piece
   - Posture: Technique
   - Pulse: Rhythm
   - Phonology: Aural
   - Personality: Character
   - Explore new rhythms or rhythms from the piece
Identify musical features in the piece

Explore specific ingredients

Ornaments

Sequences

Discuss the title

Character

Posture:

Technique

Pulse:

Rhythm

Phonology:

Aural

Personality:

Character

Pre-notation activities

1

Tap the pulse with a foot (or use a metronome) and tap the rhythm of each note together.

Regularly play the scale and arpeggio (and related keys) in the style of the piece

Regularly hear the piece internally

Choose a bar or passage and play at a different pitch

Develop images, stories, colours or shapes to aid character building

Continue sight-reading pieces with similar ingredients

Play the piece fluently, thinking about the markings and style

Compose your own similar piece

Choose a bar or passage and play at a different pitch

Regularly play the scale and arpeggio (and related keys) in the style of the piece

Perform the piece

The Piece

Perform the piece

The Piece

Understand markings

Discuss recurring patterns: rhythmic and melodic

Discuss the style and composer (use the internet).

Play the scale and arpeggio in the style of the music. Discuss and explore related keys.

Improvise using different combinations of ingredients.

Hear passages of the music internally and sometimes sing them.

Connect with short sight-reading pieces that explore similar ingredients.

Open the book

Discuss recurring patterns: rhythmic and melodic

Scale and arpeggio patterns

Understand markings
Playing and Refining the piece

The Piece

Pre-notation activities

Introducing the notation

Playing and refining the piece

How many connections did I make?

Were the 4Ps (in some form) driving the lesson?
How musical was that lesson?

What would you say is the most important outcome of a lesson?

My pupil wants to come back for another one.

Core Musical Beliefs

Teaching effectively...play our part in making the world a better place.