



# Thinking about Thinking: Metacognition for Music Learning

By Carol Benton

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*Thinking about Thinking: Metacognition for Music Learning* provides music educators with information, inspiration, and practical suggestions for teaching music. Written for music educators in multiple content areas and grade levels, the book sets forth guidelines for promoting the use of metacognitive skills among music students. Along with presenting an extensive overview of research on the topic, Dr. Benton shows how ideas gleaned from research can be put into daily practice in music classrooms and studios. General music teachers, directors of choral and instrumental ensembles, applied music teachers, future music educators, and music education collegiate faculty will find useful ideas and information here. In the current educational climate where *all* teachers are required to demonstrate that they encourage higher order thinking among their students, *Thinking about Thinking: Metacognition for Music Learning* gives music educators the tools they need to accomplish the task.

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## Thinking about Thinking: Metacognition for Music Learning By Carol Benton Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1733011 in Books
- Published on: 2014-02-25
- Released on: 2014-02-25
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.04" h x .51" w x 5.92" l, .60 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 180 pages

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

A strength of the book is the invaluable chronological reviews of the literature related to metacognition both within education generally and music education specifically; a valuable resource. The author grounds the conceptual content with clear, practical examples and scenarios relevant for teachers in the classroom or private studio. Benton sees metacognition is a tool to engage students more deeply with the content of the discipline and the development of musical autonomy. (Graham McPhail, Lecturer, School of Critical Studies in Education, Faculty of Education, The University of Auckland)

Dr. Carol Benton has provided an excellent resource for music teachers. I recommend it for both the theoretical research and the practical applications offered. *Thinking about Thinking* should be essential reading for ALL teachers and musicians. (Frank E. Folds, Director of Bands, Alton C. Crews Middle School, President, Georgia Music Educators Association)

Accessible to music researchers and music teachers alike, Benton's work is situated at the intersection of cognitive theory and applied practice. Using concrete examples, each chapter provides a theoretical and empirical overview of metacognition as it exists in musical contexts, yet never strays from the practical application to music instruction. This synthesis of research on metacognition in music serves as a timely contribution to the field. (Meghan Bathgate, M.A., Research Psychology, Ph.D Candidate, Cognitive Psychology, University of Pittsburgh)

Dr. Carol Benton reminds us that the goal of music teaching (or any teaching) is more than a successful performance. Our goal is to fully understand why the student's effort was successful or not. Our pedagogy, after all, is driven by this deeper understanding of internal processes. The metacognitive strategies presented in her book provide the reflective music teacher with a repertoire of tools through which the teacher can reveal the student's true understanding and mastery of the task at hand. As such, her work contributes to both the practice of music teaching and the training of future successful music teachers. (Richard Kennell, dean and professor of performance studies of the College of Musical Arts at Bowling Green State University)

An inspiring book full of rich, diverse ideas for music educators to use with their students. Theoretically strong and practically sophisticated, this wonderful new publication provides music teachers with a host of valuable ideas for teaching and learning music through metacognitive instruction. (Dr. Gary McPherson, Ormond Chair of Music and Director, Associate Dean, Research, Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, The University of Melbourne)

Carol Benton provides a comprehensive guide to research of Metacognition in general education and music teaching and learning in particular. I recommend it to musician-educators in choral, general and instrumental genres who wish to go beyond the psychomotor domain and into the realm of critical and higher-order thinking that characterizes much of metacognition in teaching and learning. Many helpful thinking strategies will stimulate the teaching imagination and enrich learning experiences in band, choral, general music, orchestral and private/group studio lessons. (Lenore Pogonowski, Professor Emerita Teachers College, Columbia University)

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areas and grade levels, the book offers guidelines for promoting the use of metacognitive skills among music students. Along with presenting an extensive overview of research on the topic, Benton shows how ideas gleaned from research can be put into daily practice in music classrooms and studios. General music teachers, directors of choral and instrumental ensembles, applied music teachers, future music educators, and music education collegiate faculty will find useful ideas and information here. (*Music Educators Journal*)

As educators become more aware of building the critical thinking skills required by the common core state standards, teachers in all fields recognize the need to enhance students' metacognitive skills. In *Thinking about Thinking*, Benton provides vital information to teachers and parents regarding the theory and practice of instruction that builds metacognitive skills. This well-organized book begins with a far-reaching explanation of metacognition; subsequent chapters detail how this applies to music learning, self-regulation, self-reflection, self-evaluation, thinking aloud, and independent music practice sections. A concluding chapter summarizes actions that teachers may take that will support the growth of students' metacognitive skills. Benton masterfully provides a tool full of practical examples, suggestions, and instructional strategies that will be invaluable for both new and veteran teachers. These suggestions increase the relevancy of music instruction by helping to place the role of the music educator at the center of children's educational experiences. . . . Summing Up: Highly recommended. General readers, upper-division undergraduate students, and above. (*CHOICE*)

#### About the Author

**Carol Benton** has twenty-three years' experience in K-12 music classrooms. She currently works with future music educators at Armstrong Atlantic State University in Savannah, GA.

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