This chapter argues that music teachers should focus less on having students become readers and writers of standard music notation (i.e., literacy) and more on teaching whatever music “language skills” will allow them to freely communicate their ideas in music—that is, to have them become *fluent in the language of music*. The chapter also demonstrates how, when using software to facilitate music creation teaching, the piano keyboard and various graphical visualizations of sound help to teach and understand chord progressions, accompaniment patterns, bass lines from chords, melody writing, and music theory in ways more meaningful than traditional instruction. Through the intelligent use of technology, students who have never played piano or studied another instrument suddenly create, of their own volition, music of increasing sophistication.
music fluency; music literacy; composition; music theory, technology, notation, piano

Chapter 35

Music Fluency

How Technology Refocuses Music Creation and Composition

Barbara Freedman

flu•en•cy

: the ability to speak easily and smoothly;

especially: the ability to speak a foreign language easily and effectively

: the ability to do something in a way that seems very easy (Fluency, 2014)

lit•er•a•cy

: the ability to read and write

: knowledge that relates to a specified subject

(Literacy, 2014)

The ability to communicate verbally freely and clearly in any language is what we call *fluency*. The ability to read and write in a language is what we call *literacy*.

When I was first hired to teach music technology classes at Greenwich High School in 2001, I honestly had no idea where to start. It was my fifth year teaching music, having started my career in my thirties as a general music and chorus teacher in a public high school in New York City. The electronic music courses at Greenwich High School had been created by Ann Modugno in 1969 and may very well have been the first public school music technology classes in the country, if not the world. Three other teachers have taught electronic music at Greenwich High School since Ann's retirement, but because music technology was rapidly evolving, the curriculum was in constant flux.

At first, I tried teaching with a text on recording. In class we discussed cables and recording techniques, and we used what little recording equipment we had, including a couple of four-track tape decks. But soon enough I saw that

the kids were not happy or engaged. One of the electronic music classrooms, converted from a long and narrow closet, had eight PCs (personal computers) with sound cards, a software program called FreeStyle by MOTU, and "cable spaghetti" running in and out of mixing boards, sound modules, and synthesizer keyboards. I had no idea how to use the equipment, let alone how to teach it, but the kids were eager to get in there. One day a student asked, "Can we just make our own music?" I said, "Sure," and they ran to the computers. What was I to do? Just watch them? Leave them alone to freely create? No formal lesson? No homework? No tests? How bizarre and unfamiliar. That's exactly what I did and hoped that an administrator would not walk into the room and ask what we were doing.

Soon enough, students started asking me how to do something or to listen to their music and give them feedback. If I didn't know the answer to a technical question about the computers, keyboards, or software, there was always a student in the room who did know the answer or knew where

we could look it up. I was very fortunate to have a few real "geeks" in the room at all times! I was learning from my students. Through listening to their music, I soon discovered that most students had something in common: a lack of understanding of some very basic music concepts and skills. Most of them had not played an instrument or sung in a chorus. They didn't understand how rhythms related to one another. They didn't know what scales or arpeggios or chords were. They didn't understand how to compose a melody, how to add chords, or how to create a bass line. They didn't understand anything about basic forms of music and how one might structure music over time. They lacked a basic understanding of the "mathematics" or "mechanics" of music: music theory. In other words, they had no skill with the language of music. Instead they relied solely on their ears. Although I had no problem with them engaging in this kind of creativity, they were upset and frustrated. They didn't like their music. They were somewhat ashamed of their music. It didn't sound "good" to them. So I started to teach. I

taught music. They took care of the technology. Soon enough, I taught both. We were on a happy path.

It was clear that many of my students hadn't studied music in a traditional performance setting of band, orchestra, or chorus. If they had come up through our district elementary schools, they would have had music classes that provided a fine education and musical experience. However, they didn't remember much about music theory and certainly not much about notation. If they weren't using it, they forgot it. Many students had "general music" in middle school, and others played guitar, bass, or drums in pop music settings, but most of them could not read standard music notation. I wanted to come up with a way to teach them what I thought they needed to know to make their compositions sound "good" and to deliver the instruction in a manner that was engaging. The "engaging" part can be the most difficult. What I discovered was that the students really needed very little knowledge of music notation. They needed to know the

mechanics of Western music—music theory—the foundation of which is the piano keyboard, not the printed page.

Music Literacy

Twenty-five years ago, Bennett Reimer noted that a person's ability to experience music changed drastically with a "major technological advance of recent history" (1989a, p. 28). Before the phonograph, patented in 1878, the only way people could experience music was by listening to others perform live or by performing it themselves. According to Reimer (1989a), "Once it was refined, the phonograph allowed all people full access to music without having to produce it themselves or be within earshot of those producing it" (p. 28). Technology changes society, society's needs influence education, and history repeats itself.

Reimer challenged us to expand our concept and understanding of what it means to be musically literate.

> We now have a task in general music that differs from that of the world before phonographs: to enhance the music literacy of

> all people in a completely different sense from what that term meant before. Musically literate people are now those who know a great deal about the art of music. They understand its history, its techniques, its many styles, and its major practitioners; they know where to go to hear good examples of it, how to make discerning judgments about it, and how to respond to it appropriately and sensitively in its many manifestations. Such people can be considered musically literate in the fullest sense of that term: educated, perceptive, knowledgeable, sophisticated, and discerning about music. (1989a, p. 28)

Unfortunately, music literacy has been relegated to its most simplistic definition: the ability to read and write music. We have become so focused on the mechanics of standard Western music notation as the sole means for teaching music that it has diluted our ability to allow students an opportunity

to fully experience and create music. If children's experience with music becomes limited to only what they can read or notate, their involvement with and expression of music is then further limited by their formal education and developmental stage.

Patricia White, a music educator in upstate New York, puts it well:

"ask a class of second-graders to create a story and have them tell you the story. What wonderful stories they create! Now, tell your class of second-graders that they are to write down their story but only use words that they know how to write down. Imagine how limited they now become. Isn't that exactly what we do as music educators when we limit our students' creativity to only using standard music notation?" (2009,).

In my book (Freedman, 2013) I describe, "melody is melody, and harmony is harmony. The principles of music theory, structure, and form are the same whether you are

using an electric guitar, synthesizer, trumpet, violin, or voice and applying it to music of living composers or the dead ones." (p. vi) Howard Goodall puts it well in the 2006 documentary *How Music Works*,

> Whatever type of music you are into, it may surprise you to learn that the things that sound very different to each other on the surface are, in fact, using the same basic musical tools and techniques. Looking at the mechanics of a beautiful tune, a sweet chord or a hot driving rhythm is a gratifyingly democratic process. When you analyze the nuts and bolts of music you find that the apparent differences between musical cultures, between Eastern and Western, between folk and jazz, or between classical and pop, start to melt away. The underlying techniques and tricks of good music can be and are applied to virtually any and every style. (2006,)

Do we say that a student who creates music in a contemporary pop style is less fluent in the language of music than one who creates a string quartet? Might it be that these students lack access to ongoing music education in their formative years because our music programs do not offer enticing programs to retain students' interests? It might be true that much of the music by contemporary pop artists lacks the sophistication of music by composers who create so-called serious music. It is therefore imperative for us as music educators to do what we can to reach as many students as possible to teach them how to communicate their musical ideas clearly and easily by becoming fluent in the language of music, thereby enabling them to produce more sophisticated work.

Standard Music Notation

The purpose of standard music notation is to preserve musical sound in writing so it can be re-created. A universal system of written signs and symbols that represents musical pitch or sound allows anyone with the knowledge of that

system the potential to recreate the sounds represented. This realization became important to the Catholic Church in the fifth century as the codification of a written system to represent musical sound allowed the transport of music throughout Christendom. Those that knew the system anywhere in the world could recreate music. Thus, the creation of modern music notation contributed to the uniformity of Christendom.

Like any other codified system of signs and symbols, music notation is a language and, as with any other language, it requires constant use if one is to retain its "grammar." As with any other language, if it is not used frequently, people forget it. Elementary age students may have learned music notation but if they do not play an instrument or sing in a chorus they may forget it when the reach middle school or high school. Continual exposure may be the key to language mastery, expansion, and retention. Just as language teachers experience students speaking a language more easily than

they can read or write it, music teachers also know that sound comes before sight.

Given technological advances, students do not first need to master standard music notation in order to compose (Reimer, 1989b). Technology allows students an opportunity to explore sound before sight by much as they would first explore music on an instrument or by singing. Using technology, students can create, save, edit, and listen to music creations instantly. They can even produce standard music notation if needed. “Furthermore, and possibly more importantly, teaching music through composition might provide a new paradigm in which people experience music. This approach could potentially transform music education.” (Freedman, 2013, p. xxi) Reimer puts it best:

> Electronic technologies now allow students to accomplish all the essentials of genuine composition: to produce and retain a musical idea by recording it directly; to review it and make whatever refinements they choose; to

> extend it, enrich it, and develop it while keeping it available for further refinements. When it is finished, it exists immediately and permanently for others to experience by listening to it, and an accurate notation of it can be produced by pushing a button. . . . The effects on young people's musical understandings through composing involvements may be so dramatic as to change forever our present notions of what quality of musical experiences are possible for the nonprofessional populace. And that, in turn, would change the standards of music education dramatically. (1989b, p. 28)

Reimer continued by offering that knowledge and use of standard music notation could only deepen a person's understanding of and, possibly more important, experience with music. I agree. Even if our students are not going to become professional musicians, understanding some of the

functions of standard music notation can lead to a deeper understanding of music. The very purpose of notation software is to capture music so that others can re-create it by reading and performing the music notated on a printed page. Accordingly, it becomes obvious that students need to learn the fundamentals of standard music notation in order to use notation software and the notation features in sequencing and recording software. Knowledge of music notation is also beneficial to students who use software primarily for audio recording or MIDI sequencing. If nothing else, understanding the basics of standard music notation helps students learn how to use tools in these types of software to help them compose, record, and edit their music.

Children develop skills that allow them to comprehend language, incorporate symbols and new words into their personal use, and demonstrate mastery of specific skills at different ages. English language arts and foreign language teachers understand this implicitly. We can have certain expectations of complexity and sophistication in

children's speaking and writing at different stages of their development. The ability to write in a language requires comprehension of the letters (alphabet), words, and basic grammar of that language. To become fluent, that is, to be able to freely and clearly communicate in that language, requires practice. This is why, for instance, the academic essay is taught from the earliest elementary years and is retaught, evaluated, and practiced throughout the entire K–12 curriculum and beyond. Deepening levels of sophistication in written language take time and practice to develop.

Over the last 15 years, I developed a curriculum for teaching the basics of the language of music that allows students to create music they like. (The curriculum is available in my book *Teaching Music through Composition: A Curriculum Using Technology*.) My teaching is predicated on the idea that the necessary music skills for composition, the mechanics of music and theory, should be acquired at the piano keyboard, the foundation of Western music. If students can understand rhythm, melody, harmony, and all the

increasingly complex details of music theory and composition, their ability to create more and more sophisticated music will be enhanced, no matter the genre. My goal is to teach the language of music so that students can freely communicate with as much ease as possible, given their musical developmental stage. As students learn more details of the language and practice using the language, more sophisticated use of the language appears in their creations. They become more fluent. They make music that they think sounds "good." In the end, what the music sounds like is what really matters. Technology allows us instant access to those sounds.

Rethinking Symbols

Sound does not exist on a two-dimensional plane that we can visualize. However, many ways of visualizing sound have been adapted over time. We are accustomed to viewing a sound along a graph. A basic graph can tell us two things about the items placed on it: (1) defined quality or quantity, and (2) spacing over time (see fig. 35.1).

[INSERT FIGURE 35.1]

Graph showing quantity or quality of sound over time

The staff in standard music notation is a graph. Low and high sounds are positioned on the graph vertically, and time passing is shown horizontally. The clef sign determines the range of pitches available on the music notation "graph" (see fig. 35.2).

[INSERT FIGURE 35.2]

Staff with treble clef shown as a graph

A variety of clefs in standard music notation allow music to be printed clearly on the staff, saving space and ledger lines. Music software for creation has an edit window that simply changes what the graph looks like. In this case, there is little need for saving space, as the notes appear up and down the piano along the side of the edit window. It could be argued that this is a more accurate representation of pitch, especially for Western music creators, as it more precisely depicts where the pitch is along the piano keyboard than does the elusive notation of the staff and clefs.

Rhythm

Contemporary music technology can help students learn standard music notation and produce a more sophisticated music product through *quantizing*. Quantization is a scientific and mathematical term, defined by Media College (2016) as "the process of converting a continuous range of values into a finite range of discrete values" (2014); in other words, to rounding something to an absolute value.. Both audio and MIDI parameters can have quantization. Its application to standard music notation happens within the editing grid in software.

Rhythmic figures, notes and rests, tell us where the desired sound is to begin, on the beat or at a precise moment between beats. The subdivision of a beat into "slices of the pie" is determined by the basic rhythmic value given to the beat in the context of meter. In "common time" there are four beats in a measure, and the quarter note gets the beat. We can divide the beat into ever smaller components of eighths, sixteenths, thirty-seconds, and so on. Quantization is

basically the same thing, breaking something down to its most basic, smallest part. Theoretically, we can continue to divide and subdivide further, but to be practical, we stop at sixty-fourth notes, and in general we even avoid that level. Most of our students will only need sixteenth notes or even thirty-second notes (double bass–drum patterns in rock and metal music and hi-hat patterns in electronic dance music and hip-hop). Our need for rhythmic quantization is not true to the scientific-mathematical definition of the word, but is limited to the desired accuracy along a designated subdivision of the beat. The more complex the rhythm, the more need for further subdivision of the beat. A student's age can also be a factor. Students may not be able to comprehend increasing subdivisions, smaller and smaller slices of the pie, until certain stages of development.

Rhythm is defined not only as the subdivision of a beat but also as duration of sound. A rhythm assigned to a note indicates how long that note is to be sustained. The sound may start on the beat or at any point in a subdivision of

the beat, but the rhythm will determine just how long to sustain the sound. One can play any number of rhythmic figures directly on the beat. The value of the note, an eighth or sixteenth, for instance, will determine exactly how long that note is sustained. A rhythmic symbol in standard music notation, therefore, does two things: it informs us (1) when a sound should begin, and (2) how long it should be sustained along the "grid" of beats and subdivisions of beats. In many ways, using software for creating music can aid students in understanding this complex two-part concept.

Most music creation software edit windows are visually similar and have similar functions regardless of the brand of software. The grid is based on the subdivision of the beat. It would be safe to say that most of us do not perform and record music with absolute rhythmic perfection. Given that, it is fortunate that computer software can "correct" our rhythmic inaccuracies. Notes can be "snapped to a grid." The user can customize the grid by assigning a note value, such as quarter, eighth, or sixteenth. After selecting the notes to be

“corrected,” the user pushes a button, and the notes move to their precise location along the grid. If I play four notes in a measure and I want all four notes to begin exactly on each quarter note of that measure, I would choose to quantize to the quarter note. If I want to have each of the four notes to begin exactly on the second eighth of each beat, I quantize to an eighth note, making sure the notes “snap” to the correct eighth, the second eighth of each beat.

This is where understanding the relationship of eighths and quarters is important. It could be argued that students merely need to understand the relationship of quarters and eighths as they relate to the horizontal grid—in other words, to simply count boxes. My experience has proven this to be completely true. For students with little to no experience in music, the standard music notation symbol of a quarter note is as foreign to them as a letter in an alphabet they don’t know. What’s important for them to understand is that the symbols represent an actual duration of sound and that they have a mathematical relationship to one

another. Students are better able to find the beat with an audible metronome click and when the lines on the grid, which mark the beats, are more prominent. The grid can show heavy thick lines where the beat is and thinner or dotted lines for the subdivisions of the beat. Students can “hear,” or, “audiate,” (Gordon, 2016) what they see along the grid. They see a long line or they see a short line placed at a specific spot in a measure. The graphed measure is a visual “snapshot” of beats and subdivisions of beats that repeats. In software for music creation, the grid in the edit window provides a more precise graphic representation of note placement over time than does standard music notation (see fig. 35.3).

[INSERT FIGURE 35.3]

Typical edit window in music creation software (Logic Pro X 10.1.1)

Note starting points can be quantized. The user can edit the starting point of rhythmic figures by selecting the MIDI notes or audio transient spikes in the edit window and

“snap” them to a specified grid. Rhythmic values of music, note lengths, can also be quantized. The note quantization grid durational values on the grid that represents note lengths, can also be quantized. In other words, the note’s rhythmic value or length on the grid, can be customized.

The edit window shown in figure 35.4 could be any software for demonstration purposes. Note values shown are quarter note, quarter rest, quarter note, quarter rest. Although MIDI notes are used here, the basic concepts of quantization apply to both MIDI and audio. The grid is set to 1/16 by default. Each quarter note displayed in the edit window occupies four sixteenth notes or four boxes. In some software. the grid can be customized and set set to any note value the software allows; more sophisticated software allows more subdivisions. Less sophisticated software allows only for a subdivision of the beat up to 1/64, a variety of triplets, and other settings called “swing” parameters.

[INSERT FIGURE 35.4]

Edit window in music creation software showing available subdivisions of the beat (GarageBand 10.1.2)

Teaching Music Theory: A Matter of Perspective

> I heard someone say, "Teach music. The technology will follow" [Barbara Freedman]. I say, "Teach technology and the music will follow."
>
> —Will Kuhn, Ohio Music Educators Conference (February 2012)

Will Kuhn has a degree in music technology. This major was just not available when I was in college and graduate school. Will's experience and background using technology as the instrument of musical creation and performance give him a distinctly different perspective from those of us who had no training with music technology in school. Teachers teach to

their strengths and comfort levels. We bring our background and training into the classroom, and each teacher has a unique perspective on what should be taught in a classroom. It is not to say that one way is better than another, but that they are simply different; teachers' perspectives and approaches to education also differ.

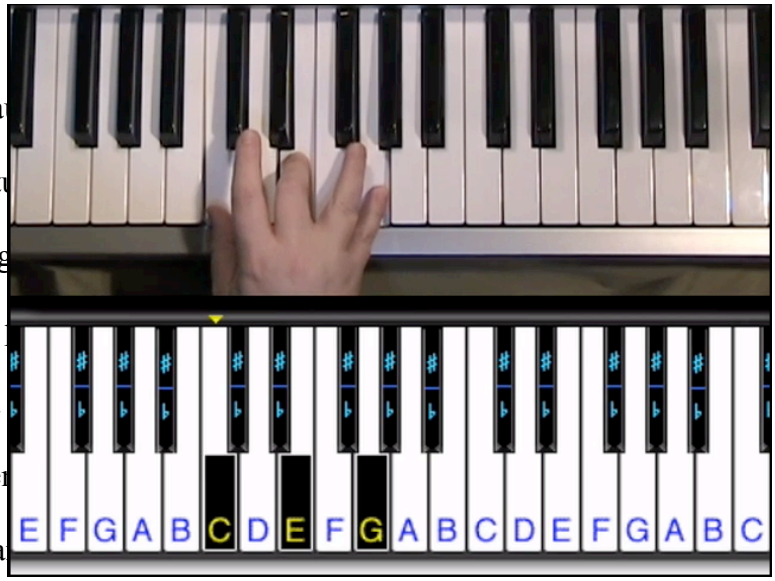
With more sophisticated concepts of music, such as arpeggiations, whether students use the software “tricks” to accomplish them becomes an issue of the learning outcomes that the teacher desires for her students. In many software applications, there is a button or simple process students can use to input a chord and then have it play in any number of iterations of arpeggiations. The software displays a block chord played harmonically, all notes at the same time, but plays it back melodically, one note at a time, in the order prescribed. It is not a “bad” thing to show students these pathways for creating arpeggiations. It is simply another tool. We can either teach arpeggios before we show students the

arpeggiator button or use the button and then explain arpeggios. Again, it's really a matter of perspective.

When considering music fluency, I prefer to teach music theory at the keyboard. This is why I choose to use the piano keyboard as the MIDI input device rather than entering each note with the mouse, using the computer keyboard as an entry device, a device that uses just buttons or some other means of input.. This approach helps students focus on using the piano keyboard to understand the relationships among pitches. I also teach basic piano skills as the primary means of teaching music theory, through playing and listening. The notation of these skills and patterns, standard notation or graphic, comes later. I am not teaching students to become pianists. I am teaching them to use the piano to discover the foundation of Western music creation. Touch-typing is a skill students learn to help them through school, business, and life. We don't teach them to touch-type so they will become professional typists. Western music theory is based completely on the structure of the piano. If most student's

don’t know the structure of the piano and the relationship among notes on the piano keyboard, Western music theory is more difficult to comprehend as a tool for analysis or creation.

I really like the idea of “sound before sight,” and I wanted to incorporate that approach in training students at the piano. In this “YouTube age,” with the advent of the “flipped classroom,” I decided to create a series of digital videos that demonstrate basic piano skills, without any music theory explanation: five-finger position, one- and two-octave scales and arpeggios, and chord progressions in root position and inversions. These simple demonstration videos are each 30 seconds to 2 minutes long. Students can work independently at a workstation equipped with a computer or tablet and a piano keyboard. The student plays the video on her device and then rewinds to repeat, plays the keyboard with the video, and proceeds to learn at her own pace. Students basically imitate what they see on the video. These videos are not meant to train students to become pianists but rather to



develop both physical and a

the presentation is visual, st

all these patterns and getting

clearly know what all these

explanation of how to build

done in class after the stude

the keyboard. Practicing pia

routine at the beginning of class.

{insert C Piano}

Screenshot from piano video instruction (Freedman, 2013)

Once students begin to "get" the sound, I incorporate lessons that teach music theory and demonstrate notation, graphic or standard. For instance, Figure 35.5 shows what I use to teach students an accompaniment pattern. Students will then practice playing and recording accompaniment patterns as an exercise.

[INSERT FIGURE 35.5]

Image of music theory instructional materials demonstrating accompaniment patterns (Freedman, 2013)

Figure 35.6 shows a MIDI file of the first few measures of Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata in software displayed graphically. When the piece is played, students can see and hear its different parts and analyze its components. This is a great exercise for discussing elements of music: bass, harmony, melody, and arpeggiated accompaniment patterns.

[INSERT FIGURE 35.6]

Image of Beethoven Moonlight Sonata in MIDI format (Logic Pro X 10.1.1)

Using this process, I teach many aspects of music theory at the piano keyboard, such as chord progressions, accompaniment patterns, bass lines from chords, melody writing, and others. Moreover, I sneak in Beethoven! This is where I get to pay homage to Bennet Reimer (1989a),

> They understand its history, its techniques, its many styles, and its major practitioners; they

> know where to go to hear good examples of it,
> how to make discerning judgments about it,
> and how to respond to it appropriately and
> sensitively in its many manifestations. (p.28)

Literacy includes a thorough understanding of music in its historical context. I don't just play Beethoven because I think students should be listening to Beethoven. Beethoven becomes an important tool for teaching music concepts, music theory and composition skills. I use the first movement of Beethoven Symphony Number 5 to discuss motives and motivic treatment. Most students have at least heard portions of this piece. Now we get to use it as a tool for composition. I take a little freedom in the classroom to talk about Beethoven. When he lived, what was happening in Europe and world history at the time. We try to place Beethoven in context of history. I do this with any composer I "sneak" into my lesson. Copland for parallel fourth and fifths, massive contemporary chorales juxtaposed to Bach or Gabrielli, and

intimate moments of solo instrumental pieces in comparison to the instrument used in a large orchestra. It depends on the topic or what the student is focused on. I had a student who loved writing percussion music and he used a lot of overlapping, repeated melodic fragments. We then listened to Steve Reich and Dan Levitan. I posed the question, “instead of just repeating your melodic fragments over and over (looping) and layering them, what can you do to effect change toward a particular goal in the piece?” Minimalism is a wonderful way to introduce the young listener melodic ostinati and then analyze how ostinati are treated in Hip Hop. My goal is to raise the bar. I want to increase the level of sophistication in how students use compositional techniques even if they are composing in contemporary popular music genres.

What I think is paramount is to be open to what students bring to the creative process. They only have their experiences to draw upon and for many their experiences and

listening is limited to contemporary popular music, even if they call it “Classic Rock”. Validating and giving honor to their music preferences keeps them open to what you have to offer as a mentor. If they don’t trust you then they won’t be inclined to try something new like listening to something very old!

I do not spend a lot of time going into historical details when referencing or playing examples of music. It’s “music appreciation” on a different level. There is a great deal of value in the intense study of music history and it is very important for young people to know and understand European Western music history and the history of contemporary popular music. Much like the ensemble classroom where music performance is the goal, the music composition classroom has limited time and the focus is on composition skills to help develop more sophisticated music. Beethoven, Mozart, Stravinsky, Bernstein, Copeland, Arlen, Berlin, and so many others are included in the analysis of composition, orchestration, and the creative process.

Having been exposed to more advanced compositional and music theory skills or just the sounds and textures of great composers past and present, students who never played piano or studied another instrument suddenly create music, of their own volition, incorporating so many sophisticated compositional skills and music concepts as they learn them. It's like learning a new word or phrase; they start using it as part of their vocabulary for communicating. The more they learn, practice, and experiment in their own compositions, the more fluent in music they become.

Figure 35.7 shows an excerpt of a piece written by student Tommy R., who didn't have much, if any, formal music training other than his elementary and middle school music classes. He did not study an instrument or sing in a chorus. Tommy is a very gifted musician and a great student. Here he demonstrates what he has learned about melody, harmony, accompaniment patterns, and bass lines. There were no assignment parameters that required Tommy to compose using these compositional tools or music elements.

He created a piece that he wanted to create, and he intuitively utilized what he had learned. There is no better assessment or acknowledgment of students' learning than when they freely incorporate new concepts and tools that you are teaching in the classroom.

[INSERT FIGURE 35.7]

Image of a portion of the MIDI display of a student piece (Logic Pro X 10.1.1)

Music is a language that takes time for students to master. If we are teaching performers, instrumentalists, and singers to re-create music composed by others, it is critical that standard music notation be at the forefront of what we teach. However, if we are teaching students to create music using available technology, standard music notation can take a back seat. The use of technology in the music classroom forces us to reevaluate what skills are necessary for fostering creativity in our students. We no longer need our primary focus to be on teaching students to be readers and writers of standard music notation. We can begin to focus our teaching

on whatever music “language skills” will allow students to freely communicate their ideas in music, to have them become *fluent in the language of music*. My experience has shown that the more fluent students become in their knowledge and use of the language of music, the more sophisticated music they produce. That’s music to my ears.

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