

# Gordon Cobb

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## **Summary Statement:**

My research mission and passion is to explore the learning processes, multimodal composing practices, and transformative engagement of young music artists as they work towards the development of their musical selves. The affordances of digital media provide opportunities for today's young people to live agentive music lives through creative and collaborative forms of music making (O'Neill, in press). Influenced by new methods of meaning making and innovative forms of working in the world, youth have access to information and modes of communication that are unprecedented in human history (Cercone, 2012). Based on this premise, my research brings together two contemporary ideas in classroom music pedagogy: the use of multimodal composing practices (Miller & McVee, 2012), and the creation of a learner-centered and youth-led environment for fostering transformative music engagement (O'Neill, 2014).

## **Areas of Research Interest:**

Specifically, my research aims to: 1) identify the practices and learning opportunities that emerge through contemporary music programs, 2) examine the affordances of multimodal composing practices for music artists, and 3) explore the potential of transformative music engagement as an approach to music pedagogy that is capable of fostering a sense of agency, autonomy, and empowerment among music learners. My PhD research examined this subject further in relation to the following two main research questions:

1. What are the specific semiotic affordances provided by new media technologies, and how might they best enable music learners to achieve music-oriented multimodal literacy through the production of collaborative music videos?
2. How might music video production pedagogy provide expansive learning opportunities associated with aspects of transformative music engagement?

Along with these two key areas of research, I have specific areas of interest that I believe will fit well within post-secondary music programs. Many music artists today are using digital media and social media platforms to communicate and represent meaningful ideas and expressions of self through multiple modes such as text, sound, and image. There is a need for research that examines to what extent music video production technologies inspire and empower music learners to become agentive and autonomous musical artists. From the singer-songwriter to the classical musician, working multimodally to create a representation of one's musical self affords opportunities to develop, produce, and promote the various products of one's musical

identity. From music videos to FaceBook and Twitter pages, there is no shortage of platforms from which today's music learners can reach outwards in order to share their vision and craft with audiences, both on and off-line. Researching music video production pedagogies provides insight into how young music artists produce music multimodally and distribute their work digitally. There is a gap in research documenting the learning processes involved in youth-led music video production, particularly in relation to music pedagogy. My research attempts to address these issues through the observation and analysis of the multimodal composing practices occurring within a particular context and pedagogical approach to music and video production with youth. The concepts explored and findings contained within my research thus far may apply to other forms of music learning and multimodal music pedagogies, thereby advancing the field by complementing existing research in this area.

Another major interest I have is in the areas of interdisciplinary collaboration, multimodality, and social-semiotic theory. Interdisciplinary collaboration provides music learners with opportunities to discover the world together, within a social context, collectively making observations that lead to simultaneously-generated creative trajectories, which materialize as the products of inspiration and imagination (Kress, 2010). If the teachers of today want to address the technology of tomorrow, as it relates to the needs of today's music learners, then we must address the technologies that students are using today to create collaborative works of art.

Finally, I am eager to continue and expand my work in music education, exploring new and innovative approaches to music learning for elementary and high school music students. Exploring how multimodality and new media technologies can be implemented into existing music curricula to create engaging and relevant music learning is an area of great interest and passion for me as an educator.

**Contributions:**

Along with my innovative work as a researcher of music video production pedagogies, I have experience in developing documentary film production as a research tool and have worked as the videographer for the Multimodal Opportunities, Diversity, and Artistic Learning (MODAL) research group on a number of research films. Combined with my extensive knowledge of new media technologies, I believe I could be of special help in researching and documenting the experiences of music learners. Lastly, I feel confident and excited about the possibility of collaborating with other instructors and music programs.

In conclusion, my mission and passion to bring new musical literacies to a wider educational community is coupled with my commitment to develop relevant and transformative music pedagogies for 21<sup>st</sup> Century music learners.