

CMEA NEWS

CONNECTICUT MUSIC EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION

volume LXXI, number 2 • www.cmea.org



Winter 2019-20

CONNECTICUT MUSIC EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE BOARD

President

Amy Bovin

Professional Development Chair

Melanie Champion

Southern Region Director

Jaminda Blackmon

President Elect

Jason Bouchard

Advocacy Chair

Carolyn Bennett

Western Region Co-Directors

Emre Akter, Rob Thornton

Immediate Past President

Brian Hutton

Membership Chair

Vacant

CMEA News Editor

Nick Loafman

Executive Director

Barbara Skrebutenas

Eastern Region Director

Megan Kirwin

Student Affairs Commission Chair

David Winer

Northern Region Co-Directors

Dawn Brys, Sharon Vocke

CMEA is a 501C3 non-profit organization and is a federated state affiliate of the National Association for Music Education (NAfME). Membership is open to all music teachers and those involved in other music education related work.

The CMEA NEWS is published four times a year in September, December, March, and June. Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not represent an official position of CMEA. A subscription to the NEWS is included in the annual membership fee.

2019-20 Publication Submission Deadlines are:

August 1, November 1, February 1, May 1

Manuscripts should be sent directly to the CMEA NEWS Editor at cmea.editor@gmail.com

For advertising information and rates, please visit www.cmea.org.

Advertiser Index

ACDA	25
Ithaca College	10
LONGY at Bard College	16
Providence College	14
Sacred Heart University	7
University of Bridgeport	4
University of Massachusetts Amherst	15
Yamaha	2





CMEEA NEWS

Volume LXXI, Number 2

CONNECTICUT MUSIC EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION

www.cmea.org

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

From the Editor Nick Loafman	5	What's Wrong with My Band? Literacy Edition Brian Wis	14
Advocacy Spotlight: Why Audition? Carolyn Bennett	6	Apprenticeships and Student Teaching Meghan Cabral	17
Student Affairs Commission David Winer	8	Favorite Children's Books for Vocal Exploration and Pitch-Matching Activities Audrey Berger Cardany	21
Professional Development Committee Melanie Champion	9	Professionalism at the Heart of Creating a Positive Culture in Our Work Michael D. Stone	25
Western Region News Emre Akter& Rob Thornton	11	You Might Be Left with Silence When You're Done Martin Urbach.....	30
Northern Region News Dawn Brys and Sharon Vocke	12		
Eastern Region News Megan Kirwin.....	13		





EMPOWERING TEACHERS TODAY POWERS THE MUSIC OF TOMORROW

As an educator, one of the most impactful ways to improve is by educating yourself. That's why the Yamaha Educator Suite (YES) helps music teachers access professional development opportunities, music teacher resources, program health support, advocacy assistance and more. YES brings you a network of like-minded teachers, experts and professionals, who want to help you achieve your goals. Let us help you raise the bar. Go to YamahaEducatorSuite.com

 **YAMAHA**
Make Waves



Free Curriculum Units for the Music Responding Standards

NAfME has created curriculum units connected to the Library of Congress's vast resources in music, including audio, video, still images, and sheet music files.

Download the newest curriculum units for Kindergarten General Music and High School Music Theory/Composition, along with Band, Orchestra, Chorus, and General Music, at bit.ly/LOCcurriculum.

nafme.org | 1-800-336-3768





BA and BM degrees in Music
Introducing
BA in Performing Arts:
Theater

TAKE THE LEAD

- BM with concentrations in Music Business, Education, or Performance
- Music Education candidates complete BM and MS degrees
- Music education students can receive a tuition-paid internship to cover their master's tuition
- Preparing successful performing arts professionals since 1947
- Spacious, well designed, renovated facilities

For more information, visit
Bridgeport.edu/music | Bridgeport.edu/theater

Program Chair: Frank Martignetti
fmartign@bridgeport.edu • 203-576-4407



TAUGHT BY
INDUSTRY
PROFESSIONALS



1 HOUR
FROM NEW YORK CITY'S
RESOURCES



UNIVERSITY OF
BRIDGEPORT

BRIDGEPORT BOLD

FROM THE EDITOR

Nick Loafman

Well, winter came on hard and fast! There was not enough crisp fall weather, and now I find myself reeling somewhat as this busy season is upon us. This can be a tough time of year for many reasons. These weeks, I find myself struggling to sleep enough, eat well, make time for exercise/wellness, and to stay in touch with my family. Even though the spirit and the music of this season is overwhelmingly festive and positive, let's remember this is a time when many personal struggles rear their heads as well, for our students and for us. Often times the best thing we can be for our students is to be a source of trust, warmth, consistency, and care. As we think about staying physically warm this season, let's remember to take care of our students, take care of each other, and take care of ourselves.

I was recently listening to an episode of the podcast "Everything Band" hosted by Mark Connor. He was chatting with Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser, a renowned thought leader in our field. Anyone familiar with "Dr. Tim's" work will know his mantra - the biggest thing that students will remember about us is how we make them feel. I know this is true for me. When my high school buddies and I reminisce about our time, we remember some performances and repertoire, but the way we felt around our teachers still resonates with us most. Relationships and personal connections are the most important parts of our work - I have to remind myself of this constantly.

This issue revolves somewhat around these themes. As Michael Stone from California celebrates building a culture of professionalism in our work, he mentions "Kids. Music. Self. In that order". I think this is fantastic advice; all are important, as is that hierarchy. I hope that Audrey

Cardany's article on children's books for pitch matching activities can help create memorable and engaging experiences for our youngest music learners. Our colleagues who teach early elementary have the amazing role of being the first ones to show kids what a great place the music room is! This coming spring many of us will take on student teachers, and everybody wins if they get off to the best start possible. Meghan Cabral, our upcoming Western Region Middle School band conductor for 2020, has some excellent suggestions for optimizing this experience.

Finally, NYC-based educator and percussionist Martin Urbach challenges us to accept the racist backgrounds/notations of many common songs, and to educate ourselves about this reality of our system. Moreover, he charges us to remove these songs from our students' experiences, while simultaneously enabling us all to be agents of equality. I encourage you to read this poignant

article most of all, as it is vital that we all confront our own implicit biases and examine our choices. Although often times challenging, as I'll be the first to admit, this is a vital process to undertake.

It has been great to see so many of you out at our fall auditions, and I am looking forward to more in the year to come. I wish you a wonderful holiday season - see you in 2020!!



Photo by Janelle Rose Photography

ADVOCACY SPOTLIGHT: WHY AUDITION?

Carolyn Bennett, Advocacy Chair

This fall, I eagerly returned to the CMEA Board, now as the Advocacy Chair. I think of this position as two sides of one coin: On one side, I aim to advocate for the needs of music educators on the state and national level. I am writing this message from the NAFME National Conference, where I hope to grow in my capacity to serve in this respect. On the other side, I work to empower CMEA members with the tools they need to advocate within their local communities. In my regular NEWS messages, I hope to provide readers with ideas to justify the many programs and opportunities CMEA members provide to our educational communities.



As we enter the regional festival audition season, we teachers know that these events are important milestones for many of our students. But how can we communicate the value of this experience in a compelling way to community stakeholders, such as principals, parents, and students?

Rubric-Based, Standardized Assessment

For better or for worse, student assessment rules today's educational landscape. Sometimes, the arts are de-prioritized because we do not use mainstream standardized assessments to monitor student progress. In festival auditions, students are assessed on a comprehensive rubric and given clear feedback on their progress. The audition rubric can be used in the classroom to show administrators that the arts have high objective standards of achievement,

contrary to the subjective, "anything-goes" common misperception of the arts.

These objective measures of success are also useful longitudinal measures of individual progress. As students look over the years, they can set long-term goals and track their musical growth. As students become increasingly comfortable using the rubric to self-assess, it will guide their work within all rehearsal contexts. Ultimately, students who are comfortable using audition-style rubrics are better equipped to make independent performance choices: They are ready to take control of their own learning.

College Readiness

Auditions are the gate-keeper to nearly every collegiate music program. As Language Arts teachers prepare students for term papers, and science teachers prepare students for lab reports,

music teachers must prepare students for auditions and juries – the tools most commonly used to measure academic achievement at the collegiate level. Students who have experienced the rigor of festival auditions are more prepared to perform successfully at college auditions, and during other high-stakes solo performances throughout their academic career.

Social-Emotional Learning

Describe the audition process to any adult, and they will quickly appreciate the emotional maturity required of our young musicians. Most adults will admire the confidence and strength students must already possess to perform solo under scrutiny. What some might not realize at first is that the audition process, under the guidance of a caring educator, nurtures these very capacities within young musicians. Students develop

healthy coping strategies including deep breathing, intentional relaxation, and intense focus. They rely on positive self-talk, develop a growth mindset, and process constructive criticism productively. These social-emotional skills will benefit students in countless ways as they enter adulthood.

Community Connection

Feeling connected to our local community is a basic human need. Adolescents feel this need especially acutely, as they develop a personal sense of identity. No matter where students are along this journey, auditions can become a powerful tool for community connection. Many students feel passively secure within the community of their school or ensemble. Auditioning pushes them to take active ownership of their community identity: They become their

community's representative to the larger CMEA world. Some students may already excel within their school or ensemble, and may suffer from the "big fish in a little pond" syndrome. Auditions can broaden their horizons, pushing them to set ambitious goals by contributing to the larger musical community. Some students' drive for musical excellence may cause them to feel disconnected from their less-passionate classmates; they feel validated when they enter the CMEA community. In the words of a former student, "I feel like I found my tribe." These students find a much-needed sense of connection as they enter a community that shares their values of musical excellence and supports those who pursue it. No matter how a student relates to their local school community, experiencing a broader context can help

them feel more connected to the world – and find their own identity there.

CMEA festivals are a wonderful opportunity for students. The audition could be viewed as a mere gateway to these prestigious events. However, I think the audition itself holds inherent value for our students. Through the audition experience, students become more self-aware, reflective, confident, connected, and ready for their future.

Join the conversation on CMEA's Facebook Page: How do you see CMEA auditions positively impacting your students? Why do members of your community (parents, students, colleagues) value such opportunities? What could Connecticut communities do to better support student growth through audition opportunities?



SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY
PERFORMING ARTS

SEE YOURSELF ON OUR STAGE

- ◆ Band, Orchestra, Wind Ensemble
- ◆ Liturgical, Concert, A Capella choirs
- ◆ Non-major scholarships and participation grants available
- ◆ International Travel Opportunities
- ◆ Music Minor

For more information, please visit: www.sacredheart.edu/performingarts

SALUTATIONS FROM THE SAC CHAIR

David Winer, SAC Chair

Greetings from the Student Affairs Commission, the driving and guiding force behind the Auditions and Festivals and all things “student” for CMEA. As I write this in early November, we have just experienced such a beautiful foliage season that it reminds me of why I love New England and Connecticut!

SAC never has a dull moment. Currently in the midst of audition season, we are enjoying the now more relaxed ride of our 4-year auditions repertoire and scales requirements list, we are now in the second year our new state-wide Access Equity Rule (see below) and the streamlining of the Harp auditions all on one day, and this year are implementing new Percussion Accessory requirements, as well as piloting the first year of Jazz Vibes auditions.

The new Access Rule reads as follows from the Teacher Handbook:

As of fall, 2018, the Access Rule ensures that a minimum of one student from each school be considered for inclusion in the high school and middle school festivals. Acceptance will be at the discretion of a consensus between the Region Director, Ensemble Chair, and the student's teacher. Students will be added to an ensemble after the cut-off score is established. Benefits of this rule include added value to teacher membership in CMEA, promoting advocacy within schools and districts through festival participation, and advancing inclusion in urban and rural environments. This rule does not apply to All-State.

It is also important to keep in mind that students to be considered for addition under the Access Rule must first have been part of the audition process. And, at the High School level, any students who score below the cutoff scores will not qualify for the All-State audition, regardless of the Access Rule.

As auditions season progresses, we welcome any feedback regarding the scales and repertoire, and anything else that may draw your attention. Representatives will be attending each HS Region meeting this winter to discuss a new vocal audition repertoire proposal - we will welcome your feedback on that, as well.

Our Region Directors, All-State Chair (Greg Hoyt, now a veteran in his 2nd year!) and all of the Festival and Ensemble Chairs who work under their guidance toil endlessly to create outstanding musical experiences for our students. Please do not hesitate to thank them and offer your assistance. There are many tasks to do, and many hands needed to do them.

As I enter mid-year of my final year as SAC Chair (Mr. John Abucewicz of Bristol Central HS will be assuming the role next year!), there is still and always so much more to do. One of the items on my list continues to be to encourage the middle school regions to share their approaches to the auditions and the audition repertoire. There are so many excellent ideas being used in each region independently, and some have already begun to adopt these ideas in other regions. I hope this process continues.

CMEA is a fabulous organization run 99% by incredible volunteers. Our Executive Director, Presidents, and others on SAC and the Executive Board serve out of passion for Music Education, love of music, and devotion their students. Please make our jobs easier by reading the Teacher Handbook, and other materials on CMEA.org, reading the email communications,



meeting deadlines... and volunteering! We love to serve you - help us help you.

Finally, as we all strive for great concerts this season, remind your students' parents and your administrators at every opportunity that what we do is a *process* – yes, a little product too (and that's nice, but it should not be about just the show!). The most important part is the powerful learning – Mind, Body, and Spirit – that is gleaned from the *process of music instruction* and the *experience of creating great music!* We actually never “master” the art of music, as music always changes, the bar always rises, there is always more to learn and achieve. That is the beauty of our art form.

I know I have shared this before - this is a wonderful quote by Leonard Bernstein and I use it on my personal email signature: “Development is the main thing in music, as it is in life; because development means change, growing, blossoming out, and these things are life itself.” Music continues to be one of life's great teachers.

I wish for everyone a wonderful fall and fine momentum into the winter concert season. Peace and fulfillment to all, and wonderful holidays!

Dave

FROM THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CHAIR

Melanie Champion melchamp4@gmail.com

With the school year well under way, I hope you have been able to participate in quality, music-relevant professional development. I strive to create opportunities that are available to all of our members around the state, and I welcome your help and input about how to improve our program offerings. I find that the more educators we have involved in the planning and execution, the better the result for everyone. I encourage you to consider applying to present a session at the Spring conference or to have your group perform as a Showcase Performing Ensemble. Or, perhaps you want to get involved in our PD Committee or hosting a Coffee & Conversation event at your school in the future. Please contact me with any comments or questions.



In-Service Conference: I would like to publicly welcome Michelle Martin on board as our Conference Chair! If you have questions related to the Spring conference, please contact her at cmea20martin@gmail.com and consider getting involved

We debuted our new professional development program called “**Coffee and Conversation**” at Waddell School in Manchester, hosted by Nicole Dickinson.

These are intended to be informal meetings hosted on weeknights at various schools around the state, where the host teacher offers a short presentation/talk or facilitates a lesson/topic sharing session. While I have a few locations/hosts already booked, I would love to be able to offer more and varied opportunities and am looking for more teachers interested in serving as hosts.

Election Day PD was held in Stratford and I would like to thank Brian Frazier and Stratford Public Schools for assisting CMEA with this important work. Thank you to all who presented and attended for helping to make this such a successful day filled with thoughtful discussions and high quality sessions. I

would also like to thank our volunteers, Nicole Dickinson, Rebecca Corcoran-Stevens, Elisa Haveles, Brian Frazier, Koryn Soboleski, Lisa Moretti, and Christina Curto, as well as the large group that helped to move yoga mats!

We are in Year 2 of our new **PD Outreach Program** and have an



outstanding lineup of presenters and topics available to your local school districts. While the deadline has passed for subsidized sessions, the program is available year round. I encourage you to look at our website for further details.

With all of these exciting PD opportunities comes some behind-the-scenes work, and I can't do it without help. We have decided to create some new positions to help - this year, Region Presidents will be looking for individuals to serve as **Regional PD Chairs**. These folks would combine with the Conference Chair and myself to form a state PD Committee that would meet monthly to further this work. The more people that step forward to assist with this important work, the better our PD offerings will be. Please contact your region president if you are interested in this position.



Don't Just Play.
PERFORM AT YOUR HIGHEST LEVEL.

Take your musicianship to new levels through the continuous study of theory, practice, and performance.

ON-CAMPUS AUDITIONS

- DECEMBER 14, 2019
- JANUARY 25, 2020
- FEBRUARY 1, 2020
- FEBRUARY 8, 2020

REGIONAL AUDITIONS

- LOS ANGELES, CA JANUARY 12, 2020
- AUSTIN, TX JANUARY 19, 2020
- BOSTON, MA JANUARY 19, 2020
- CHICAGO, IL FEBRUARY 2, 2020

Application Deadline: DECEMBER 1

➤ ithaca.edu/music | music@ithaca.edu



FROM THE WESTERN REGION

Emre Akter, Rob Thornton co-directors

We hope everyone is staying warm! As the snow begins to cover the ground and concert season starts, we wanted to share an update about things going on in the region.

For high school directors this busy time also means looking forward to the All-State festival, opportunities for continued professional growth, and chances to meet with colleagues. CMEA continues to offer wonderful experiences for our students, and professional development opportunities for us as music educators. As the work toward the region festivals continues at a feverish pace, we would be remiss if we didn't point out that All-State deadlines are approaching. All-State auditions will be held February 8th, 2020. If there is the possibility of cancellation due to bad weather, the snow date is February 15th. These auditions will take place at North Haven High School.

The All-State Festival itself will take place once again at the Connecticut Convention Center from April 2-4, 2020. Registration for All-State begins the same day high school region scores are posted. The following deadlines will be important to observe: The deadline for All-State audition registration is January 3, 2020, which is less than a month away. Your school's payment must be postmarked by January 17th, 2020. We know this deadline is right around the winter break, so please try to keep it in mind!

We forget this sometimes, but the purpose of the adjudication festivals

isn't solely to decide which players will be accepted to regionals or All-State. They also exist as a means to educate our students about the audition process, help them build confidence as a solo performer, give them encouragement to explore solo literature, and provide them valuable feedback as they improve. The adjudication festivals are such an important part of this process. Thanks to all those who make this possible.

The past high school adjudication festival went very smoothly. Envelopes of materials were prepared, judges were selected, rooms were assigned, auditions were heard, and scores have been posted. A huge thank you goes out to the teachers and staff of the New Fairfield Public Schools for hosting the high school auditions again this year. We would also like to thank Fairfield Woods Middle School, Fairfield for hosting the WRMS Auditions. Thanks so much to Jim Buchta and the whole staff! The entire region really appreciates it.

There are so many people for us to thank at this point in the school year. For one, the WRMS Jazz Ensemble Co-Chair along with Michael Strange is actually Peter Hohmeister, a change from what was listed in the previous Fall article. Thank you for everything you guys have been doing for the region, and sorry for the misprint!

We would also like to send a huge thank you to our colleagues in the Darien public schools for hosting this year's Western Region High School Festival,

and Wilton public schools for hosting the Western Region Middle School Festival. A great deal of work goes into being site host, and that work is appreciated. The music departments at these schools have worked hard to ensure that everything is in place for our region festival. Planning meals, reserving rehearsal spaces, security concerns, providing instruments, and all of the related details take quite a bit of time and effort to manage. We certainly could not offer festivals like this without districts like Darien and Wilton stepping up to host the events, and for that we are very grateful. In addition to the site chairs, we appreciate the help of the WRHS festival chairs, Jason Polise and Malcolm Karlan. Thank you all for your work toward the upcoming festivals.

There is still one more thing we need to share with the region. After 3 years as serving as Western Region Co-Director, Emre has decided it is time to pass the torch to someone else at the end of his elected term. Rob will continue to run as a Region Co-Director, but the position has evolved to the point where it is definitely better as a two person endeavor, and we are seeking someone else to step up into the role of region leadership. Please reach out to either Emre or Rob if you are interested in stepping up.

Thanks to everyone for your work on behalf of CMEA. It is very much appreciated!

GREETINGS FROM THE NORTHERN REGION

Dawn Brys & Sharon Vocke, co-directors

The close of the calendar year brings us a season of celebration and reflection. We hope this communication finds you celebrating all the great work you continuously put forth as music educators. Few professions reach so many in such profound ways. We are proud and grateful to do this work alongside you and to serve as your co-region directors.

In the spirit of continuous improvement, we encourage you to get involved in whatever capacity you can and to make your voice heard - we are listening! Some of the many ways your participation helps the festivals run smoother include making photocopies, running sectionals, serving as an usher, greeting families, selling tickets, standing in a hallway to point people in the right direction, helping with stage setup and breakdown, and many others. No task is too big or small, but every action is certainly worthy. Some of our most significant agenda items as a region are addressed (or even organically uncovered) during director meeting conversations at festivals. We hope the next director meeting serves as an opportunity for you to share your voice and the voice of

your elementary colleagues who do not typically attend these meetings. Things to consider sharing: What do your students need? What do you need as teachers to support this work? What professional development do you need? And perhaps most importantly, in what ways can we support and encourage each other?

Middle school band directors: please make every effort to attend the directors meeting at the middle school festival this year. We will be making a significant decision regarding audition repertoire and we need all voices represented. If you are a middle school director unable to attend the meeting, please be sure to reach out to us regiondirectornorth@gmail.com prior to the festival in March so we can share your voice with other directors on your behalf.

Finally, we are looking for a new high school festival chair as well as a site host for the 2021 middle school festival. Thank you to John Abucewicz for your service as festival chair, and to Wethersfield High School and music faculty for being such gracious hosts the last few years for our middle school festival. Please let us know if your school is able to host the 2021 festival.



Dawn Brys



Sharon Vocke

Important Dates:

January 11, 2020: **Northern Region Middle School Auditions**, King Philip Middle School, West Hartford. Snow date February 1, 2020.

Audition fee (\$15/student) due 12/20/19

January 17-18, 2020: **Northern Region High School Festival**,

New Britain High School. Snow date: January 24-25, 2020.

Festival Fee (\$38/student for accepted students) is due 12/20/19

February 8, 2020: **All-State Auditions**

March 20-21: **Northern Region Middle School Festival**, Wethersfield High School
Snow date: March 28. Festival fee for accepted students (\$25/student) due 2/14/20

April 2-4, 2020: **CMEA In-service/All-State Festival**

EASTERN REGION

Megan Kirwin, director

Greetings CMEA Members! I am thrilled to be writing this message as your new Eastern Region Director. It's been a pretty steep learning curve and I wanted to thank you all for your patience and flexibility while I find my footing.

I can't believe we are already closing in on the end of 2019, what a blur! It's amazing to think that while the year is wrapping up, our school years are just getting started. In November we had our High School audition day, and in December we had our middle school audition day. These audition days were a huge success due in large part to the many people who volunteered their time for our students.

On November 16, we held our high school auditions at Manchester High School in Manchester CT, which hosted over 1000 students from over 35 high schools. I would like to thank Keith Berry, our site chair, for hosting the auditions for us. I would also like to thank our tabulators Nola Campbell, Ilanna Tariff and Leah Stillman, and our head judges Mark Kolb, Rich Manning, Susan Kohanski, Jessica Wolf, and Bethany Dauphinais.

Our Middle School auditions were held on December 7th at William J. Johnston Middle School in Colchester CT, which hosted over 700 students from 45 different middle schools. Thank you to Lynn Goodwin and Keith Morrissette, our site chairs. Thank you to Patricia O'Sullivan who was our adjudication chair and was responsible for making

the judges' packets. I would also like to thank our tabulators Barbara Comstock King, Jason Beit, and Allison Beit, and thank our head judges Rich Manning, Andrew Kohanski, Bethany Dauphinais, and Mark Kolb.

Thank you to all of the individuals who worked on the Eastern Region's behalf to help our students have successful auditions. If you see any of these directors, please thank them for all of their hard work and dedication in working to ensure that our students in the Eastern Region have one of their best musical experiences. I look forward to seeing you all at the upcoming festivals.

The High School festival is set for January 3rd and 4th at UCONN and our middle school festival is set for March 6th and 7th at Enfield High School. We will be holding our annual directors' meetings during each of the festivals. Items on the agenda include: a review of the year, budgets, and looking forward to next year. Each year at the annual directors' meeting we need volunteers to take on various roles including ensemble chairs, site chairs for auditions and festivals, festival chairs, tabulators, and head judges. We would love to have any experienced veterans return to these positions, but we are always looking for new people to join in the fun!

Thank you to everyone for your hard work during this hectic audition season. Have a wonderful break and I'll see you all at the Eastern Region festivals!



Megan Kirwin has been the Director of Instrumental Music at Tolland High School for the past fourteen years, previously taught middle school music for six years and elementary general music and beginner band for one year. Mrs. Kirwin has a great deal of experience with instrumental music programs and the philosophies behind them. Mrs. Kirwin is a TEAM certified mentor and was nominated for Tolland Teacher of the Year in 2019. As a professional horn player, Mrs. Kirwin maintains a small private studio and plays with the Willimantic Orchestra. Mrs. Kirwin received her Bachelor of Music Education from the University of Colorado at Boulder and her Master's in Music Education with an emphasis in Instrumental Conducting from the Hartt School at the University of Hartford.

What's Wrong With My Band? *Literacy Edition*

By Brian Wis

This post originally appeared on the blog Teaching and Music - Reflections of a Daily Practitioner (teachingmusic.posthaven.com). Reprinted with permission.

The teacher complaints go something like:

“Why are my kids looking around the room instead of at their music?”

“Why are my kids dragging?”

“Why are my kids ignoring all the markings?”

Are you ready for the answer?Because your kids are *lost*.

Your kids can't read music.

Now, they may be able to tell you the name of a note when you point at it (given enough time). Or your trumpet section might be able to (slowly) tell you the names of notes in the next phrase, but what I'm talking about is individual *fluency*. The ability to process names of notes *instantly*.

Your kids probably can't do *that*. *Not at the tempos you are asking them to maintain in rehearsal.*

Don't believe me? Next rehearsal, choose students at random to say the names of the notes out loud *at the tempo you have been rehearsing*. Choose different kids on different parts so they can't just repeat what they just heard from someone else.

What did you notice? Yeah. They can't process the note names instantly with 100% accuracy. So, if you were those kids, and the teacher was rehearsing faster than you could process, what would *you* do?

- Write in the names of the notes (or fingerings)
- Look at the kid next to you to memorize the fingering pattern
- Learn the tune by ear
- Slow down

And so it goes. Students learn these survival tactics because that's the only way they can participate “successfully” during the rehearsal. When you reprimand them

music
at providence college

areas of study:
music
music education
musical theatre track
music minor

COMING SOON: music technology

ensembles:
pep band
orchestra
symphonic winds
opera musical workshop
i cantori
concert chorale
jazz ensembles
chamber ensembles

SMITH CENTER
Arts

AUDITIONS - 401.865.2183
music.providence.edu

see yourself here

for looking away from their music, all that results in is a student blankly staring at the page while *having no idea where they are*. They are lost because they simply can't keep up.

Eventually their survival tactics result in the banding sounding OK by the time the concert rolls around. Then, after the concert you pass out a new piece and "Wow, it's like they didn't retain anything!"

Been there? Yeah, me too.

So...what is the solution? You probably won't like it. Let me start by talking about what the solution *is not*:

- Having the students fill in a handout of notes (writing the names below each note)
- Reciting names of notes out loud on occasion, *as a group*
- Memorizing the names of the lines and spaces

Filling in worksheets is far too slow a task. Students won't develop fluency that way (though you could use it for a timed summative). Doing anything as a group will always allow the kids who are struggling to hide. And separating the staff into two things (lines and spaces) actually makes note recognition take *longer*. Not to mention it becomes rather useless when dealing with ledger lines.

The solution is *to rehearse less*. You read that right. Less rehearsal, in conjunction with a sequenced, challenging, data-driven (yep, I said it) process for helping students to make note recognition second nature. Instantaneous.

Once students have truly conquered:

- Note recognition over the full range of the instrument

- Enharmonic equivalents
- Key signatures
- Scale spelling

Then you have given them a fighting chance to consider:

- Rhythm
- Fingerings
- Dynamic markings
- Blend
- Intonation

And all the other aspects of musicianship that we want them to know and be able to do. Honestly, when I hear teachers expressing concern about (for example) their band's lack of pulse control and rhythmic accuracy, I ask myself "I wonder if those kids can read names of notes." Because maybe it's not the rhythm, maybe they are lost/playing by ear/just trying to survive. Help those kids to become fluent at *note reading*, and suddenly the other things start to improve.

And I'm not just talking about beginners. At my school, we spend a full class period every week with our *9th*

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST
Department of Music & Dance



Ranked in the top 5% of public colleges and universities nationwide by U.S. News & World Report

<p>B.M. in Jazz, Music Education, Performance, and more</p> <p>B.A. in Music offers flexibility for double-majors</p> <p>M.M. in Conducting, Music Education, Performance, and more</p> <p>Ph.D. in Music Education</p>	<p>AUDITIONS FOR 2020 ADMISSION</p> <p>All Instruments & Voice <small>(except strings)</small></p> <p>JAN 25, FEB 1 & 8, 2020</p> <p>Violin, viola, cello, double bass</p> <p>FEB 10 & 19, 2020</p>
<p>UMassAmherst The Commonwealth's Flagship Campus www.umass.edu/music</p>	
<p>Information, Admissions, or to Visit: 413-545-6048 musicadmissions@umass.edu</p>	





graders on music literacy. Every. Week. What do we use? We use my NoteNames+ iOS app. But you don't even need to use technology. When I was teaching in the early 90s I used handmade flash cards and put students in pairs. They had to get through the whole stack of flashcards in a certain amount of time in order to be considered fluent. So don't let the lack of technology stop you! Just make sure there is and expectation, and *accountability*. And you have to do it *regularly*, all year.

Of course, the advantage of NoteNames+ is that it provides a graduated approach that results in a sense of urgency. And the Google Docs data reporting allows us to refine instruction, expectations, and summarize progress. You can do some of these things with sites like musicracer.com, tonesavvy.com and musictheory.net as well (though

maybe not for free when it comes to data reporting).

And by the way, there is *nothing* about note reading that is difficult. Beginners should be taught to read the full range of their instrument. You don't need to wait until they need to play those notes before learning to read them. It's just the alphabet! Take a look at the *complexity* of any video game that 10 year olds play today and tell me they can't learn the alphabetical nature of the staff.

The bottom line is that note recognition needs to be *instant* so kids can consider everything else we expect them to be attending to. Would an English teacher expect kids to read aloud at a quick pace if they barely knew the *letters* they were looking at? Would the teacher have the class "read aloud" as a group and just keep going back to the beginning

and try again and again? If they class *could* eventually say a sentence aloud all together, would that mean *each child* could read? No, that would be a rather silly conclusion. Yet how often do we put music in front of kids, count off a tempo, and expect them to magically keep up? We go back to the top and have them play it again, and again, and *again*, until it sounds good. Should we assume that each child is actually reading now? Hm.

Put the instruments in the cases and spend regular time explaining the *alphabetical* nature of the staff, how enharmonic notes are structured, how sharps and flats are presented on the staff, and then give kids *tools* to develop fluency of recognition. Then put the horns together. Do this once per week and you'll find that you have not wasted time, you've invested it.



**Master the Art
of Teaching**
**CHOOSE
YOUR COAST**

**Master of Music in Music Education
(MM/ME) in Cambridge, MA**

**Master of Arts in Teaching in Music
(MAT) in Los Angeles, CA**

Prepare for licensure with our
innovative, one-year programs
rooted in El Sistema principles.

[Longy.edu/apply](https://longy.edu/apply)

LONGY
School of Music of Bard College

Apprenticeships and Student Teaching

by Meghan Cabral



Meghan Cabral (All photos by Eric Pecor.)

Different professions have different on-the-job training periods. Medical doctors complete residencies lasting three to five years. Cement masons, who handle poured concrete, have apprenticeships that can be up to four years long as they learn their trade. According to the United States Department of Labor,

[t]he length of an apprenticeship program depends on the complexity of the occupation and the type of program (Time Based, Competency Based, or a Hybrid). Apprenticeship programs range from 1 year to 6 years, but the majority are 4 years in length. During the program, the apprentice receives both structured, on-the-job learning (OJL) and related classroom instruction (RCI). For each year of the apprenticeship, the apprentice will receive normally 2,000 hours of on-the-job training and a recommended

minimum of 144 hours of related classroom instruction.¹

Teachers get anywhere seven to sixteen weeks of on-the-job training during six- or seven-hour school days. A student teacher may participate in thirty-five to forty hours a week of on-the-job training depending on the length of the school day and the amount of outside-the-school-day preparation the teacher and student teacher do together. For a full semester, this is between 560 and 640 hours of training, compared to the 2,000 hours of many other apprenticeships. Until they do their student teaching, college education majors are learning in a vault, building skills theoretically as they discuss how to teach in a classroom or lab. It's fairly common knowledge that there is no substitute for teaching students in an actual classroom setting; however, educators generally get minimal on-the-job training.

Colleges and universities define student teaching in many different ways. Temple University in Philadelphia describes it as a situation in which you are sharing the classroom: "To help you make the transition from student to teacher, you will share the classroom with an experienced professional who will impart to you his or her knowledge of best practices and the wisdom acquired from years of experience."² This definition is in line with recent research about student teaching that explores what is called a *cooperating teacher partnership*.

In the handbook of Texas State University–San Marcos, the student

teacher is described as a *student of teaching*. "Student teaching is the culminating experience of the teacher preparation program at Texas State. It is a six-semester-hour experience in a classroom of a public, and in some cases private or charter, school. During this semester you will be a 'student of teaching.' It will be a time of learning, improvement, and growth. Your university supervisor and cooperating teacher will assist you to develop your full potential."³

Defining "to Train"

What exactly does *on-the-job training* mean? The *International Journal of Business and Management* defined it by saying that "the verb 'to train' is derived from the old French word *trainer*, meaning 'to drag.' Hence such English definitions may be found as: to draw along; to allure; to cause; to grow in the desired manner; to prepare for performance by instruction, practice exercise, etc. Training can be described as 'providing the conditions in which people can learn effectively.' To learn is 'to gain knowledge, skill, ability.'⁴ This leads us to ask, What is the best way for future teachers to learn how to do their jobs effectively?

Coteaching/Team-Teaching

Given that there is so little on-the-job training in student teaching, how can student teachers and their mentors make the most of their time? New research shows that the best way to learn is through a

Copyright © 2018 National Association for Music Education
DOI: 10.1177/0027432118811001
<http://journals.sagepub.com/home/mej>

Meghan Cabral is a band teacher at George Fischer Middle School in Carmel, New York. She can be contacted at musicmegs@gmail.com. <https://sites.google.com/view/meghancabral/>

This article was originally published in the December 2018 issue of *Music Educators Journal*. Reprinted with permission.



coteaching model. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development in a December 2015 article looked a new approach to student teaching. They observed student-teaching activities at Minnesota’s St. Cloud State University, where the motto is “Off our seat and on your feet.”⁵ Instead of watching the cooperating teacher for a few days, student teachers immediately jump into teaching through a coteaching model, much like many of the special education models used in classrooms today. This model incorporates student teachers in the education, learning, *and* teaching process from the very first day of their student teaching. This approach helps to maximize the time student teachers have in the classroom as they complete their cooperating teaching.

The coteaching or team-teaching model requires trust on the part of both the student teacher and the cooperating teacher. Since student teachers often do not know their cooperating teachers prior to starting their student teaching “gig,” it is important to allow for flexibility in the student teaching process.

St. Cloud State University defines *team-teaching* to be what happens

when both teachers are actively involved in the lesson with no prescribed division of authority. Both teachers share the instruction, are free to interject information, and are available to assist students and answer questions.⁶ No one person is in charge of the classroom. Students learn from both teachers without either teacher being the leader. While the student teacher may be giving part of the lesson, the cooperating teacher can interject and aid the teacher without worrying that the students will see this as undermining the student teacher’s authority. Teachers work cooperatively in all aspects of teaching.

What Coteaching Is Not

The cooperative team teaching or coteaching model allows the student teacher to begin refining their skills from the very beginning. From the Academy of Co-Teaching & Collaboration, St. Cloud outlines very clearly what coteaching is not. They state, “Simply dividing the tasks and responsibilities among two people. For example, coteaching is *not*:

- One person teaching one subject followed by another who teaches a different subject
- One person teaching while the other sits and watches
- When one person’s ideas prevail regarding what will be taught and how it will be taught
- Someone is simply assigned to act as a tutor.”⁷

Many of these statements sound like traditional student teaching. Traditional student-teaching handbooks often provide guidelines specifying that the student teacher observe during the first few days while taking notes and getting a feel for the school and classroom. When the student teacher finally starts teaching, the cooperating teacher should be sitting and watching the student teacher, taking notes, and then debriefing. Coteaching, however, is not about divided responsibilities or even about supporting one another in the teaching—it is about teaching together.

Making the Model Work

Cooperating teachers, from the very first class period, can have their student

teachers take part in the class. During these first few lessons, this can be as simple as sitting in on the class and participating. If it is an instrumental lesson, have them play; if a choral rehearsal, have them sing; and if a general music class, they can participate with the students.

Prior to the first class, the cooperating teacher can encourage the student teacher to support the teaching and learning process by helping students who are struggling by modeling behaviors or musical ideas. Trust needs to be established between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher to make sure the student teacher understands it is okay to speak out during class. While students are in a clarinet lesson, for example, the student teacher, along with the cooperating teacher, can begin to reinforce good posture and embouchure with the students. The student teacher should feel that it is fine to teach during the beginning classes.

As the class periods go on and the student teacher begins writing his or her own lesson plans to deliver to the students, the coteaching model can continue. While the student teacher may start a lesson, the cooperating teacher can jump in and offer suggestions to the students, which gives the student teacher other things to think about in real time. This differs from the traditional approach in which the cooperating teacher takes notes, writes down suggestions or even errors observed, and then hands the student teacher the notes or debriefs hours later, when the lesson is not fresh in everyone's minds. By coteaching, both teachers are adding to the learning process every day, and the student teacher can see what she or he might be missing as it happens.

Research on Coteaching

In September 1969, the *Peabody Journal of Education* published an article titled "A Team Teaching Approach to Student Teaching." Authors Louise Wilder and Raymond K. Jung wrote about the experience of incorporating a team-teaching approach into student teaching. They

wrote, "I, as supervising teacher, believe that our team teaching approach to student teaching was very successful and that the advantages of our program far outweighed the disadvantages. The class benefited from the active utilization of the talents and abilities of two teachers to meet the needs of the whole group and of the individual. The student teacher benefited from the opportunity to plan and implement enrichment activities."⁸ Both the student teacher and the cooperating teacher found this approach to be extremely beneficial.

One concern about the cooperating teaching approach to student teaching was that the student teacher would not have enough classroom experience during her or his time. During this experience, however, the opposite occurred. In fact, there was "added insight gained from the give and take process experienced under true cooperative planning and evaluation."⁹

Personal Experiences

Any time I host a student teacher, I spend time prepping and planning for our first encounter. The student teacher and I meet prior to the student teacher's start date to go over what our schedules look like. We discuss strengths and weaknesses of different classes. The student teacher receives class lists as well as an outline of where to expect each class to be in terms of progress. With the use of technology, you and your student teacher do not even have to be in the same location to have this meeting. This initial meeting saves crucial training time once the student teacher begins.

I believe that the student teacher should begin teaching as soon as possible. We discuss together what his or her most comfortable instrument (or class) is first, as well as which one he or she struggles with the most. A student teacher's most comfortable instrument to teach is not necessarily his or her primary instrument.

From the first class meeting, I have to allow the student teacher to step in. We use questions like "Ms. K, what did you think of that example?" or "Ms. K, what

do you think we should do next with this example?" Although some young, new teachers might feel like they are being put on the spot, it is important for them to begin showing their teacher skills immediately. It is important not only for the student teacher but also for the students that she or he is teaching. The student teacher will do the attendance for the class right from day one. Even if I am at the point where I no longer verbally take attendance, I will have the student teacher take attendance verbally (for nonensemble classes!).

My own situation has a very nice setup for student teachers, as in my beginner class lesson, I have two of the same lessons back to back. If we are lucky enough to have the situation, even if these classes fall on the student teacher's day one, I have the student teacher watch the first lesson of beginning clarinets and take notes (almost in dictation) on what I taught, and then the student teacher teaches the second lesson, along with my guidance. I have her or him do the same warm-ups that I did in the previous lesson and follow the same lesson structure. Prior to this day, we also discuss that if, at any point in the lesson, the student teacher is feeling uneasy or unsure, she or he should simply say, "Mrs. Cabral, what are your thoughts about our performance?" or "Mrs. Cabral, what do you think we should work on next?"

We continue to carry this team effort throughout the entire first week of student teaching. During the first few days, if the student teacher is feeling very confident, he or she can begin to lead as many classes as desired while continuing to have me jump in, saying, "Ms. K, why don't we try this?" or "Ms. K, could I hear Student Z play alone for a minute." This nonthreatening environment allows the teacher and the student teacher to work together in a manner that gives them both leadership experiences in the class.

Throughout these first few days, both the student teacher and I have a notepad available to write down questions or things we want to discuss and clarify after class is over. While I have to accept

that the class will not run 100 percent the same as it would if I were running it, the student teacher will see the value of trying it my way, not because my way is the perfect or best way but because it is working currently for my own students.

Over the course of the student-teaching experience, both the student teacher and I have to be complete honest with each other after the class is over about our feelings and perspectives. We set aside time daily to discuss the outline of the day or the next day, and to talk about improvements or achievements. Many schools want the classroom teacher to give up all teaching by the end but to stay within earshot of the classroom. While I believe that it is important to have the student teacher be “it” at some point, I also think that the learning experiences that come from coteaching classes are critical.

Letting Go

As a teacher, you may find it hard to let go of your students and “hand them over” to someone else. As I have grown as a teacher, I have come to believe in the philosophy that the students I see daily are not “my” students, but rather

students of our district and program. These are my colleagues’ students as well as mine, even if they are on my particular class roster. My classroom is an open door to feedback. Colleagues such as student teachers walk in and hear something, and they speak up. They do not step on my toes; instead, they make a suggestion, such as “Mrs. Cabral, could we try this?” or “Mrs. Cabral, I think the saxophones are missing that C#.” This type of relationship allows for constant feedback for both the teacher and the students. It also allows for continual growth in for the students and for me as an educator. We teach our students to never stop learning, and we should also follow the same principle.

I would be lying if I said there were not times when a colleague or student teacher said, “Mrs. Cabral, I think . . .” and I was not embarrassed, mortified, or angry at myself for not recognizing a situation sooner, but I have to let go and realize that for the good of the program and the good of the students, *any* helpful feedback benefits all of us. The bottom line is I can allow my pride to be wounded slightly if a suggestion makes the students better musicians.

NOTES

1. Teresa Washut Heck and Nancy Bacharach, “Co-Teaching: Making It Work,” *Educational Leadership* 73, no. 4 (December 2015/January 2016): 24–29.
2. Temple University College of Education, “Office of Field Placement Resources,” <http://sites.temple.edu/edresources/ofp/student-teaching/student-teachers/st-roles-responsibilities/>, accessed August 15, 2017.
3. Texas State University, Office of Education Preparation, “Student Teaching,” <https://www.education.txstate.edu/oep/current/initial-certification/clinical-teaching.html>, accessed October 12, 2018.
4. Mehrdad Alipour, “Study of On the Job Training Effectiveness: Empirical Evidence of Iran,” *International Journal of Business and Management* 4, no. 11 (November 2009): 63–64.
5. Heck and Bacharach, “Co-Teaching.”
6. Ibid.
7. St. Cloud State University, School of Education, “The Academy of Co-teaching & Collaboration,” <https://www.stcloudstate.edu/soe/coteaching/>, accessed August 16, 2017.
8. Louise Wilder and Raymond K. Jung, “A Team Teaching Approach to Student Teaching,” *Peabody Journal of Education* 47, no. 2 (September 1969): 112–15.
9. Ibid.



KICK-START YOUR CAREER WITH A NAFME MEMBERSHIP

Congratulations! NAFME Collegiate members are eligible to receive up to a 50% discount on dues when you become a full active member. This offer is only valid for one year after you graduate.

Act now.

Deadline: Offer extends from June 30 of your graduation year until June 30 of the following year.

Visit: bit.ly/NAfMEcollegiate

Email memberservices@nafme.org or call 1-800-336-3768



Favorite Children's Books for Vocal Exploration and Pitch-Matching Activities

General Music Today
2017, Vol. 30(3) 22–25
© National Association for
Music Education 2017
DOI: 10.1177/1048371316687607
journals.sagepub.com/home/gmt


Audrey Berger Cardany¹

This article was originally published in the April 2017 issue of General Music Today. Reprinted with permission.

Abstract

In this article, the author shares favorite children's books and stories for integrating language and music during shared-book experiences. The music activities described are aimed to contribute to the overall singing development for children in preschool and primary grades. Music and reading teachers will enjoy sharing these books with early readers in ways that foster expressive speaking and singing through vocal exploration and singing repeated melodic patterns.

Keywords

elementary general music, English language arts, language and music integration, shared-book experience, vocal exploration

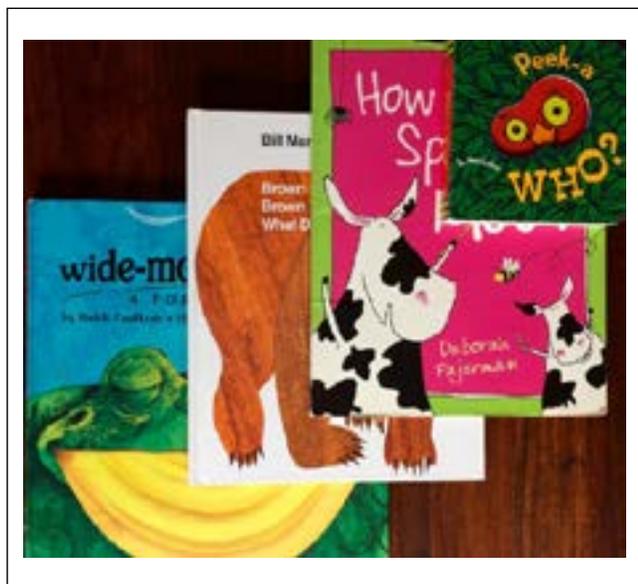


Figure 1. Four favorite children's books for integrating language and music.

The early reader is also an early music maker, simultaneously acquiring language and music skills and understandings. In this article, I share four of my favorite children's books for engaging young children in music activities (see Figure 1). The shared-book experience provides opportunities to integrate language acquisition with children's singing-voice development—specifically vocal exploration and singing melodic patterns. These books have become staples for group music sessions with preschoolers and children in primary grades.

Vocal Exploration

Neelly (2002) explains that vocal exploration is essential to the development of speaking and singing. Vocal exploration can be defined as vocalizing pitch ranges with the purpose of coordinating articulation (i.e., lips, teeth, tongue), inhalation/exhalation, and phonation (vibration of the vocal chords). Successfully coordinating these mechanisms—manipulating the lips, teeth, and tongue on the breath to make sounds—contributes to expressive speaking and singing. Reading teachers use vocal exploration as a pathway to phonological awareness and pronunciation of phonemes (single units of spoken words); music teachers use it to promote pitch awareness and aid in the development of healthy singing voices.

There are a variety of ways to help children find their singing voices through exploring sounds such as imitating animal sounds or sirens or playing echo games. Phonating using vowel sounds such as “ee” or “oo” embedded in a shared-book experience make this type of learning activity playful for children. Fajerman (2002) and Laden's (2000) children's books provide just such a musical and playful activity that integrates language and music learning.

How to Speak Moo! by Deborah Fajerman (2002) is a delightful expository about the language of cows. Fajerman declaims that “every single word is moo,” but

¹University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI, USA

Corresponding Author:

Audrey Berger Cardany, University of Rhode Island,
105 Upper College Road, Kingston, RI 02881, USA.
Email: audrey.cardany@uri.edu

think again if you believe that every “moo” sounds the same! Each page spread explores how sounds can be different. Readers experience music concepts of loud and soft, high and low, melodic contour, articulation (i.e., “wobbly” and “smooth” sounds), and timbre (i.e., “through a funnel” and “in a tunnel”). When sharing the book with young children, music teachers have the opportunity to model a wide range of sounds. Teachers will also find ample occasions for children to make the many sounds suggested. I recommend lingering on a page or two with invitations to children to explore the sounds suggested in the book.

One favorite page with children has been directing them to make high- and low-pitched “moo” sounds. The page illustrates two cows—one large and one small with text that matches in size. The text reads, “Moo depends a lot on size. Big cows do lows, and little ones, highs.” I begin with a prompt, “Let’s make high and low moos.” Then I point to the large cow and then the small cow. In this manner I create patterns to explore form and duration of long and short sounds. Children delight in discovering the patterns. We revisit that page on another day with individual children as the directors.

Another favorite page is an image of a cow in a row-boat “which makes its moo sound as sweet as a song.” Sometimes, I will sing “Row, Row, Row Your Boat” using the syllable “moo” and watch their eyes smile with familiarity. After which we sing the song together on “moo” and then on words if they request it or if time allows. With older children, I prompt them to connect what they see to prior knowledge by asking them if the picture reminds them of a song they know. Some children respond by singing the song for the rest of the class. In this manner, the prompt seamlessly creates a reason for children to sing solo in a safe environment without performance pressure. Sometimes children become self-conscious as they realize they are singing alone, at which time, I usually join them softly or ask them if they would like others to sing along. In some sessions we make a list, or we might sing the songs together as they identify them. Other songs children have suggested include “Lightly Row,” “Michael, Row Your Boat Ashore,” and “Canoe Song.”

A second favorite children’s book for integrating vocal exploration is *Peek-a-Who?* by Nina Laden (2000). This board book invites children to guess what is hiding on the next page with the prompt “Peek a . . .” with an image suggesting who or what is hiding. When they turn the page, the children enjoy discovering who or what is hiding: owl, cow, ghost, train, and mirror. They encounter five rhyming words that correspond with the hidden figure—*who, moo, boo, zoo, choo-choo, and you*. In music classes that included free musical play with parents and children, this book became a favorite in free musical play centers.

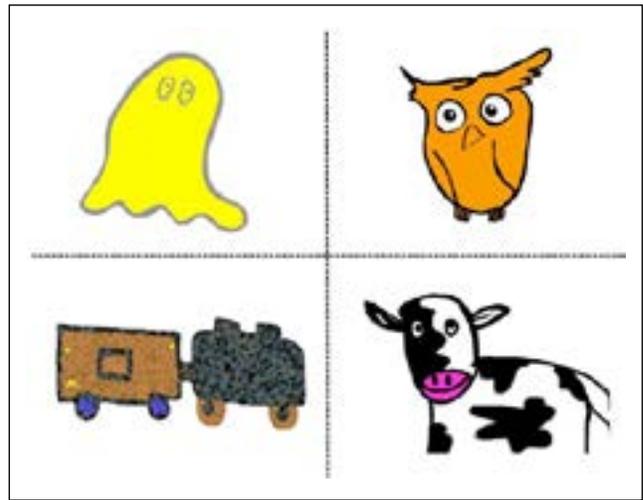


Figure 2. Art by Audrey Cardany for pre-music reading and composition activities.

Although, most young children are not yet ready for reading and producing music sounds from standard music notation, they can read icons and practice pre-music reading skills such as reading pictures from left to right and organizing and writing sounds using pictures. By using three or four of the sounds (i.e., who, moo, boo, choo-choo) as represented by the pictures in the book, we created a music game of reading the pictures to make patterns of sounds. Children make the corresponding sounds using teacher-created cards with an image of a cow, an owl, a ghost, and train cars. See Figure 2 for pictures inspired by the book. Point to the sound or show one card at a time. Engage the children in a composition activity by making several copies of each image and then have them “write” a “Peek-a Who?” song. Then invite them to perform the song for others or have the group perform each composition.

Melodic Patterns and Pitch-Matching

Research in children’s singing development indicates that young children progress from free exploration of sounds to exploring melodic phrases and eventually singing whole songs (Atterbury, 1984; Gardner, 1982) Singing development is a complex task for children. With that complexity in mind, Leighton and Lamont (2006) suggest practice with pitch patterns to improve children’s listening and voice production skills. Incorporating pitch patterns (especially those patterns found in songs) may prepare children for success in singing complex songs. Bennett (2005) recommends teaching songs holistically through a melodic-figure approach in which figural groupings of “melody chunks” within songs are highlighted within a whole-song context. This “songwise” approach treats songs as a whole and avoids unnecessarily segmenting the song.

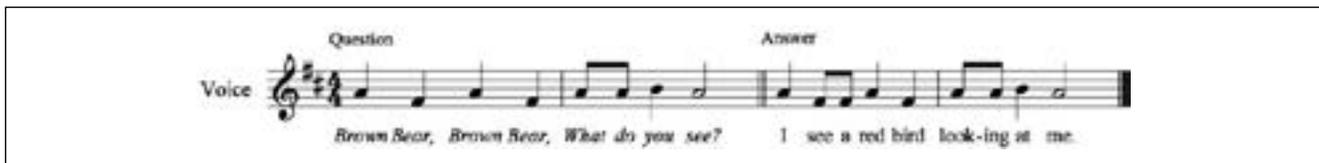


Figure 3. Suggested melody for *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*

Using the shared-book experience may provide a similar holistic approach by inserting a melodic chunk as part of reading a story, and it may provide some of the practice of patterns Leighton and Lamont (2006) suggest. Opportunities for children to sing common melodic patterns found in songs repeatedly throughout a story seem to align with what we know about how children’s singing voices develop. *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Martin and Carle (1992) and the story of the wide-mouthed frog are top picks for integrating language and pitch patterns in this holistic manner.

Martin and Carle’s book (1992) has long been a staple for reading teachers in early literacy programs as well as for music teachers in general music classrooms. When using it in a music setting, I use a simple *sol*, *mi*, and *la* melody repeatedly for each question and answer (see Figure 3). I sing the question and model the sung answer with nonverbal prompts (e.g., facial expression and hand gestures) for the children to sing the answer with me until they sing answers without assistance. A presentation of this activity in workshops with a focus of music and children’s literature is likely familiar to many music teachers.

A favorite extension activity using puppets or stuffed animals provides children with practice of the pitch-set of *la*, *sol*, and *mi*. Here are two of the many variations of using puppets as an extension activity of the shared-book experience:

1. Have a few puppets in a basket. Bring one puppet at a time and invite an individual child to respond. For example, with a white sheep puppet sing the name of a child with the “Brown Bear” melodic question, such as “Lisa, Lisa, what do you see?” After experiencing the book sung, the child will likely know to respond with “I see a white sheep looking at me.” Bring out different puppets to keep the group’s interest. Occasionally, invite the whole group with “Children, children, what do you see?” This invitation will help maintain interest in the activity for all children.
2. Pass out a puppet to each of the children. Have them look at their neighbor’s puppet and think about what they would sing as an answer. Then invite all children to practice singing their answer

as a group. Sing “Children, children, what do you see?” using the three pitches and have them all sing their own answers. Invite them to look at their other neighbor’s puppet and repeat that step. Progress to individual singing. Have them all hold their puppets behind their backs to begin the activity. With your puppet showing, sing the question to a child sitting beside you. Use his or her name so that child and the group will know he or she will sing the answer alone. Then put your puppet behind your back (or in a basket) and have that child bring his or her puppet out and sing the question to the next child. Some children are shy about singing, and you may want to sing the questions along with them to keep the activity going around the circle. Occasionally engaging the whole group in singing the answer will also help a child who is having difficulty and will aid in maintaining group interest in the activity.

The second favorite story for providing opportunities to sing melodic patterns is the story of the wide-mouthed frog. This story is based on a classic joke—the wide-mouth frog brags about what he eats to each animal he meets. When the frog asks an alligator what *he* eats, the alligator replies, “I eat wide-mouthed frogs.” The frog then quickly makes his mouth small and exclaims, “Oh, you don’t see many of those around do you?” With several illustrations of the story available, my favorites are *The Wide-Mouthed Frog* by Ela Jarzabek and Oakley Graham (2010) and Faulkner and Lambert’s (1996) publication with the same title. Both books use a “pop-up” feature that adds to the drama of the story, and the same wide-mouthed frog declaration, “I’m a wide-mouthed frog, and I eat flies.” Jarzabek and Graham’s (2010) retelling of the story precedes the declaration with the word “well.” Instead of two animals presented in Falkner and Lambert’s version, Jarzabek and Graham’s version uses five animals, which extends the duration of the activity and provides more repetition for singing the melodic pattern.

Like *Brown Bear, Brown, What Do You See?* the repetitive text makes it perfect for singing a melodic pattern each time it occurs in the story. The frog’s bragging can be sung easily using the pitches *sol*, *mi*, and *la*.



Figure 4. Suggested melody for “I’m a Wide-Mouthed Frog.”

Singing these pitches in the manner of a typical taunting chant of “nah nah nah nah nah nah” also fits the bragging nature of the frog. See Figure 4 for a suggested melody for Jarzabek and Graham’s retelling of the story. The glissando from *do* to *sol* provides an enjoyable invitation for the children to join in singing the melodic figure and sets *do* as the pattern’s tonal center.

Closing Thoughts

I feel confident that many music and reading teachers will enjoy sharing these books with early readers in ways that foster their singing development through vocal exploration and singing repeated melodic patterns. Music teachers who wish to avoid teaching vocal exploration or pitch patterns in isolation will find that integrating reading and music provides a meaningful context for children; the books provide the “child reason” to make “funny” sounds and sing a melodic pattern repeatedly. Reading these books with children once is rarely satisfactory for a group, and sometimes a single page can inspire an entire music activity. Extension activities shared here provide children with opportunities to create, notate, and read icons using sounds to help explore high and low pitches for developing voices. These authors and illustrators’ collective creativity spark rich musical experiences that bring music concepts to life with joy and whimsy. Without fail these picture books and their related musical activities have elicited delightful responses from children and have made them child and teacher favorites.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

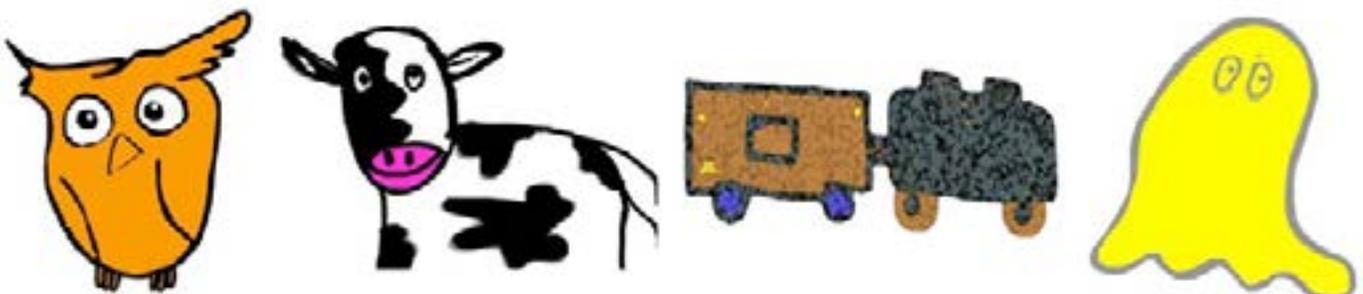
The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

References

- Atterbury, B. W. (1984). Children’s singing voices: A review of selected research. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, 80*, 51–63.
- Bennett, P. D. (2005). So, why sol-mi? *Music Educators Journal, 91*(3), 43–49.
- Fajerman, D. (2002). *How to speak moo!* London, England: Random House
- Faulkner, K., & Lambert, J. (1996). *The wide-mouthed frog.* New York, NY: Penguin Putnam.
- Gardner, H. (1982). *Art, mind and brain.* New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Jarzabek, E., & Graham, O. (2010). *The wide-mouthed frog.* London, England: Top Hat
- Laden, N. (2000). *Peek-a-who?* San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books
- Leighton, G., & Lamont, A. (2006). Exploring children’s singing development: Do experiences in early schooling help or hinder? *Music Education Research, 8*, 311–330.
- Martin, B., Jr., & Carle, E. (1992). *Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see?* New York, NY: Henry Holt.
- Neelly, L. P. (2002). Ways to improve singing in early childhood classrooms. *Young Children, 57*(4), 80-83.

Author Biography

Audrey Berger Cardany is an associate professor of music at the University of Rhode Island, Kingston. She teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in music and music education. She is also Director of Education and Community Music for the Chorus of Westerly, in Westerly, Rhode Island, where she teaches musicianship to singers of all ages.





Professionalism at the Heart of Creating a Positive Culture in Our Work

by Michael D. Stone

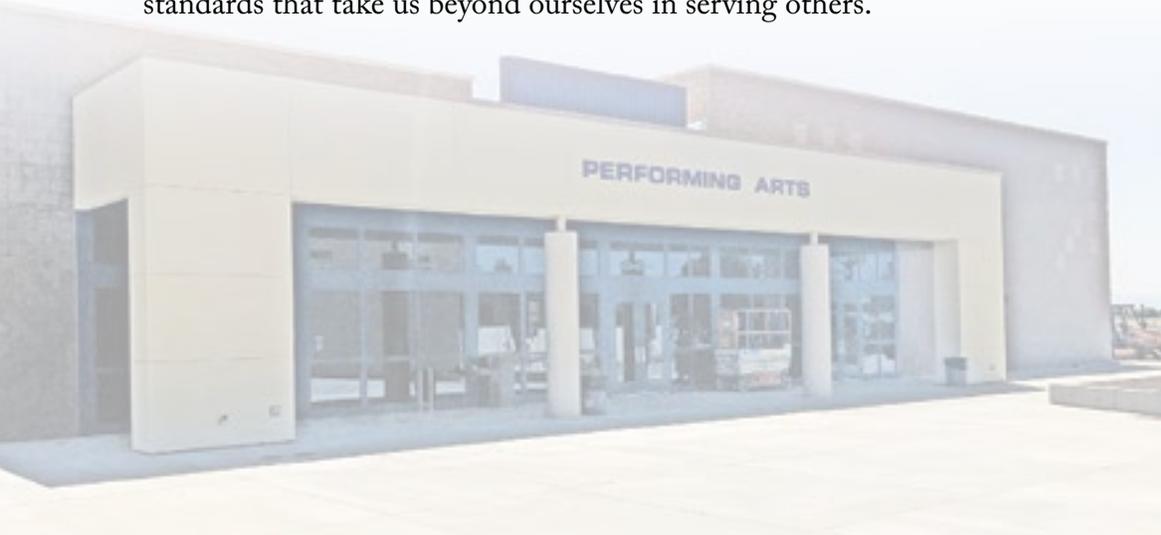
Professionalism: Kids, Music, and Self

Summer provides music educators the opportunity for self-reflection and meaningful self-assessment. Music education is a dynamic profession providing us with the opportunity to refresh our work with inspiration as we plan for the future. But, what does it mean to be part of a “profession” anyway? We often think of teachers, doctors, and lawyers as being part of a profession, but other occupations are simply viewed as careers. My good friend Dr. Lawrence Stoffel tells his university students that Madonna has a “career,” but we are part of the music education “profession.” So, what’s the difference between a career and a profession? The answer is quite simple. Those of us in a profession share common goals and standards that take us beyond ourselves in serving others.



Ryan Dirlam, music teacher, Firebaugh High School.

This article originally appeared in the Summer 2019 issue of CMEA News, the state journal of the California Music Educators Association. Reprinted with permission.



The new Performing Arts Building in the Firebaugh-Las Deltas Unified School District in Central California. In 2012, music teacher Ryan Dirlam went to work as the only music teacher in the District. After planting his roots, the program has blossomed with four full-time music teachers today and a new performing arts center.

THE 2ND ANNUAL

ACDA

AT

CMEA

Choral Reading Sessions

ACDA sponsored Meet-and-Greet

with All State conductors

Choral Focus Workshops

Jeffrey Douma and Tesfa Wondemagnehu



We adhere to particular norms and expectations for those who serve in our ranks. Teachers must earn degrees and teaching credentials, be positive role models, and do ongoing professional learning. Madonna's number one career goal may be to sell recordings, perform at a certain venue, or make more money, all for herself. As music education professionals, we get to reach outside of ourselves to serve others through music education. A profession is an opportunity to serve.

My personal educational philosophy was inspired by Mr. Gerald E. Anderson, former Head of Music Education at UCLA, when I earned my bachelor's degree in the 1980's. Mr. Anderson spoke to us about kids, music, and self as they related to his educational philosophy: Kids. Music. Self. These three words, in that order, are why I work in the music education profession. We must keep each element in this order to enjoy our work as music education professionals. When what is best for kids stays at the front of our work, everything else we do will fall into place.

All decisions we make as professional educators must be made first and foremost based upon how they impact our students, the kids. My superintendent, Doc Ervin, likes to say: "I make decisions based upon how students are affected, not the adults." As a music supervisor, I could not agree more. I like to think that if I provide the adults with what they need to be effective teachers, the students will be successful as well. All of our decisions as educators must be centered around how students are affected. This is a crucial factor when I make decisions in my work as an administrator.

When I speak to college and university music education classes I see the passion that each student has for "music." There is no doubt that many of us would probably not be in the education profession if not for our passion in music. Music is a significant part of our lives, and we hope to pass on that love for music to our students. But I would argue that "music" must be second to "kids" when it comes to why we teach music. The instrumental music teacher who decides to program Beethoven's Fifth Symphony for his elementary orchestra because he puts great music first is putting his personal "musical" interests and ambition above what is best for students. Surely these elementary school musicians would not be able to get meaning out of performing something that they cannot technically

play on their instruments. The middle school vocal music teacher who only teaches music by rote so that the students can sing more music is not serving the students first since they will not learn musical literacy. Simply put, music is a catalyst for teaching kids, and not the other way around. We should be passionate about music, but remember that it serves as a conduit for developing students who are good citizens and healthy adults. Music helps us along the way, but is only part of why we teach.

As members of the music education profession, it is important that we take care of ourselves. Long days, numerous rehearsals, and a variety of public performances are part of any vibrant music program. We are expected to provide leadership and work hard, as we should. But it's my belief that as professionals, we must also take the time to care for our personal goals and needs. It's okay to have ambition to conduct an honor band, or present a clinic, or perhaps stay at home on weekends with family. Feeding our soul is important in this profession. Unfortunately, though, I see some music educators who put "self" in front of "kids" and "music" through their actions. The band director who wants to chase trophies will attend ten field tournaments in the fall, instead of three, because that ambition comes before what's best for students who have busy lives. The competitive nature of this band director places "self" in front of "kids" and "music," since to him it's about the end result (i.e., trophies) rather than students' music education. The elementary music teacher who only sings pop music with students is putting personal interest above a balanced diet of repertoire that is rich and varied. Students need to learn music in a variety of genres and styles. The band director who is not interested in learning to teach strings because it is out of his comfort zone is not doing what is best for students who need a teacher to learn string pedagogy, or there will be no orchestra class. So, remember: 1. Kids; 2. Music; and 3. Self. Keep your priorities in that order. You can't go wrong.

Follow the Golden Rule in Relationship Building

How do you create a culture of high expectations for music students in your school district or school? Music educators as a group are great human beings. Our

backgrounds in music give us an advantage in effective communication, and our backgrounds performing, composing, creating, and living as musicians make us more adept at communicating than others. In my work as a music supervisor, I have seen some teachers go into any environment and thrive. Others struggle with issues such as communication and establishing a positive environment for student learning. What is the key ingredient to success? It's all about personal relationships. The teacher who is loved by students can be forgiven for small inadequacies and still succeed. But the expert musician who has splendid pedagogical knowledge can fail due to lack of good interpersonal communication skills. Remember, if you have a warm and caring disposition, as opposed to being aloof or harsh, people will view you as successful and want to get to know you and be part of your music program. It is our responsibility to develop positive relationships with students, colleagues, administrators, and parents. There are no shortcuts here. You either work to be a good communicator, or you will fail. The golden rule for music educators is to develop strong interpersonal relationships with all stakeholders in the school community. Let's face it: Clicking "send" on an e-mail may be a more efficient means of communication sometimes, but face-to-face communication or a phone call will better accomplish clear communication and relationship-building in certain matters. I work with one fabulous teacher who calls our Department Office at least three or four times a week. We sometimes tease him for having so many questions. But when push comes to shove, this teacher understands that communication is his responsibility. There are no bad questions, and communication is crucial when developing interpersonal relationships. Another teacher I work with texts throughout the day, but calls when it's something more important. This teacher has good communication skills and we have a strong professional relationship because I am kept well-informed. I appreciate over-communication. It's the teachers who I rarely hear from who may be viewed by the school community as being aloof or disjointed. How you communicate may vary in given circumstances, but you must develop a strong interpersonal relationships with your principal, parents, and students in order to succeed, and communication is

crucial. Err on the side of too much communication. Build relationships.

Honesty and Specific Solutions

I'm often asked how we have assembled such a terrific team of music educators in the Bakersfield City School District (BCSD). As a large, urban school district with close to 90 percent of our students living at the lower socioeconomic level, we have children with big challenges. Yet, in spite of these obstacles, our team stays in the district year after year. A key ingredient, from my perspective, is that when it comes to our work, we build our team by addressing issues that may arise with honesty and a mindset of finding specific solutions to problems. As CMEA President-Elect, I had the opportunity to learn strategic planning skills, which provided me with the idea that any objective must have a metric attached in order to be successfully implemented. If a teacher has a problem doing his job, and cannot solve the matter on his own, then I want to be involved to support. Sometimes that means just being a sounding board for the teacher. Other times it may be giving direction or speaking to another administrator, a parent, or a colleague. My good friend Jim Mazzaferro has built a culture of excellence at Cazadero Performing Arts Camp by saying "We do not have problems at Caz; only solutions." This view of collaborating to solve problems is at the core of successful organizations. People are generally not motivated by fear, outside pressure, or negative consequences. Professional educators will perform at their best when self-motivated, and when given the tools necessary to accomplish a given task. In BCSD we strive to create a work environment where stakeholders are free to collaborate with colleagues and administrators for the benefit of the students. It's not to say that we do not face challenges, but we try to work together with honesty and openness in service to students. Actions speak louder than words.

Part of my work is to supervise and evaluate the work of music teachers. At times it is necessary to have honest conversations about a given teacher's work, and that may be uncomfortable for me and the employee. I have found that the best approach is to come at the matter with a variety of solutions to address the issue, whatever it may be. Sometimes I may have several ideas for a solution, but the employee may

have another great idea. It's important to trust the professional educator to choose the best solution. If Plan A doesn't work, then go to Plan B, Plan C, and so on. People do not need to be micromanaged. Let them thrive by becoming their own problem solver. Be their sounding board. In this sense, my work as a supervisor is sometimes as a coach, rather than a boss.

Trust Your Team; Encourage Creativity

The term "boilerplate" is popular in management circles to mean a standard practice or template used for organizational purposes. A boilerplate schedule for music would mean that we each have the same exact teaching schedule. I have found that one size does not fit all in every situation. This does not mean that some schools should offer some core music classes while another does not. But, at the same time, one school may need to have two beginning band classes where another may only need one class. One teacher may want to add a guitar class or Mariachi class to serve students at a given school site. In my work I have found that when a professional educator has a special passion for a part of the curriculum, or a methodology as to how to teach a particular concept, that teacher should run with it. There are many means to reach a given end result. Creativity lies in how we get there. Trust your team, your colleagues, and provide the support necessary to enjoy great results. High standards will develop over time, and a cookie-cutter approach will not get you there. It's more than structure. Create, create, create.

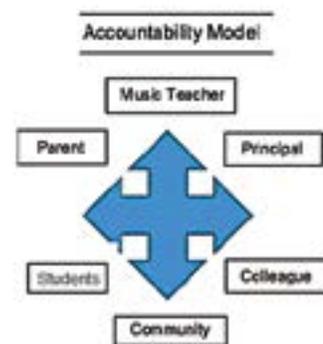
Dynamism Comes From a Growth Mindset

As professionals, we must always work to be better. We must grow and develop our learning, and inspire such growth in our students. The juxtaposition of the growth and fix mindsets provides a good framework for how to build synergy within your instructional team. A teacher who views work through the lens of personal growth will face problems with solutions. One with a fixed mindset will only identify problems, and offer no solutions. This educator will have excuse after excuse as to why things are not working well. We can never succumb to seeing the glass half empty. View the glass half full with optimism, and question what you can do to grow more. We must model this behavior

as instructional leaders, teachers, and even student leaders. A special kind of dynamism will develop when the entire instructional team views their work through the lens of the growth mindset.

Accountability Comes Full Circle

Any successful organization has clear values, vision, and mission. The values of an organization include ways in which the group interacts with one another; vision is where the group is headed; and the mission is the work to get to the point of fulfilling the vision. In Bakersfield City School District, one of our core values is accountability. We believe that administrators must hold teachers to high standards, teachers must do the same for students, and administrators must be held accountable to teachers and parents. In other words, the accountability model goes multiple directions. If as the instructional leader I fail to follow our core values, I expect a parent, teacher, or community member to confront me with the matter. It's important that all stakeholders in an organization view accountability as multi-directional. A top-down model will not result in the building of trust in an organization. Trust is earned by transparency and accountability being at the heart of the work.



Face Challenges with Tenacity and Persistence: Rome Was Not Built in a Day

As an instructional leader first appointed to my role as Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator in 2003, I remember being so frustrated in the first year or two because change was coming so slowly. It seemed like all I faced each day was problems, and I was running around like a chicken with his head cut off trying to put out fires on multiple fronts. After settling into the job a couple of years later, and after facilitating

a strategic planning process with all stakeholders, I realized that change can come over time with tenacity and persistence. Some things just take longer to accomplish than others. Avoid being frustrated when there are obstacles in your path. Sometimes you have to create a new path around an obstacle. Other times, you simply wait for the obstacle to move. Regardless, persistence is the key ingredient in getting from A to Z. As a person who thrives on overcoming challenges, it's rewarding to work for positive change that will affect students' lives.

An example of an obstacle I faced when becoming music supervisor in Bakersfield City Schools is that I had no authority to evaluate the work of the music team. Yet I held unique background in instruction that a principal would not. The paradigm at that time was that principals would do teacher evaluation and supervise the work of their music teachers. After several months I was able to provide justification that a music educator could better evaluate music instruction, and this could be accomplished without usurping the authority and input of the principal. This moment only came after months of work establishing trust with principals. It didn't happen immediately. Principals slowly understood that it was not me trying to take away their authority, but putting the right person in the role of evaluating teachers where I had expertise and they did not. Since becoming the evaluator of itinerant music teachers, principals and I have worked together to ensure all students get the best possible instruction in music.

Raising Standards Takes Time

As musicians, we are impatient and perfectionistic. We want everything in its place as soon as possible so that we can get on to being creative and expressive with our music making. We often want to get to the fabulous performance without all the practice. But we sometimes forget as educators that we must thrive on the process of getting to the performance, rather than creating the actual performance. The great Lida Beasley once told me that she would rather not have concerts, as that was not important to her. It was all about the learning along the way. I see performance as important, but only as the icing on the cake. When building new structures to support strong instruction in music we must focus on changing process rather

than product. It is necessary to be patient. There will be road blocks along the way to increasing standards. The early bird catches the worm. Get up and do the work each day, and over time, there will be success. Work, evaluate how things went, work some more, evaluate again, and work yet again. There are no short cuts to achieving musical excellence. The persistent and hard-working music educator can accomplish so much in providing children with high standards of excellence in music education.

Plant Yourself and Grow

As I reflect on my first thirty years in the music education profession (I just finished year thirty), I am sometimes asked what the key ingredients are for a long and fulfilling time in the profession. My best advice is to plant yourself in a school community and grow right there. All kids need music education, and you can provide it in a variety of environments. So often young music teachers think the grass is greener across the valley. While it may be, you can get the hose and start watering your own grass. Principals will come and go, but successful music teachers thrive in spite of difficult circumstances. Ryan Dirlam is a

young music educator in the Central Valley. In 2012, he started as the only music teacher with the Firebaugh-Las Deltas Unified School District, without a classroom, and teaching everything music: fourth through fifth grade general music, middle school choir and band, and high school choir and drumline. After planting roots, and with Ryan's hard work and relationship-building, the district today employs four full-time music educators and has a new performing arts center for rehearsals and performances. Way to go, Mr. Dirlam! Ryan has established positive relationships with his superintendent and principals. Perhaps your principal just doesn't get it. Remember that principals come and go. Push forward. Onward. The teacher is the catalyst to everything good in education. No problems, only solutions.

I sometimes reflect back on my first thirty years as a music education professional. What are the key ingredients that have made all these years so rewarding? Kids; Music; and Self. You are the only one who can impact the lives of your students. Have a great 2020-2021 school year and beyond. Kids; Music; Self. 1, 2, 3.

Mark Your Calendar
for the 74th
CMEA In-Service
Conference
April 2-4, 2020
Connecticut Convention
Center, Hartford



BE A PART OF NAFME: WHERE MUSIC EDUCATORS BELONG

Join today: nafme.org/collegiate



- Take part in professional development opportunities
- Network with music educators nationwide
- Include impressive leadership skills on your resume
- Add your resume to the NAfME Career Center
- Advocate for your profession and your future students at the local and national level

collegiate@nafme.org | 800-336-3768

YOU MIGHT BE LEFT WITH SILENCE WHEN YOU'RE DONE

The White Fear of Taking Racist Songs Out of Music Education

By NAFME National Conference Presenter Martin Urbach

This article first appeared on Medium. Reprinted with permission.



"There will be no songs left to sing, after you take out all the ones you think are racist."

I recently shared a link as a conversation starter on the Kodaly Educators Facebook page. This article was highlighting the racist history behind songs like "Jimmy Crack Corn," and "Eny Meeny Miny Moe," and others. The thread quickly became lively and heated.

This group has just over 7,000 members and seems to be majority White. ← emphasis on "seems" as I scrolled around about 700 members and could find only a handful of non-white-passing members. I'm recognizing that this is a flawed way of collecting data, yet it is not a wild assumption as most of the music teaching profession is White. To be precise, nearly 9 out of 10 pre-service music teachers are White.

As I write this, there are 360+ comments, written in a few days since I first posted the link: "12 childhood nursery rhymes you didn't know were racist." You can find the article here. You can find the post, in the Kodaly Educators Public Page here.

As in every Facebook music educators group conversation, I expected to find a range of opinions and was (and still am!) excited to have an insight into what/how/why the "system" of music education across the country might feel about this. As one might expect, there were folks who agreed, who were not sure, and who disagree with the article. One thing that is evident from the post, is the feeling of fear that White teachers have when it comes to discussing issues that have been racialized and that have racist tones, like these songs. White teachers are scared that they themselves might be called racists for teaching songs like this, but I think even more importantly, they are afraid of the "silence" they think will wash upon us once "we're done taking out all the racist songs." How fitting of White supremacy culture that White teachers perceive that once we get rid of the racist songs, there won't be any songs left to sing. This of course could not be further from the truth.



Whiteness thrives on fear, and when we are afraid, we get defensive. It is human nature. This defensiveness in turn, turns a conversation about systems into personal attacks and defensive strikes that go from #notallwhiteteachers to "I don't do

this" to "It is not my fault" to "What about my love for song X which is how I learned how to count." Pivoting away from discussing systems and toward discussing individuals robs everyone of opportunities to dissect the problem radically; meaning at the root. **At the core, what needs to be addressed is the system of white supremacy which allowed for minstrel songs and other racist songs to make it into the songbooks and teacher training programs we teachers pay thousands of dollars to learn from, and the system that allowed for these songs to be normalized and accepted as "the norm."**

Do. No. Harm.

In one hand, I deeply understand the feeling of fear of walking on eggshells and not knowing whether or not we are doing right by our students. I empathize with it, and commend all teachers who are guided by the tenet of "Do No Harm." Although it is not possible to guarantee that we won't ever do harm, yearning for it is honorable, and should also be the basis for how we discuss and process another tenet of teaching; to err is to be human. We. Will. Make. Mistakes. To this, we White teachers WILL make mistakes around the curricula we teach to our students when it comes to race, because we have been denied (by White Supremacy Culture) the opportunities, spaces, guidance, and skills to discuss race/racism. We literally do not know how to do it or see it. The best we have been

socialized to do is to say: “I see no race,” and to actually believe it.

On the other hand, I feel angered and deeply disturbed by the idea that White teachers fear that “there won’t be any songs left to sing/teach if we continue with this witch hunt” because we call on them/us to dissect our curriculum and repertoire critically and with a lens on race. There are literally hundreds, thousands, hundreds of thousands and even millions of songs written in the whole history of music. People have been writing songs since people have been people. This fear of silence prohibits the afraid to peel the onion, find what’s at the core, and hold one another close as they untangle the ugly together and plant new seeds to harvest.



iStockphoto.com | amenic181

This fear then is followed by massive resistance and even anger that this call is even on the table. On their 2015 essay “Decentering Whiteness,” Hitchcock and Flynt describe one of the experiences of centrality as: “Not open to contradiction: The center of a culture tends to defend its values and to place negative sanctions upon people who question them. White culture is antagonistic to people of color who contradict its values, or who take espoused values of white culture and demonstrate that white culture has not lived up to them.

I remind myself that for every racist song like “five little monkeys” that is used to teach kids to count, there are hundreds, if not thousands of songs that could serve the same

purpose. If what we aim is to teach kids to sing “Sol-La-Mi,” we surely can find songs that won’t bring violence and or trauma upon our students.

Understanding Systems

It is instrumental to understand these issues as “systematic,” meaning, it is less about pointing our fingers of “performative wokeness” at individual teachers teaching racist songs and more about unpacking, naming, undoing, and interrupting these systems. Critical Race Theory (CRT) positions racism as baked into the fabric and system of American society. CRT challenges us to view not past but beyond the individual racist and look at racism as an institution that is pervasive in the dominant culture; whiteness. CRT pushes us to analyze power structures, white privilege and white supremacy, that perpetuate marginalization of people of color. Moreover, CRT rejects the notions of neutrality and color blindness when it comes to everything, from curriculum and teaching in our case, to laws. You can learn more about CRT here.

Context-less Education

Whiteness thrives on the erasure of painful and violent histories and on revising the histories to tell “cleaned-up,” white-washed stories. Whiteness also thrives on telling other people’s stories, rather than our own (though through the White lens). It is common for music educators to teach songs

- a) just because they are “great” songs,
- b) because those are the songs we’ve been taught and
- c) because they are “part of the tradition of great American songs” and kids should learn them.

Judith Katz speaks this as “Background”.

“The culture itself is not a point of discussion, focus, or examination.

Rather, things different from the culture become the objects of attention. White people, for instance, overwhelmingly concentrate on discussing and studying other racial groups. Whiteness and white people as a racial group are not discussed or studied. Taboos are present in white culture against bringing the discussion and study of whiteness into the foreground.” (Katz, 1978)

Some of the worries/fears this post highlighted included “if we don’t teach this history, then how will the kids know about racism? Though such concerns might be coming from a place of inquiry, they don’t account for the trauma and violence that learning racist songs can bring upon a student of color. This is even more problematic when it is White teachers who advocate this, as if the music classroom is the one and only place where kids will ever learn about racism. I argue that our students of color are born knowing about it, and even in the early grades have already experienced it firsthand. I also have a hard time believing that teachers arguing this point as for the validity to teach a racist nursery rhyme. Truthfully, how many teachers are using “Eeny Meeny Miny Moe” in the early elementary grades to teach 1st graders or kindergartners that actually the word tiger wasn’t the original word, and thus the sentence “catch a T(N)ig(G)er by his toe” actually means catch a Black man so there can be a lynching? I dare to bet that almost nobody. Even if a few did, why? At what cost and whose cost? Most importantly: Why do this?

I am not advocating we erase this song from U.S. American culture. To the contrary, I am reminding us all that they exist and that they are dangerous. **Just like Confederate statues don’t belong in city streets where they are constant reminders of such violence, and especially violence toward Black folks, racist songs don’t have any**

room or business in our classrooms as repertoire items. If what we want to do is to teach the racist history of a song like “five little monkeys,” then we can teach the racist history behind the song without making our students learn to count by chanting the song. If we are looking for a nursery rhyme to teach our students how to count, AND if we know that our song choice is racist, then we must change songs. Remember: “Do No Harm.” We don’t actually have to use materials that traumatize our students, and that are oppressive to them because of our own comfort. The onus is on us to go out of our way to learn better materials and unlearn bad material. Hitchcock & Flint write about this as: “The way everyone does it.”

“The way everyone does it: Cultures will only permit one set of values, rather than competing sets. Part of the function of culture is to let everyone interact through some shared basis of meaning and understanding. Within a culture, ‘everybody’ does tend to do things the same way—to use the same language, celebrate the same events, etc. In white culture this is sometimes expressed as a belief that people of color must automatically know how ‘people’ do things, i.e. how white people do things.”

I recognize that we teach racist songs because those are the songs that are suggested in the books we buy on Teachers Pay Teachers or Amazon. It is the comfortable thing to do. We already know these songs. Yet, we can do better. We must do the work to first be “not racists,” preferably, becoming “anti-racists.” We do this with action. Being a nonracist requires nothing (granted we don’t teach racist songs to begin with). Becoming an anti-racist, involves taking action steps. Not a single White music educator on the thread of more than one hundred teachers offered to do any labor toward creating a

database of problematic songs, or even researching ones. I did not see a White teacher stepping up and saying: “I volunteer to make a list of songs,” or “Here is a spreadsheet I made with the background information for how this song is indeed not racist.” I wonder what kind of list we would have now with over 300 hundred songs collectively researched instead of a Facebook thread of over 300 hundred comments of White folks disagreeing with teachers of color on whether or not these (and other) songs are racist. I wonder what kind of lists we could have that are “anti-racist nursery rhymes” instead of hundreds of posts made in White Fragility space.

I originally screenshot the whole conversation and copy/pasted quotes that I found telling/problematic with the intention of including them here as “vignettes.” As I finish writing this article and listen to my emotions and brain, I realize they don’t belong here. If folks want to read the thread, the thread is hyperlinked at the top of the post. What I think is the point I try to convey with this post, is that as a field and as a system, the field of music education is at best “not racist” and at worst “racist.” I deeply believe it is time for us to do the work of transforming, and becoming anti-racists, through thought + action + reflection.

Here is a spreadsheet of “CrowdSourced Anti-Racist Songs” I created. Feel free to use it, and spread it as much as possible.

I conclude with the yearning for the kind of self/community reflection that we as White music educators have to do the work of being more anti-racist and less racist. We must fix what our teachers got wrong so that our students don’t have to fix as much and we can focus on teaching. We must break the cycle of racist curriculum. If we don’t do it, the labor will have to be on people of color. White people created the social

construct we call racism, and we must do the work of abolishing it.

About the author:

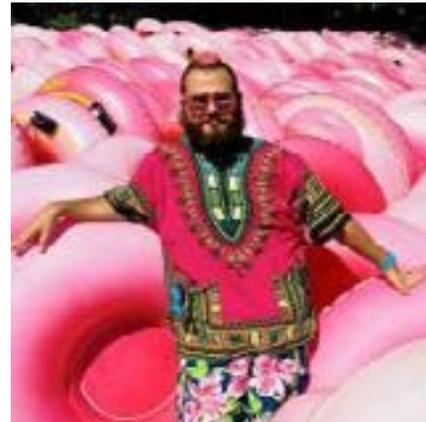


Photo: Erika Kapin

Drummer / Percussionist Martin (pronounced mar-TEEN) Urbach is a Latinx Immigrant, education activist and advocate for young people. His work in the classroom is based on facilitating liberated spaces for young people to fall in love with music and to promote social justice through music making. He holds a BA in jazz performance from the University of New Orleans, a MA in jazz arts from the Manhattan School of Music, an Advanced Certificate in Music Education from Brooklyn College and is currently a doctoral candidate in music education at Teachers College, Columbia University. He teaches music, critical consciousness and activism at Harvest Collegiate High School in New York City and plays drums in a punk band named Sheer Curtains.