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Journal

Volume 1: Fall 2021

# Overcoming Obstacles



AIME

**AIME**  
Active & Integrative  
Music Education

# AIME 2021 Journal

Volume 1: Fall 2021

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## Overcoming Obstacles





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# Letter from the Editor

by Dr. Rachel Brashier

November 1, 2021

Dear Readers,

Hello, and welcome to the first edition of the AIME journal. AIME (Active and Integrative Music Education) began as a conference idea, hoping to promote research and practitioner growth in music education, broadly conceived. The acronym grew from the 'Active' music making long promoted by Dr. Judy Bond, my predecessor as the Director of Music Education at the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point and a fellow AIME board member, and my own work with 'Integrative' music education, a push towards thinking of music teaching holistically – as opposed to the silos that have traditionally, and often unnecessarily, separated music teachers according to the ensemble they teach.

Our hope as an AIME board is to promote both a yearly conference (the last Saturday each January) and a resulting publication (each fall) that can include both research and active practice in music education in ways that benefit music teachers, current and future, in many ways. Whether you teach general music, choir, band, orchestra, or as is increasingly the case, in a combination of one or more of these areas, it is our sincere hope that AIME can help you find a place to share what you know and garner new knowledge from your fellow educators. The AIME conference and journal strives to be inclusive of practicing music educators who work in school classrooms, current music educators who have studios of private students, future music educators who are still in collegiate study at both the graduate and undergraduate level, retired music teachers who have so much still to contribute to our body of knowledge as a discipline, and current music educators in higher education, including music education professors, studio music professors, musicology and musicianship professors, conductors, accompanists, and music theory professors.

We hope in our endeavors to bring together and foster learning amongst all those engaged in the Active and Integrative practices of music education, now and in the years to come. We hope you enjoy this inaugural edition of our AIME journal, and we also hope to see you in Stevens Point the last Saturday in January!

All my Best,



Rachel Brashier, AIME Editor

# Letter from the Assistant Editor

by Stephen Calgaro

In a time where arts education has been tested on practically every front, it is imperative to take stock and evaluate where we have been, where we are, and where we are going. Do practice journals really work? What does inclusion look like? How can music educators adapt their classrooms to the 21st century? How can we make the most of the situation in which we find ourselves? These questions and more will be answered in this first issue of the Active & Integrative Music Education journal: Overcoming Obstacles.

Some of these questions might seem like they're settled, but they certainly are not. Although defending general music education has been ongoing for many years, Lois Guderian applies research gathered in the last year and thinkers as old as Lev Vygotsky to create an advocacy for general music which speaks to contemporary concerns. Josh Barker contends that grades should be motivating, and that standards-based grading can be effective if established clearly, leaning heavily on Ken O'Connor's 2018 writings on the subject. Patrick Lawrence outlines proper instrument repair procedures and upkeep for brass and woodwinds, something that could save students and teachers a lot of money. New and relevant information is in perpetual production about these older topics, and these articles are fresh takes on those subjects. Obstacles exist, no matter how long they've been around.

With a focus on the present and future, Elizabeth Bucura describes her journey and reflects on the COVID-19 pandemic and the questions associated with it. Brian Cyr conducted research into the effectiveness of practice journals, and his findings might surprise you. Brenna Ohrmundt, a young educator herself, addresses mental health problems in many young educators and how to combat them. Cody Miller offers a self-reflection of how his collegiate choirs recently soared to new heights of excellence by changing his own mentality. Andrea Hunt discusses online and technological resources and means for education to adapt the classroom for the 21st century. Michelle Yaciuk and Judy Bond both discuss what inclusivity in the music classroom looks like, and what it should look like going forward. Adrian Barnes takes inclusivity beyond individual classrooms and looks at the obstacles for creating music educators in the first place, especially teachers of color.

My vocal pedagogy professor would call these "hot topics," and I would be inclined to agree with him. There is something in here for every educator to read, whether you are brand new to the field or an old veteran. I had the pleasure of reading every one of these, and each one contributes a different obstacle to consider and overcome. As Elizabeth Bucura says close to the end of her article, "Among great changes and challenges, we can address pathways forward in a spirit of togetherness and care. We can liberate ourselves from traditions and expectations in order to collaboratively embrace surprise and confusion. We can demonstrate value for the wonder and possibility of a decentered struggle that moves us to grow together." I think this best summarizes why we put out this journal and held this past year's conference; to come together to overcome the obstacles we face today. As a graduate student, after carefully reading and evaluating these articles, I know I came away with a great amount of new knowledge and perspectives I had not considered. I hope you will as well.



Stephen Calgaro, Assistant Editor

# AIME: Overcoming Obstacles

Introduction by Dr. Valerie Cisler



The last few years have presented many obstacles to all of us. Most recently, the global pandemic caused us to change the manner in which we teach and address new complexities related to how students learn. If this wasn't enough of a challenge, the pandemic arrived in the midst of nearly continuous experiences and reactions to ongoing social, political, economic, environmental, and human rights challenges every day.

I believe that artists—through both inner passion and years of rigorous training are among the best equipped people to successfully handle obstacles. I think this is in large part due to perception. An obstacle may actually trigger a flight or fight response. For instance, some people see obstacles as threats or barriers. Their reaction to an obstacle may be to get discouraged, maybe even angry, and give up. They run or hide. But in order to achieve a goal, we have to realize that there are always obstacles and no way to avoid them completely. We can, instead, choose to turn our reaction into strength and determination—to see obstacles as opportunities to learn, to transform, and to overcome.

In my own College of Fine Arts and Communication, I have been amazed at the number of ways our students and faculty have created—to continue our connections with one another and with the public. For instance, our campus radio station moved their entire trivia experience online, and they had more than 6,000 participants. Media studies students created a competitive film series called *CinePoint* with many original works that addressed a variety of contemporary issues. The theatre and dance department put on a number of productions, challenging students to write their own original scripts on many issues of today; the highlight was *In This Moment: Reflections of our Time* which garnered the Kennedy Center Citizen Artist Award in 2021. In the music department, our students and faculty offered many amazing virtual concerts in jazz, orchestra, choirs, and solo recitals, as well as master classes with guest artists from throughout the country and participation in the national *Offerings of Peace* initiative. Our Suzuki program actually increased their enrollment this year. By facing what they thought were obstacles to their performance careers, our faculty and students have expressed the many ways that learning new modes of creative expression actually enhanced their experiences. These are just some of the ways our students have learned to turn what we thought might be an insurmountable obstacle into an opportunity—and they have met the challenge to find innovative ways to connect with others.

One of the most gratifying experiences I have had this year is to see how incredibly creative and innovative artists from around the world have handled challenges brought on by the pandemic. We know of its devastating economic effects as visual and performing arts venues have been shuttered. The National Endowment for the Arts estimates the loss to be at \$14.6 billion, that amount growing every day. By the time of our January 2021 conference, more than 62,000 arts workers had been laid off, 50,000 furloughed, with more than one third of remaining staff seeing a reduction in salary.

But the NEA also reports that artists have relied on their creativity and ingenuity to overcome what may be the greatest external obstacle of the century. Digital platforms have exploded: Museums are giving virtual tours, millions of online opportunities have sprung up, from art and dance classes to music lessons. Larger, virtual stages with music, theatre, and dance performances, are now available to all. In overcoming the pandemic obstacles, artists have met the challenge through innovation. What we all thought of as an impossible obstacle has now led us to provide even greater access to the arts—something we will likely continue once we are past the pandemic.

I know for myself, when my parents said that I could not go to college, my reaction was, "Oh yes I will!" I knew I had to follow my passion into music. I also knew that I did not want to live the rest of my life regretting that I did not pursue my dream. No one in my family had ever gone to college and we didn't have money, but I knew I could not let family or financial obstacles stop me. In fact, that determination took me through three degrees! Was it easy? No, but taking that chance was the best thing I ever did. I cannot even imagine what I would have done if I

had not pursued an education. I also know that once I overcame that initial obstacle, it gave me more strength and confidence to take on the many other obstacles that followed.

Sometimes the obstacles we face are not from pandemics or family or lack of finances. Some obstacles can actually come from professionals in our field. As an example, I have a brother who followed me into college. His passion was art—specifically graphic design. After graduating from UW-Milwaukee, he worked at a few agencies, but found so much freelance work that he set up his own business. He could have stayed there and done really well. But my brother Jon had a dream, and that was to move to New York City. He wanted to be in the design capital of the world, and he had a plan.

He took a trip to the city to check out what the cost of living would be. He then worked day and night to save enough money, not only to move—but enough to live there for an entire year without work if he had to. Once he moved to the city, he went to a design agent to show his portfolio and see if there were any positions open. He describes how this agent, slowly turned the pages of his portfolio without expression, and then closed it, slid it back across the desk and said, “I think you should go back to the Midwest.”

Of course, my brother was absolutely crestfallen. However, on his way out of the agent’s office, he got onto an elevator. In the car was a woman who asked if he was a designer and to see his portfolio. They got off on another floor of the building and he followed her to her office. She loved his work, and she happened to work for Ralph Lauren. Since that first elevator ride, my brother has designed more than 400 projects including logos, labels, and packaging for Ralph Lauren. He followed a dream, took a risk, and moved right through a variety of obstacles. He made his way through a combination of hard work and tenacity.

The lesson in this story (and throughout the journal) is that no matter how talented you are, we all face obstacles. It is up to you to choose whether you see them as barriers or threats, whether you just give up or choose to find a way to see the opportunities beyond. This year’s theme Overcoming Obstacles could not be a more timely topic for discussion. There are some wonderful articles ranging from the challenges we face with equity, diversity, and inclusion, to issues of mental health, and strategies to create satisfying musical experiences, among many others. The arts transcend race, gender, political affiliation and beyond. It is clear, through it all, that the arts are recognized for their power to unify all people. Our obstacles are now being met with hope, and we, as artists will continue to nurture and promote hope as we navigate the present and prepare for the future.

I hope you will find some inspiration in this first edition of the Active & Integrative Music Education Journal.

## Biography

Valerie C. Cisler, DMA, joined the UWSP campus in 2017 as Dean of the College of Fine Arts & Communication and Professor of Music. She has had an international career as a performer, presenter, clinician and author, including several books with Alfred Publishing, Van Nuys, CA, and a forthcoming publication with Oxford University Press, NY (2022 release), and performance premiers of eight state-commissioned works for MTNA including *Ghosts of Old Pianos* by Grammy Award Winner, Libby Larsen. Dr. Cisler previously held teaching positions at Eastern New Mexico University and the University of Nebraska-Kearney, where she served as Professor of Piano/Pedagogy and Chair of the Department of Music and Performing Arts and was elected to numerous roles with the Nebraska Music Teachers Association including President. Award highlights include campus-wide *Leland Holdt/Security Mutual Life UNK Faculty Award for Superior Teaching, Scholarship, and Service*, the *Pratt-Heins Foundation Faculty Award for Research/Scholarship*, and the *UNK Creative Teaching Award*, along with the University of Nebraska System-Wide *Outstanding Teaching and Instructional Creativity Award* (OTICA). She is a MTNA Fellow and Nationally Certified Teacher of Music (Piano, Pedagogy, Theory), and member of Phi Kappa Phi and Pi Kappa Lambda.

# THE BIG PICTURE: Imagining the Future of Music Education Through the Lens of DEI\*

by Dr. Judy Bond



Sometimes it’s terrifying to face a blank sheet of paper, knowing there’s a deadline looming, but not having clarity about where to start, not for lack of ideas, but rather having too many ideas that haven’t coalesced around a clear central focus. So, on a warm, sunny Sunday afternoon in mid-July, 2021, I began by remembering a very cold Saturday in January, six months before, when UWSP launched AIME: Active and Integrative Music Education. It was a great launch for an idea bursting with optimism and enthusiasm!

The first annual AIME Conference, held January 30, 2021, was filled with rich experiences, providing music educators from all stages and seasons of life with opportunities to learn, share, grow, and collaborate. At the end of an inspiring and engaging day, as part of the closing session, participants were asked to reflect on memorable aspects of the time they spent together. The words “exhilarating, rejuvenating, and affirming” were among the positive comments received.

As musicians, and as human beings, we need music and we need each other. Even as the 2020 pandemic year continued into 2021 and the AIME Conference sessions were presented on Zoom, the participants experienced a welcome and much appreciated sense of community, and the feelings of exhilaration, rejuvenation, and affirmation were deeply felt and genuine. As a long-time, life-long member of the larger, world-wide music education community, I felt personally bonded to the AIME community which formed around the stimulating presentations, and I realized again the importance of gatherings like this conference, which bring people together through love of music, music making, and music education.

As I reflected on the personal growth and happiness I experienced at the AIME conference, I pondered the title and theme for this article, thinking about how to imagine the future during this time when music educators are challenged to show leadership and artistic citizenship, in response to critical national and world issues like environmental, social, and racial injustice. Responding to these issues while also working toward greater \*Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in music education requires reaching beyond the traditional role of being an artist/musician/teacher. I realized that I wanted to reflect on the AIME conference and imagine “The Big Picture” of music education as we move forward together.

A personal story from the past, with questions and comments for today: I remember a conference of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association, held three decades ago, when two renowned music educators/philosophers, Paul Haack (Tait, M. & Haack, P., 1984) and Bennett Reimer (Reimer, B., 2003) presented their practical and philosophical ideas about music education, in a session titled “The Big Picture”. Based on the philosophies presented in their books, they spoke about “new perspectives”, the meaning and value of music, music education as a right for all children, and music literacy for life-long involvement in music. These are goals we still value today, but what has changed? For those whose awareness of systemic racism has been heightened, there is a realization that *whiteness* was assumed, though never spoken out loud, when the music education establishment said “all children”. The concept of “music literacy” was based on Western European music, with too little consideration of the validity of other musical traditions. We are looking at a very different world! Our concept of “all children” includes all races, ethnicities, abilities, and sexual orientations, and our concept of music literacy stretches far beyond the typical music curriculum found in textbooks and repertoire of the 70’s and 80’s. What do we see in “The Big Picture” of music education today? How shall we imagine the future? I pondered these questions as I reflected on how the AIME Conference provided inspiration for imagining the future of music education with greater diversity, equity, and inclusion, and where artistic citizenship and culturally responsive teaching would be essential components of music teacher education. It was refreshing and exhilarating to participate in the conference sessions, and my imagination about the future of music education was definitely stimulated, leading to the thoughts, extensions, and connections which follow.

## Artistic Citizenship and Music Education for Social Change

In the Fall 2020 issue of *The Orff ECHO*, quarterly journal of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association, Marissa Silverman (2020) asks, “What is ‘artistic citizenship’ and why should music educators consider it in relation to the teaching of music?” She goes on to note that, although her colleague David Elliott did not coin the term, he used it frequently in writing and presentations, eventually serving as an editor for “Artistic Citizenship: Artistry, Social Responsibility, and Ethical Praxis” (Elliott, Silverman, & Bowman, 2016). Silverman’s *ECHO* article lists three themes for music educators to consider:

“1. Music educators should prepare music makers to ‘put their music to work’ for the positive transformation of their own and others’ lives. 2. Music educators should help students conceive and practice ‘musicing as ethical action’ for social justice. 3. Music educators should aim to infuse school music with an ‘ethic of care’—care for oneself and for the health of various communities.”

She goes on to state that,

“When music education is ethically guided—when we teach not only in music (i.e., to make music) and about music, but crucially through music—we help students pursue a life well lived, a life of well-being, meaningfulness, and constructive happiness for the benefit of themselves and others.” (Silverman, 2020)

I felt a strong relationship between the first and third artistic citizenship themes of Marissa Silverman (2020) and the AIME Conference session “Coping and Mental Wellness in the Struggle for Equity in Music Education”, presented by UWSP faculty member Dr. Sarah Manasreh. Both Silverman and Manasreh address the issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion with attention to the health and wellness of students and teachers who are ready to work for needed changes in music education but may be unprepared for the amount of stress their efforts may bring.

What are your personal stories of these artistic citizenship themes at work in and through music? Any music student or teacher can usually think of more than one example. It’s important to remember and share these stories and to reflect on the ways music has been a transformative force in your own life and the lives of others you know or have observed. If you are a music teacher, share your own stories that may illuminate artistic citizenship, and encourage your students to tell their personal stories of how music has impacted their life journey. In these situations, the job of the teacher is to LISTEN, in a non-judgmental manner. The sharing of stories is also an important component of culturally responsive music education.

The second of the three Artistic Citizenship themes listed by Silverman involves musicing for social justice. I imagine this as a broad, comprehensive tent, involving global aspects including environmental, racial, economic, and sexual injustice and oppression. Such injustices occur everywhere—you can probably see them close at hand. Other injustices may be tied to a particular time, place, or group of people. Imagining music as a catalyst for transformative change may involve reaching beyond one’s immediate environment and developing awareness of hidden injustices, sometimes revealed through poetry, literature, or visual art. Whether close at hand or seen from a distance, there is also an element of risk.

Bringing sensitive issues into the open may result in backlash or resistance from others in your community or beyond. Respect for the Other, awareness, tolerance, empathy, and compassion are necessary personal qualities. Listening, sometimes waiting in silence, is essential.

How does one begin to explore the activism that is connected to artistic citizenship? Juliet Hess explores this topic in depth in “Music Education for Social Change: Constructing an Activist Music Education” (Hess, 2019). Through finding activist musicians, listening to and telling their stories, Hess imagined and conceptualized how music educators and students can respond to social injustices through various forms of musicing, performing, and composing. She states that “The emergent activist music education, like activism pushing toward social change, focuses on bringing people together, expressing experiences, and identifying and challenging oppressions.” (Hess, 2019, p. 5).

There were several sessions supporting the concept of activist music education at the AIME Conference, including the session presented by bassoonist Midori Sampson, “Recentered Music Learning: Operationalizing Social Work Principles as Ant-racist, Anti-oppressive, Socially Just Music Praxis”. By integrating social work principles into music performance, teaching, and composition, and incorporating her philosophy into international performing and teaching, Sampson exemplifies how “The Big Picture”, including activism as part of music education, can lead to a more just and equitable world, a world where we can imagine a future music education with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as core values.

## Culturally Responsive Teaching in Music Education

For insight into the general topic of culturally responsive, culturally relevant teaching, especially in regard to African American and Latinx students, “The Dream Keepers” by Gloria

Ladson-Billings (2009, 2nd Ed.) is an important resource. Ladson-Billings is not a music educator, and you will not find the word music in the index to the book, but this is an essential read for a teacher in any discipline who is ready to take a deep dive into culturally responsive and culturally relevant teaching.

In “Culturally Responsive Teaching In Music Education: From Understanding to Application”, Constance L. McKoy and co-author Vicki R. Lind (2016) give music educators a vision and conceptual framework designed to impact music education through the idea that paying attention to the culture of the students is primary. Curriculum and repertoire must be adapted accordingly. For teachers who are not part of the dominant culture present in their classroom or ensemble, this is challenging. It can be risky but also gives the promise of creating transformational change.

A few of the questions I ask myself when I’m thinking about culturally responsive teaching: Do I recognize and value the racial, ethnic, cultural, and sexual differences in my students? Have I listened to student preferences? Do I respect and value their opinions and tastes, even when I don’t agree? Do I accept the premise that every student matters? That all music matters?

As I reflected on the AIME sessions related to culturally responsive teaching, I thought about the panel presentation led by Abbie Sonstegard, a senior psychology major at UWEC, “Combining Virtual and Live Music Delivery for Juveniles Inside Jail”. This was an amazing project, combining research, use of technology, and diverse styles of music, while also giving the incarcerated juvenile students the opportunity to make musical choices and create their own music. Combining techniques and practices from music therapy and music education, this project was impressive as a model for future music education exploration. I reconsidered my own questions about culturally responsive music teaching, and I realized that the same questions would be relevant, appropriate, and perhaps even more necessary, when working with students in a detention center.

“Grow Your Own Music Educators? The potential for pre-college music teacher GYO’s”, presented by Adrian D. Barnes, was another AIME session related to culturally responsive teaching in music education. Grow Your Own (GYO) programs are designed to diversify the teacher workforce, by recruiting Black, Brown, Indigenous, and Asian (BBIA) students to enter the teaching profession. This is crucial for the future of music education, where students of color, who form the dominant majority culture in many urban schools, may not have any music teachers of color during their K-12 music experience. In this session, Barnes pointed out that GYOs have not targeted music educators. He presented ideas for how college and university music education programs may work to change this situation. This seems like a very important topic which should be of concern and interest to everyone at the AIME Conference—it’s about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, it’s an Obstacle to be Overcome, and it’s something we can work on together! Please remember and think about your role in recruiting BBIA students and step up your welcoming voice to encourage them to consider becoming members of our life-affirming, joyful profession!

A FINAL NOTE: Welcome, Welcome, Everybody Welcome! The future of music education is experienced in making music together: Singing, Dancing, and Playing with everyone welcome, everyone included. “Every morning when I wake up I have a new song to sing!” (Avon Gillespie, 1938-1989).

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## Biography

Judy Bond, PH.D., is Professor Emerita, UWSP, a past-president of AOSA, and Chair of the Alliance for Active Music Making Leadership Team. She is a nationally and internationally known presenter, teacher of Orff Levels I, II, and III, and an author of two K-8 textbook series published by McGraw-Hill.

# Grades Should Be Motivating: An Introduction to Standards-Based Grading in the Choral Classroom

by Josh Barker



As educators, we oversee numerous variables in our classrooms, all of which impact our students' abilities to learn and reproduce the skills necessary for becoming good musicians. We organize concerts, musicals, prepare repertoire from varied time periods and genres, give individualized lessons and help students learn solo material for performance opportunities and auditions alike. When organizing and facilitating these elements, other core areas of our craft often fall to the back burner. Most commonly this ends up being assessments, grades, and grading procedures that align specifically with musicianship skills, instead of participation grades (Russell & Austin, 2010, p.43). Discussion around whether music educators should give more emphasis to grades or effort have been happening for years in the field of music education. Many educators brandish their lack of impetus to assessments like a badge of honor when this can often

lead to a lack of a clear path for student growth and prevent them from realizing their full potential. This is what standards-based grading attempts to solve for music educators. In this article, I will provide a brief overview of the principles of standards-based grading, its benefits, and how I am working to implement this into my own practice. After all, grades are not meant to be a task we have to complete as educators. Grades should be motivating to both the students and teachers alike!

Standards-based grading (SBG) is a system of assessment and a philosophical mindset of educators that began its development around 1956. It gained further attention in 1983 during the Reagan administration's push for "standards-based reform" and has been continuously developed since (Lab, 2000). Its popularity is growing in the field of education as many school districts attempt to adopt it into their schools. One important component of standards-based grading is that the entire grading system is focused on specific skills outlined in the state or national standards, or an adapted version of these standards. Ken O'Connor (2018), who has written several books on assessment and SBG, has covered the topic extensively and much of his writing about SBG can be synthesized into one of four categories: clear communication, including only what matters, assessing process versus product, and learning as an ongoing process (reassessment).

## Clear Communication

By using the national or state standards, or an adaptation of these standards, it allows for consistency across varying grade levels, teachers, and allows for the goal of your class to be clearly communicated to students and parents alike. If someone asks what their students will learn in Concert Choir and our response is simply that they will learn how to sing with others for performances, this may be true but is not particularly clear as to which *skills* they will be gaining as musicians and is not linked to a larger plan of student educational goals. If instead we can communicate to parents that our students will learn how to sight-read using solfege when given a key signature, learn how to count rhythms with syllables in time, and how to apply these skills to music making at the ensemble level, then we are doing a service to the students and parents when understanding what the purpose of our class is. Even further, if we connect these to the standards that we are expected to use as a framework for our classrooms, advocating for music education becomes much easier and more clearly defined, then we are also doing a service to the entire community of music educators. This allows for clearer communication to the community what our expectations are of our musicians and why these skills are important and valuable when moving on to the collegiate level music making experience (O'Connor, 2018, p. 38).

Expectations should be clearly defined at the beginning of the year, in written form, and accessible to both students and parents. Specifically, what skill or knowledge is being graded? How is it being assessed? What does an A look like compared to what a B looks like? These rubrics of expectations should be provided to the students well before the assessment is completed so the students know exactly what they need to do to be successful. There should be no surprises. Finally, once formative work is completed, timely communication of the areas of

growth needed is key to success when the student begins to complete the summative assessment. Once the summative assessments are completed, a discussion utilizing the rubric provided before the assessment of what needs to be improved before their next attempt is necessary (O’Conner, 2018, p. 78).

### **Include Only What Matters & Assessing Process Versus Product**

One of the more difficult principles of standards-based grading is that educators should only be including the skills from the summative assessments in the grade calculation. There should be no inclusion of behavior grades such as: showing up to the concert, wearing the appropriate attire, or working hard during rehearsal. These behavior components (i.e., work skills) are included in the process but do not affect the students grade calculations in any way. Homework, or formative assessments, do not get graded or are of minimal impact to the grade calculation (some teachers give 10% total weight for formative work). Instead, all grades are made up of summative assessments, meaning that the gradebook should be a log of each individual skill and the level at which they are able to perform that skill. The premise is that formative assignments are meant to be a way to encourage practicing the skills, not a punishment for those who may need less practice than others, or a way to prove that the students are working hard enough on the material to merit a good grade (Dueck, 2014).

For example, say I have a student who has done none of the formative assignments for the week and comes in to do their sight singing assessment and passes with flying colors. In the gradebook it shows they get a 3/3 for accurate pitches, 3/3 for accurate rhythm, 3/3 for accurate solfege and 3/3 for musicianship. This student clearly can display the skills necessary for solid musicianship even if they did not do the formative work and should not be penalized for not doing the formative work if it was not necessary for them to display the skills. Conversely, say I have another student who is struggling with their solfege but has done all the formative work for the week. The gradebook will show 3/3 for all categories and a 2/3 for solfege. Now when the student checks the gradebook, they have an exact category that they know they need to focus on before they do their next assessment, which should be accompanied with suggestions and feedback on how to improve in that area. Their grade is not inflated because they did the work. Instead, the focus is on using the work to improve the skill and ability.

### **Reassessment**

If the goal is, ultimately, for our students to display mastery of musical skills, it should not matter when they gain the mastery, and they should not be punished if gaining said mastery takes a little longer or a bit more practice (O’Connor, 2018, p. 151). Therefore, the standards-based grading system allows for reassessment opportunities for summative assessments. Reassessments allow students to learn from their mistakes instead of being punished for them and can inform you as the educator on what you might not have taught well enough or what needs to be reviewed for the students to be successful. This is not to say that students can just retake any test any time. Students need to fulfil specific reassessment criteria before they can retake a summative assessment, this is where the formative work from the previous section comes into play (Ebert, 1992).

In some classes you need to complete all formative work for the given unit, submit supplemental assessments based on the mistakes made during the summative, prove you have worked on the skills since your last attempt at the assessment, or come to a tutoring session or a student/teacher meeting regarding the assessment. Any combination of these elements can be used as reassessment criteria to ensure the students are putting in the work necessary to improve the skills before they are given the opportunity to reassess. For example: a student does their sight-singing assessment and ‘bombs’ horribly. However, this student has not done any of the formative work for the week and has not put in the time or energy to improve the skills. They would be required to come in for a private lesson to discuss what they did wrong on the first attempt, practice the skills with the teacher during the lesson, and would need to complete any missing formative assignments from the previous two weeks before they are allowed to try again.

The purpose of this system is to use clear communication to set up the student for success by making all goals clear and concise and provide feedback on what needs to be improved throughout the learning process. We only include what is necessary in the gradebook so we can clearly communicate to the students exactly what they need to improve on without inflating or deflating their grade based on arbitrary elements like their clothes or having a pencil. We only include the product of their work, and not the process, in the gradebook so it clearly reflects

exactly what level of mastery each student has achieved in each of the standards-based goals that have been established. Finally, the students are allowed to reassess, assuming they have met specific criteria, reinforcing that practice is what makes perfect without it negatively affecting their grade. It also shows them exactly how much growth comes from them doing the practice work on their own, instead of as a punishment for their mistakes. In the following section I will talk about how all these elements are practically put into action in my Concert Choir.

## **PRACTICAL APPLICATION**

### **Clear communication**

At the beginning of every year, I send home a packet that has the rubrics for all summative assessments that I already know will be utilized during the year. Generally, for me, these are sight-singing assessments, rhythm counting assessments, ensembleship peer/self-assessment, and a concert reflection. Each of these come with specific language on what a 3, 2 or a 1 looks like for the assessment and what the goals are of the assessment. There is also an attached list of what state standard is connected to each assessment to defend or explain why that assessment is specifically important. Short formative assessments are given daily as both an extension of the day’s rehearsal and as a way to practice for one of the previously mentioned summative assessments. Consistency in the practice of these skills, along with the clear communication of what is expected is key to the system working and clear communication should be a primary focus of your classroom every day.

### **Including only what matters**

My gradebook only includes the summative assessments listed above, but broken down by specific skill in each assignment, not listed as total points for an assignment so the student knows exactly upon what they need to improve. For instance, a sight-singing assessment is a total of twelve points and is made up of four categories: pitch, rhythm, solfege, and musicianship each area being out of 3 points (3 is successfully demonstrates the skill, 2 is developing the skill, 1 is needs work). Instead of it being listed as “Sing-singing: 12/12” in the gradebook it is listed as all four separate categories out of three instead, so the student can see exactly which skills they need to improve on, if any. Things like lesson attendance, concert attendance, pencil or sheet music checks, or attire when performing are not included in the formal grade calculation at all. Some school districts, mine included, choose to have a separate category for ‘work skills’ that include behavior, attendance, and respect that can affect the students extracurricular involvement instead of affecting the clarity of reporting the students skills or knowledge.

### **Assessing process versus product**

When assessing process versus product in concert choir, the students submit their daily formative work to be checked over and those students that need work in specific areas get feedback in those areas via our schools learning management system (LMS). Once the student is ready for their summative assessments, they record their sight singing via a Google Doc and submit it for evaluation. This creates a running record of their improvement over time and can be good documentation of their skills if you need to defend their grade to a parent or administrator. Generally, these assessments are gone over in their private lessons, which happen weekly in my district. The only thing calculated in the gradebook are the summative assessments, the formative assessments are only necessary as reassessment criteria.

### **Reassessment**

The practical application of reassessment in the choral classroom is most easily shown using the sight-singing assessment mentioned in previous sections of this article. Each student is required to submit one assessment per quarter but can practice the assessment (consisting of 6 sight-singing excerpts of the same difficulty) for as long as they want. They all start on Level 1.1 and progress to the next level upon receiving a 3 in all categories. If they do not receive a 3/3 in all categories, they are allowed to reassess as many times as they like and as often as they would like, assuming they have met the reassessment criteria. The students need to come to their private lessons, discuss what they have made mistakes on, take a week to practice, and have completed all formative

assignments in the previous two weeks. Conversely, if the assessments are too easy and the students are looking for a challenge, they are welcome to submit more than one assessment per quarter to push their musicianship and mastery. Progressing to higher levels becomes important when auditioning for honors choir, state-wide music contests, solo opportunities, section leader or musical auditions. This allows every student to work at their own pace, to differentiate based on individual need, and to work specifically on the skills each students need to develop without punishing the students for making mistakes.

In summary, standards-based grading is a system that is becoming wildly popular in the field of education and has many positive merits. Specifically, it forces music educators into a consistent routine of clear communication, requires you to only include what matters in the grade calculation instead of inflating or deflating grades based on student behaviors, asks us to grade based on the product the students present instead of the process it takes them to learn the material, and finally allows our students to safely make mistakes without being punished and uses the summative assessments as positive motivation for the completion of practice work via the opportunity to reassess. While all these aspects take a lot of care, time and work to implement, it allows our grades to genuinely impact our student's ability to learn and retain information, and to reproduce skills we deem important as professional musicians. After all, grading should not feel like a chore! Grading should impact our craft as educators and should impact our student's ability to know what they need to improve on, as well as how they need to work to improve in those areas. In short—Grades should be motivating!

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## Biography

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# Grow Your Own Music Educators?: The Potential for Pre-College Music Teacher GYOs

by Dr. Adrian D. Barnes



## Introduction

The current teacher workforce lacks diversity and is made up of majority non-minority teachers (Department of Education, 2016). This is especially true in urban settings where the student population is predominantly Black and Latinx. A lack of diversity is also true in specific disciplines like music education where there is an underrepresentation of teachers of color (TOC) and an underrepresentation of students of color enrolled in music courses at the K-12 level overall (Delorenzo & Silverman, 2016). This should be cause for concern, as music educators who are TOCs are known to act as institutional agents, role models, cultural brokers, mentors, and bearers of social capital for students of color. Additionally, current music educators of color are vital to potentially bringing about more students of color into music education (Walker & Hamann, 1993). This is vital in areas like urban communities where TOCs are greatly needed.

TOCs from urban areas normally maintain a certain amount of social and cultural capital, as well as an understanding of how to navigate the potential barriers and difficulties that stand in front of the young people of color from distressed urban communities. In addition, TOCs from urban communities also understand the value and community cultural wealth (CCW) that students and their communities offer. This is essential to teaching and connecting with students of color from urban areas and gives way to the implementation of culturally responsive teaching and culturally relevant approaches in teaching.

Since TOCs will continue to serve as role models, mentors, cultural brokers, and holders of CCW, it will become vital that the field of music education take much more aggressive and calculated steps to diversify the music educator workforce. This can be done by recruiting and growing music educators of color who maintain a significant amount of cultural capital and sociocultural understanding, are from urban communities, and are prepared to teach in urban communities. This will require music education preparation programs to cultivate an acute interest in not only diversifying the music education workforce, and the music educator workforce in urban areas, but also addressing the infrastructure that prepares them. This can be done by following the model of other institutions of higher education (IHEs) who have problematized the lack of TOCs and the lack of TOCs in high-needs areas by developing and implementing initiatives to assist in increasing the representation of TOCs.

Equity-based initiatives that attempt to diversify the teacher workforce, especially those that attempt to create TOCs who work in urban settings, go by many names, and are often called pipeline programs, pathway programs, “home-growing” programs, or “home-grown” programs. The most common pipeline programs are called Grow Your Own, which will be discussed later in this article GYOs (Coffey, Putman, Handler, & Leach, 2019; Gist, Bianco, & Lynn, 2019; Valenzuela, 2017;). GYOs employ specific theoretical beliefs to guide the systematical, and programmatical practices employed to diversify the teacher workforce. These beliefs normally reside under the umbrella of Critical Race Theory, and attempt to upend inequalities as it relates to education. However, while GYOs have been used holistic approach to bring about more TOCs into the teacher workforce we have yet to see GYOs that target future music educators. The purpose of this article is to discuss the underrepresentation of TOCs in music education, present the purpose and theoretical underpinnings of GYO programs, and present ideas on music educator programs can established university-led GYOs with urban communities.

## Low Numbers of TOCs in Music Ed

There is a shortage of TOCs in music education (Delorenzo & Silverman, 2016). There are many reasons why this may be the case (i.e., low numbers of students enrolled in music programs across the country, access, etc.) as there is a shortage of TOCs at large. It would seem that the absence of TOCs may be due to the overall underrepresentation of students of color in higher education at large. This may be due to some of the more

common barriers known to impact the ability of students of color to reach higher education at all. These issues can vary from deficiencies in educational background, language barriers, social and economic barriers, lack of career counseling, etc. (Perna, 2000). As it relates to music education, Delorenzo & Silverman (2016) postulate that low numbers of TOC in music education could be due to an underrepresentation of students of color in school music programs (Delorenzo & Silverman, 2016). Further, in one study done by Elpus & Abril (2011) they found that after surveying 750 schools that the music programs were overwhelmingly White. When this study was reassessed, numbers still demonstrate low numbers of Black or African American students (13%) and Latinx (17%) enrolled in music ensemble (Elpus, Kenneth & Abril, 2019). These numbers should be a cause for concern as the current demographics of students of color is growing at a far greater rate than that of TOC. Without an intense emphasis on growing music educators who are TOCs we may continue to see even fewer numbers of students of color within music programs across the country.

TOCs who are music educators are known to act as role models and even assist students of color in their academic progress while in school and their retention in a music programs Hamann & Walker, 1993; Hamann, & Cutietta, 1997; Walker & Hamann, 1995). Additionally, TOCs who are music educators hold an immense amount of capital, especially if they teach students of color or work in urban areas. While there seems to be minimal research that demonstrates the capital that TOC yield at the post-secondary level, it would seem safe to assume that this idea is more than likely the case at minority serving institutions like Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) where most, if not all, of the ensemble directors /music educators are Black.

TOCs are capable of having a level of sociocultural understanding of students of similar backgrounds, can provide culturally relevant experiences, and act as institutional agents for students from urban areas. An assumption can be made TOCs who are from and teach in urban areas understand and value CCW. Understanding CCW is probably one of the more important skills as a TOC working in an urban area and is essential to assisting in creating or growing a GYO program. However, there are few, if any, music education GYO or home-grown programs or research that suggest a model for the use of a GYO program in music education. Nor are there community-based or university-based GYO music educator programs which are based out of urban communities. This is perhaps because much of the research in GYO programs does not focus specifically in music education. Or, possibly because urban communities value of music education may differ from those of music educators. Or, maybe the field of music education has not systematically problematized the low numbers of TOC within music ed. However, it seems that now, more than ever, would be an ideal time to begin to create music educator pipelines that bring about more TOCs to music education and in high-needs urban areas through the implementation of a GYO program.

## What is a GYO?

GYOs are teacher pipeline initiatives created as early as the 1970s to diversify the teacher workforce and increase the representation of TOCs within urban communities. More specifically, GYOs are initiatives that can be community-based, district-based, or university-based, and attempt to diversify the teacher workforce in high-needs urban communities through teacher academies, urban education programs, teacher preparation programs, and other methods to certify more teachers of color.

Community-based GYOs are initiatives that are started organically by a community to address issues made relevant by a community. Normally, because of the general nature of GYOs, and the theories that define it, the issues have to do with education. One of the more famous community-based initiatives is the Chicago-based, federally-funded (Title VII) Logan Square Neighborhood Association (LSNA) (Skinner, Garretton, & Schultz, 2011). This organization was developed out of the 1988 School Reform Law (Skinner et al, 2011).

University-based GYOs that are led and first initiated by a university, however, can be housed and/or directed by a community. An example of a successful university-based GYO would be the partnership between LSNA and the Bilingual Education Program at Chicago State University to create Neuva Generación (Skinner et al, 2011). This GYO was created to prepare bilingual teachers to teach in a predominantly Latinx community. Another well-known GYO, a teacher cadet program is the Armstrong Atlantic State University (AASU) Pathways to Teaching program. This was a grant funded program that started in 1989 to bring teachers of color into the teaching profession (Lau, Dandy & Hoffman, 2007).

District-led GYOs are ones in which the school district acts as a liaison between communities and universities for the purpose of establishing a GYO. A more recent GYO that is district led would be the Patterson Teachers for Tomorrow (PT4T) (Hill & Gillette, 2005). This program is a collaborative project that began during the 1999-2000 school year, with the establishment of Future Teacher of America (FTA) clubs in the three largest high schools in Patterson, NJ. Each club is led by one faculty advisor selected by school principal and one William Patterson university faculty.

## Targeted Populations

GYOs can range from high school summer academies to undergraduate teacher preparation programs that either create a pipeline or focus specifically on certifying students, paraprofessionals, and emergency certification candidates of color to become teachers in urban areas. These programs may also be referred to as home-growing, urban teacher academies, or pipeline programs. No matter the name, they all have a similar focus to diversify the teacher workforce and increase the representation of TOCs in urban settings.

One significant difference in GYO programs is the targeted population. GYOs are known to normally target four different populations: (1) Emergency Certification, (2) Paraprofessionals, (3) Current Undergraduates of Color, and (4) Pre-collegiate Students (Skinner, et al, 2011; Villegas, & Clewell, 1998; Valenzuela, 2017). For example, urban teacher academies may focus on creating TOC pipeline programs by taking high school juniors and seniors from urban communities, whereas some GYOs may focus on TOCs already enrolled in higher education. Additionally, another targeted population by GYOs are emergency certification candidates. Emergency certification candidates are candidates who are pushed through the certification process for high-needs content areas. These are normally degree holding recipients teaching through Teach for America programs, and those alike.

Two key elements of GYO programs are how they are established and where they are housed. There are normally two formats for how they are established. Programs are either established from a community-based initiative or a university-based initiative. The main difference is that community-based GYOs are ones that are led by and initiated by a community, school district or other appendage of a community and work in conjunction with an IHE. University-based GYOs are established or initiated directly at an IHE and work in conjunction with the community.

The final three aspects of a GYO, which are the most pertinent, are as follows: (1) Where programs are housed, (2) what is taught and how it is taught, and (3) who is teaching. These aspects are important for the following reasons:

- When a GYO is housed in a community, the impact can be uplifting, empowering, economic, and educational.
- Teaching culturally relevant content in a way that is culturally responsive and relies on the CCW of a community can be liberating.
- When the facilitators of a GYO are TOCs it can be uplifting and empowering to the students of color in GYO.

Furthermore, these three aspects are essential to GYOs because they are vital to framing the philosophical and theoretical structure of a GYO.

## Theoretical Underpinnings of GYOs

Of all the elements that make-up GYOs, the most important are the philosophical and theoretical ideas that frame them. This is most likely because of the following two reasons: (1) The theoretical and philosophical framing define the purpose of a GYO and its strategic and programmatic structure, and (2) historically, the theoretical and philosophical framing of GYOs attempt to up-end systemic discriminatory and unjust practices as it relates marginalized youth in education (Alinsky, 1989; Skinner, et al, 2011; Young & Berry, 2004). The second reason is particularly important because the theories and philosophies used to frame GYOs are equity-based, embedded in social justice, and focus on breaking down oppressive systems as they relate to education. Therefore, Critical Race Theory (CRT) seems to be the best overarching theory to frame GYOs, as they often include many other theories.

As continued below, it will be shown that the theories selected by a GYO are used to frame, guide, and direct what practices are employed.

It is often difficult to pinpoint one specific theoretical belief for a GYO, as structural, theoretical, and instructional beliefs of programs often vary from place to place. As stated above, many GYOs' missions and overall purposes are framed by certain theoretical beliefs and may be based on a range of ideological and even pedagogical beliefs. Some of the theories can be current or date back to the early 20th century. These would be theories such as social reconstruction, which postulates that neighborhoods can be changed by community involvement. Or, Saul Alinsky's idea of community organizing to promote drastic changes within a community, and Dewey's idea that public schools, as community institutions, were meant to prepare students to contribute to their communities (Hill & Gillete, 2007). Without truly understanding and implementing these theories, it is difficult to devise a GYO, or any community-based initiative. Further, without understanding the historical and cultural aspects of a community, it is not possible to devise a truly equitable GYO.

As stated before, at the core of most GYOs and home-growing teacher pipeline programs is the theory of social reconstruction (Skinner et al 2011). However, the next most essential theory is the theory of Community Cultural Wealth. (CCW). CCW is the aspirational, familial, social, linguistic, resistant, and navigational capital that innately exists within the fabric of communities of color. Understanding and valuing these forms of capital are critical as urban communities are often devalued. Additionally, there is often an over-emphasized focus on negative issues within some urban communities (Yosso, 2005). Of course, some of the more well-known theories adapted by GYOs are Critical Race Theory (CRT) which acts as an umbrella for other theories such as LatCrit, teaching as political practice, critical pedagogy, race uplift, other mothering, and social justice pedagogy. Each of these theories operate differently within GYOs and impact the functioning and programmatic, structural, and strategic processes within GYOs. It must be noted that Booker T. Washington's and W. E. B. Du Bois theory of "racial uplift" is one of the more underlined theories at the core of all GYOs because it focuses on bettering the life of Blacks (Hill & Gillette, 2005).

Lastly, the next most essential part of the theoretical structure of GYOs, other than where the program is taught, is what is taught and how it is taught as it relates to pre-collegiate initiatives and certification programs that target students of color. This also includes a host of theories such as culturally responsive teaching, culturally relevant content, and others, to connect with students and assist in them connecting with future students. This is a crucial aspect of GYO programs because while they still lean on more formal approaches to teaching and the well-known educational theories, GYOs makes use of CCW and places value on the information that students of color from urban communities bring to the academic table. This is a key idea behind CCW in which we value the knowledge brought forth from urban communities, and also the idea of critical pedagogy in which we question who controls the knowledge and what are the characteristics of those who control the knowledge (Sheared & Sissel, 2001).

## Music Ed GYOs

There is very limited research which seeks to understanding how to diversify the field of music educators in urban areas through creating teacher pipeline programs (Delorenzo & Silverman, 2016). While there have been strides in understanding how to teach in urban settings and how to prepare music educators to go into urban settings, there are very few articles discussing how the field of music education has yet to examine GYO programs which develop music educators from urban areas to teach in urban areas (Robison, Tiger, Williams, Hoffman, & Eros, 2020). However, while there are teacher preparation programs to prepare music educators that do focus on preparing teachers to teach in urban areas, minimal literature discusses how to recruit pre-colligate students from urban communities (Anderson, Steven, & Denson, 2015). Further, while research has yet to demonstrate that GYOs are being used, it does not imply that music education teacher-preparation programs have not begun to examine GYOs as an option, nor does it suggest that music education pipeline programs do not already exist. These initiatives could simply be proceeding at a smaller scale or has yet to be written about, or simply because GYOs overall are under-researched (Gist, Bianco, & Lynn, 2019). It is also safe to assume that there could be other barriers, more closely related to music education as a discipline, that may make creating a music education GYO difficult. These barriers can include a shortage of music educators of color, lack of university-based connections with urban communities, a lack of funding (a limitation in all GYOs), and, as stated earlier, a shortage of students of color enrolled in K-12 music ensembles.

From a curricular standpoint, if music education programs are to create collegiate GYOs which focus on paraprofessionals and emergency certification candidates, there would need to be an evaluation of a candidates' musicianship, or an audition process (including a music history and music theory evaluation) in order to remedy limitations where necessary. Further, if a candidate is not up to par in their musicianship, playing, and other critical areas, this could potentially prolong the ability to put paraprofessionals and emergency certification TOC candidates back into their communities as music educators. Additionally, the types of musicians that are accepted into a traditional music education teacher preparation program must be reevaluated are planning to diversify the music teacher workforce as many musicians in communities may not be traditionally trained.

At a more basic level, the underrepresentation of TOC in music education at the secondary and higher education level overall may also impede an upstart of a GYO. This is because when planning a GYO, the facilitators are critical to communities of color seeing their community being served (Skinner et al, 2011). This not to suggest that all facilitators of a GYO must be TOCs, especially if they understand the CCW within a community, but representation of TOCs within a GYO is vital. This is critical to the philosophical and theoretical ideals (specifically racial uplift) of GYOs mentioned earlier to the philosophical and theoretical practices mentioned previously which are engrained in the fabric of a GYO.

Another potential reason for an absence of a GYO in music education teacher-preparation program could be because of a lack of push from the top down to lead these initiatives. Without the leadership of a dean or chair to address the absence of TOCs in music education, it is a more arduous task to establish a GYO which will need funding to help the program function. This is not singular to music education, as many attempts to diversify student populations at higher education institutions fall short without the help of top-down leadership (Clements, 2009).

As it relates to community engagement, the assumption could be made that a lack of GYOs in music education higher education could be because music education teacher preparation programs lack of connection with urban communities nearing their institutions. As stated above, GYOs can start as community-based initiatives and be joined by a neighboring institution. Furthermore, GYOs are housed in urban communities, again requiring music education programs to establish a relationship with neighboring urban communities. However, a music department would need a very strong presence in a community for these types of relationships to be established.

## Conclusion

The ground is definitely fertile for music education teacher preparation programs to establish GYOs. The ground is also fertile to begin to establish university led partnerships which focus on increasing the representation of TOCs in music education. This is mainly because GYOs are effective in increasing TOCs, and because the known decrease of involvement by students of color in music programs at the secondary and post-secondary levels has been documented (Coffey et al 2019). There is also a chance for music educators to be innovative in their approach at diversifying the teacher workforce in high needs communities by integrating non-traditional practices and non-traditional music ensembles to garner greater numbers of students of color. Further, music educators may have an advantage in garnering greater numbers of students of color over other disciplines, as music educators of color have been known to act as role models to students of similar backgrounds (Walker & Hamann, 1993). However, there must be more TOCs to help fulfill this goal.

Before attempting to diversify the music education teacher workforce in urban communities through GYOs, there are a few considerations that need to be made by music education teacher preparation programs. First, considering the target population is important. Music education teacher preparation programs must decide to target emergency certification candidates of color, paraprofessionals of color, current undergraduates of color, and pre-collegiate students of color. Secondly, they will need to find a community to serve and leaders within the community to act as cultural brokers and to make the appropriate connections with important community members. Thirdly, they will need to select and adapt specific theories to frame and govern the purpose, programmatic and strategic goals of their GYO. These are the most important considerations in establishing a GYO.

At the macro level, there must be a concerted effort by music education teacher preparation programs to address a few vital areas of concern. Music education programs must establish a strong presence in neighboring urban

communities. This must be separate from the often-mandatory visit to urban settings required by some teacher preparation programs. Music education teacher preparation programs must continue to integrate culturally responsive teaching with social justice teaching pedagogies that inspire future music educators to continue to address issues of equity in music education. Music education teacher preparation programs will need to continue to adapt the theoretical and philosophical views of GYO programs which makes the music educator a teacher and an institutional agent. Lastly, there must be an examination of curricular needs in music education, and music departments at large, that integrate traditional and non-traditional ensembles and non-traditional pedagogical approaches that work well for students of color at primary, secondary, and post-secondary levels.

At the moment, there are very few GYOs that focus on diversifying the music teacher education workforce. However, that is not to suggest that they do not exist and are not successful in bringing about more TOCs into music education. As mentioned before, the study of GYOs, not matter the focus, is an under-researched area. Therefore, there is a very good chance that music education GYOs exist and have yet to be published. It is my hope that this article entices others to bring their ideas and practices to the forefront so that it can be used as best practice or inform the research on how best to go about recruiting TOC into the field of music education and diversify the teacher workforce at large.

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## Biography

Adrian D. Barnes is an Assistant Professor, and coordinator of Music Education at Rowan University. He began his teaching career in a Title I school in Bradenton, Florida (grades 6-8) as a band and orchestra director. While in Florida, he served as an assistant director of marching band at Southeast High School working specifically with drum-line, and front ensemble. Dr. Barnes has worked closely with students from historically marginalized communities, as well as students with special needs. Upon attending Texas Tech University, Dr. Barnes served as an instructor of record, an instructor for the Texas Tech University String Project, and as a research assistant on a Promise Neighborhood grant given to Texas Tech University by the U.S. Department of education for the purposes of establishing better relationships, and providing social capital to African American/Blacks and Latinos of Mexican-origin within the historic Paul Lawrence Dunbar Neighborhood, a historically marginalized section of East Lubbock, Texas. Dr. Barnes research is grounded in social justice, equity and access and seeks to remedy the underrepresentation of Black and Latinx students in 4-year institutions of higher education (IHE).

# The Importance of General Music Education and Educator Preparation to Equal Opportunity for Children and Youths in U.S. Music Education

by Dr. Lois Veenhoven Guderian



An undergraduate degree in music education encompasses many aspects of teaching and learning in music and sometimes surprising revelations, new understandings as to the value of music education to humankind, and insight into the importance of each area of K-12 music education in the schools. Looking back on a long career as a music educator, since the onset of my undergraduate degree, my understanding has grown substantially as to the importance of general music education to children's musical development, overall well-being and ability to engage in life-long music making. Due to their socioeconomic status and/or family schedule, general music classes are the only formal music education that thousands of Americans will experience during their lives. Although middle school, and especially high school level students are allowed to choose their courses, including ensemble music education, not all have the socioeconomic ability to do so. For some students, their parents may not recognize the many values derived from participating in an instrumental or choral program, and for others, their parents may not have the economic means or work schedules to support the extra rehearsals, contests and performances that commonly are a part of ensemble classes. For example, in some districts or schools, ensemble rehearsals are scheduled both inside and outside of the school day. To participate in an ensemble group, students must commit to attendance at all rehearsals.

Economic means restrict a portion of high school students from participating in ensemble music classes that require fees for uniforms, instrument rental, contest fees and travel costs. Even in schools where most of these costs are absorbed by the school or school district, there are parents who cannot afford the smaller costs that periodically arise such as fees for group travel, lunch money, and tickets for field trips to performances to name a few. At the high school level, if a student has a part-time job, they might have the ability to cover costs like these themselves. However, at the middle school level, few youths have jobs and are dependent on their parents to cover fees for their education.

Another factor that has bearing on children's and youths music education in the United States is the opportunity for private music lessons. The cost of private music lessons outside of public-school education and fees for afterschool enrichment programs are out of the question for many families.

When one reflects on this situation, one realizes that the opportunities for all children and youths to receive music education are limited and that even public school education may not always provide the equal opportunity for all students that we like to believe exists. At the high school and middle school level, to claim that the opportunity to receive a quality music education is equal for all students just because they are able to choose enrollment in an ensemble class does not necessarily translate as equal opportunity for all. Socioeconomic conditions are a driving factor in youths' ability to choose ensemble music classes.

The quality and availability of general music education in grades Pre-K-8 is also a factor that has bearing on equal opportunity for music education in the schools; especially for children whose families cannot afford to supplement their education with private music lessons and enrichment programs outside of the school day. For these students, only with consistent and substantial quality teaching and learning in general music in the elementary and middle school grades will they develop enough musicianship skills and understanding in music to be able to enter any music class of their choice at the high school level. Not to mention that education in the early grades should also provide groundwork for an individual's life-long engagement in music and other subjects. This statement may seem strong, however, if one compares teaching and learning in other subjects to music it is easy to understand. For example, if an elementary school math program is of poor or average quality and math class is provided only once or twice a week for 30 minutes, will the children be prepared and able to choose higher order math classes in high school? Availability and opportunity for excellent education, regardless of the subject area,

enables choice. In most U.S. school districts, *general music* education is the only opportunity for music education that is equally available to all children and youths in the public schools; i.e., in schools where general music is a required subject in the school curriculum and 100% of the teaching and learning takes place during the school day. And, thankfully, some form of general music is still offered in most U.S. schools. Teaching and learning in general music education must be of the highest quality possible.

Thus, the responsibility on general music educators and the whole profession of music education – from music educator preparation programs and advanced degrees in higher education to those who teach pre-K-8 general music– to nurture the musical potential of the young in our country is staggering. The preparation of individuals to become educators of general music is critical to the wellbeing of U.S. children and youth, the adult portion of U.S. society, and the survival of music education in the schools. When American adults look back on their general music experience in the schools as one of value, one that was enjoyable, and one that provided substantial learning in music towards their lifelong, learning and participation in music, the question of music education as a necessary part of the curriculum will become an issue of the past.

## Teaching and Learning in General Music

There are few experiences in this life that are as rewarding as helping other human beings learn. Nowhere in the school curriculum is this truer than in the general music classroom. By nature, children are musical and love to learn about themselves and the world around them through musical activities. According to Levitan, the aptitude to develop musical skills and understanding is part of what it means to be human: musical potential is in the evolution of human heredity (Levitan, 2006).

Music has many meanings and functions in children's lives (Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 2014 p. 6.) Not only learning *in* music is important to childhood development, children learn many things about their world *through* music (NAfME, 2000). From songs and music activities that help children develop their bodies, minds and spirits, including the development of understandings about themselves and the behavioral norms of their culture, to learning curriculum content in music and other subjects, the role of music in children's lives is critical to their musical, aesthetic, social, emotional and kinesthetic development. Connecting music with familiar understandings can help children build on what they already know and have experienced in their home environments. Additionally, music making, and the phenomena of musical experience appears to be a unique way of knowing, and critical to human beings' ability to express life experience and to make sense of the world (Reimer, 2003). Making music is of critical importance to human wellbeing and meaning making.

Influences on musical development begin early in the life of human beings (Reynolds and Valerio, 2017). In a study that examined the effects of music on unborn children, Woodward (1992) found that the fetus not only hears music, it responds to music. Levitan (2006) proposed that "all humans are born with the capacity to learn any of the world's musics," and "that the basis for understanding music is formed during the first few years of life due to rapid neural development after birth and the rapid formation of neural connections continued during the first few years of life" (Levitan, 2006, p. 107). Similarly, in her formative article on teaching and learning in early childhood music, Levinowitz (1998) found that the ability to hear and match pitch, and numerous musical skills are best learned in early childhood during the time that the brain is forming. May (2013) confirmed Edwin Gordon's (1988) earlier attestations that the critical years for musical development were age 3-5 however warned educators of the possibility of mis-education and its long-range effects if educators were not in full understanding of how to nurture musical ability in the very young and not fully aware of the differences in approaches to music education between music education for young children and approaches to teaching and learning in music for older children (p. 41).

Many veteran music educators readily accept and understand these findings based on their experiences, over the course of their careers, in making music with children and youths. They understand that musical behaviors are learned behaviors and that all children and youths are able to develop musical abilities when given the opportunity and when engagement in musical activities is an ongoing, consistent part of the child's lived experience. The research discoveries cited here are critical to teaching and learning in general music. They can support general music educators' understandings and decision-making processes surrounding their teaching, curriculum design, the learning opportunities that might be offered and the possible ways to differentiate and adapt them according to students' needs.

Children learn *in* and *through* music when general music educators design curriculum content, instruction and activities according to children’s social, emotional, cognitive and physical development. Neatly stated, however the acquisition of knowledge, development of musicianship skills and mature understanding in teaching and learning that can make the statement a reality is a tall order. For educators of general music, learning the many developmental stages of children and youth, and numerous learning theories and educational practices including several music-teaching methodologies, and how to apply this knowledge and acquisition of teaching practices in the design of comprehensive, sequentially-ordered, standard-aligned curriculum and instruction, per age level, can be daunting. During degree programs and beyond, learning everything one needs to know and be able to do to enter the field as a general music educator requires perseverance and dedication to the purpose. Additionally, besides the student teaching experience, preparation to enter the field requires extensive field experience in both observation and practice to develop mature understandings in the many aspects of what it means to be a general music educator of humankind. Those who dedicate their lives to a career in general music are often individuals who are dedicated not only to the profession, but to children: their interests, their wellbeing and their futures.

### Undergraduates and Preparation Programs for Teaching General Music

The love of making and performing ensemble music is a common motivating factor for those who choose to major in music education. Thus, it is understandable that during the early years of pursuing a degree in music education, few individuals are fully aware of the potential value of general music education to the American public, the importance of becoming a stellar general music educator, and the importance general music methods classes are to the very survival of the career they have chosen to pursue. In university music departments, where preparation in general music is regarded as important as the development of musicianship towards teaching and learning in secondary ensemble performance classes, undergraduates have the opportunity to grow and develop towards a mature understanding as to the importance of general music in the schools and the importance of their own preparation for teaching general music in the schools.

While it is not the purpose of this article to provide a review of the learning goals per methods course, or to remind individuals of the numerous pages of reading and applied fieldwork that is experienced during the pursuit of a degree in music education, a synthesis provided here of a few overriding principles for teaching and learning in general music might serve as a useful list; a helpful reminder of many of the aspects of teaching and learning in general music. Under these principles, *balance* in all areas and aspects of the teaching and learning is key to children and youths’ well-being and to the efficacy of the instruction. Developing musical skills and understanding is a life-long process that can and should be an enjoyable one. Part of our role as general music educators is to facilitate that process for our students.

### Principles for Teaching and Learning in General Music: A Matter of Balance

There are many areas and aspects of music teaching and learning in general music that require a sense of balance when preparing, planning, and carrying out instruction:

- Balance between the amount of verbal explanation and opportunities for applied music making an educator uses when engaging children in music teaching and learning
- Balance in the amount of time spent to provide students with substantial experience in the various areas of the curriculum with the amount of time spent to rehearse and practice literature towards the performance of a program or concert
- Balance in the variety of styles, ethnic and world musics represented in the materials chosen to support content areas in music, curriculum design and instruction
- Balance in the various practices and strategies chosen for the process of teaching and learning

- Balance between educator-centered teaching and learning that includes the modeling of skills (such as pitch matching and fingering on instruments, etc.) with student-centered learning that provides students with opportunities to explore, experiment in and create music
- Balance between providing students with instruction to develop musicianship skills and knowledge with opportunities to develop creative thinking through assignments in improvisation and composition
- Balance in how we go about designing assignments aimed to nurture students’ creative potential; i.e., balancing the amount of structure and freedom of choice in the actual design of assignments we give to students that are aimed to develop their abilities to solve musical problems, use their creative and critical thinking, and thus develop creative potential in music
- Balance in the various ways we assess students’ understanding (those that assess factual understandings, others for skill achievement, and embedded assessment as an authentic way to assess students’ ability to apply what they are learning)

### Teaching Music within a Balance of Verbal Explanation and Applied Music Making

Children and youths go to their general music classes with the anticipation that they will experience music. It is in the students’ interest that general music educators keep verbal explanations short and use as much of the class time as possible to engage the children and youths in music making activities that support the concepts and skills they are learning. Children and youths can be lost in the teacher’s explanation of concepts and context and become tired, confused and even lose their desire to try to make the music.

Human beings need opportunities to **construct** their own knowledge and must learn how to think in a *discipline* (the term discipline in this context means *domain* or subject area) in order to truly understand it. It is not enough to learn *about* music through verbal explanations. Children and youths must learn *in* music through active thinking, feeling and bodily doing of music that makes music what it is. In the early years of children’s music education, effective nurturing of children’s musical potential includes an educator’s ability to model musical behaviors (not perform for) and ability to apply practices that are research and practice based and have shown to be successful for nurturing children’s musical potential. For example, using the development of children’s singing ability as an example, one educational practice that has met with success in helping many children to develop singing ability is the use of solfege. As part of their preparation in methods courses or in post-degree professional development, educators learn how to use solfege as a teaching tool in combination with research and practice-based forms of song teaching. Learning accepted practices is foundational to an educator’s development of their own ideas and creative teaching. Another extremely important factor in an educator’s ability to successfully nurture and preserve children’s singing voices is the educator’s knowledge and awareness of the developmental stages of children’s vocal ranges – usually learned in methods classes. This knowledge is critical towards an educator’s ability to make informed selections in song literature and in understanding what practices, old, new or original, might be possible in nurturing children’s singing voices. Engaging the children in the processes of excellent teaching and learning in singing activities, with as limited verbal explanation as possible, supports children’s development and joy in singing. Children learn to sing as a result of hearing good vocal models (singers) in their environment, from engaging in singing, and from educators who effectively use song teaching and pitch matching strategies that demonstrate their awareness of the child’s singing range and vocal development. These understandings, and the development of the knowhow to apply them, are foundational to successful teaching and learning in general music. They are learned practices, most often learned and developed in methods courses and practiced in field experiences. In preparing and teaching music methods courses, demonstrating and sharing knowledge, and supervising and conducting fieldwork with pre-service educators, college and university educators must also be informed on past, present and emerging practices and research on new and possibly better ways to teach general music. At times limiting, and always balancing verbal explanations with discussion and hands on experiences is also essential in the higher education classroom.

Educators can work towards engaging children and youths in music education in a balance of the ways people make music, namely by **(1) Actively playing or singing music** – **(2) listening/responding** to music and **(3) creating** music. General music educators can collaborate with classroom educators or work alone to offer students learning opportunities that **(4) connect** experiences in music to their historical, social and cultural contexts (NAfME, 2014). Even during *connecting* experiences, i.e., interdisciplinary teaching and learning that can provide students with meaningful cultural and social-historical understandings, design of instruction should allow for substantial learning in music.

### **Balance between Variety in Curriculum and Practice for Performances**

As musicians, we are well aware of the necessity of practice toward successful, confident performance and that the preparations for performance are in themselves a learning experience. Yet, we can overdo the practice with our students and limit the variety of literature the students learn by having them practice and perfect a small group of songs for a program or concert. It can also be a disservice to our students when other areas of the curriculum are given little time due to the number of class times allocated towards the rehearsing of songs. Knowing that principals and parents will be in the audience, it is easy to perhaps place too much emphasis on the desired product for the upcoming performance instead of on the many content areas and processes in teaching and learning in general music. A balance in our own thinking during planning, preparation and instruction that includes reflection as to the value, purpose and goals of music education can, in part, drive an educator's decisions regarding how much time is devoted to practice towards performance perfection. Being aware and watchful of potential fatigue or boredom in the responses from students is useful towards keeping this aspect of general music in balance. A healthy balance might also help to avoid undesirable behavior from children who might tire of the practice. During the times the general music class time is used for practicing and rehearsing in preparation for a program, focusing on teamwork and the performance as a shared experience with the audience can also help in making the practice, preparation and performing experience a positive one for all students.

### **Balancing Choices Made for Curriculum and Content Areas**

There are *multiple intelligences* within the discipline of music (Reimer, 2003). As educators, we need to understand that children have differences in abilities, differences in background experiences in music, and differences in their current levels of achievement and interests in music. The cultural and socioeconomic situatedness of the school must also be carefully taken into consideration in order to tap into children's backgrounds in music and build on what they know. Successful learning is often dependent on new learning experiences that connect with and build on students' former knowledge. Taking these factors into consideration, we must design curriculum and instruction accordingly, differentiating and adapting as needed.

Vygotsky (1986) and Piaget (Myers, 2004) believed in the importance of experience that would allow for connections between new knowledge and students' former knowledge. Children could form new understandings, or schemas, constructed from a foundation of prior learning experiences. Vygotsky (1986) also argued that children's informal understandings learned in such places as the home combined with formal learning in the school to create new schemas of understanding, all of which were culturally situated. Children grew in their knowledge and understanding by interpreting new information based on schemas they had already formed. Social interactions with educators, adults, and peers were critical to the child's learning and development of new schemas of understanding (Guderian, 2014; Vygotsky, 1986).

Piaget's theories, and especially Vygotsky's social constructivist theory of human learning give rise to an aspect of learning that is critical to our own time: *Culturally responsive* teaching and learning takes into consideration the cultural background of the population of children in a given classroom with the realization that the children are coming to the learning experience from various, particular cultural perspectives and understandings of the world based on their life experiences and what they have seen and heard in their home environments. *Culturally responsive* teaching and learning recognizes that a child's foundations for learning lies in the lived experiences of their culture and home environment (Abril, 2013). Educators who adhere to the wisdom of Piaget and Vygotsky and the many individuals who have further developed their ideas will understand the importance of designing instruction that includes learning experiences that connect to their students' cultural backgrounds and informal learning environments.

### **Balance in Instructional Practices Including Educator-Directed and Student-Centered Learning**

Providing students with a balance between educator-directed instruction and student-centered learning is essential. In music, some educator modeling is necessary for children to learn musical behaviors, and to acquire knowledge and skills in music. Student-centered discovery methods of instruction, where children are given opportunities to apply what they have learned and further construct and deepen their understandings through assignments that require creative problem solving, is also essential to the development of children's creative ability in music.

With limitations on the amount of time general music educators have with their students, it is tempting to "tell" information instead of asking students questions that better engage them in the learning process. Use of *inquiry* during instruction is essential for engaging children in learning curriculum content, in thinking in and about what they are learning, and in using their creative and critical thinking. Use of *inquiry* as a teaching and learning strategy allows children to engage in thinking and learning processes, figure things out on their own, contribute to and be a part of the teaching and learning, develop new understandings and to change preexisting understandings.

Balancing experiences in *sound before symbol* aimed to develop students' understanding of conceptual music knowledge is imperative to the development of children's understanding in music. Children should experience sound before learning symbols and engage in experiences in music many times and in a variety of ways before learning symbol systems. For example, how can one understand the concept of beat unless one has had many experiences in responding to beat through clapping, tapping, moving, and playing the beat of music? It is also beneficial to children's understanding in symbol systems to allow them to create their own ways, i.e., their own symbol system for showing and sharing their creative music products.

Due to the nature of music, and the strong connection between cognitive and kinesthetic ability needed towards to acquisition of skills, the study of music requires order, often a sequentially designed music curriculum that includes consistent reinforcement of skills and many opportunities to practice and apply learning in both learned and creative ways.

### **Balance Between Instruction that Supports the Learning of Skills and Knowledge in Music with Opportunities to Create Music**

During the last 20-25 years, much emphasis has been placed on the development of creative and critical thinking in all human beings, especially in children. In music teaching and learning, this has given rise to increased understanding as to the importance of including teaching and learning in music improvisation and composition in comprehensive curricula for music education. However, there is still some controversy as to *how* to go about the design of curricula, instruction and assignments that will result in meaningful creative music making, nurture students' creative potential and ability to improvise and compose in meaningful ways, and have a positive effect on student learning. Questions surrounding the amount of freedom and structure in the formation of assignments and guidance during instruction leading up to the actual creative music making and during the process are important ones for those who teach general music. In music classroom teaching and learning, the idea of complete creative freedom provided for children, with no prior instruction or context building, raises questions. Even the various forms of *free improvisation* are based in some kind of understanding of musical practices dependent on the particular form or strategy used as a framework for the *free improvisation*. Allowing children to explore and experiment with sound is always desirable. However, it does not necessarily result in learning in music or understanding in how to compose music under the child's cultural system of music or various other cultural systems of music. Nor does complete freedom necessarily result in substantial learning in music. To learn how to compose music according to particular cultural practices requires a balance in learning in that system while consistently providing students with opportunities to explore, experiment and apply what they are learning in creative ways (Guderian, 2009; 2012, 2014, 2017). Assignments that provide some structure and are open-ended can be very effective. Another aspect to keep in mind is that in the schools, educators nurture children's creative ability in music under the restraints of schedules, standards and school or district curriculum goals. Open-ended assignments – those that provide some structure for guidance and have a strong correlation with curriculum content and instruction, and yet still provide students with many opportunities for choice in the creative process, have shown to be effective in nurturing children's improvisation and composition abilities in music

(Guderian, 2009; 2014, 2012; 2017). Providing students with opportunities to apply what (content) they are learning in creative ways is also a form of embedded assessment (Guderian, 2009, 2014, 2017).

### Providing Balance in Assessment by Using a Variety of Assessments

Since music educators need to assess skills, conceptual knowledge and the ability to apply knowledge (understanding), assessments can take a variety of forms. Evaluation is also be part of the assessment process. For example, a rubric assessment might include levels of expectation per area or aspect of learning that is assessed. It is the assessment made within these expectations that further facilitates the evaluation of student learning and often provides another level of meaning to the assessment process. Assessment and evaluation can inform educators as to where a student might have difficulties in learning curriculum content and where and how the plan and design of instruction needs to be differentiated, adapted or improved.

Since educators must remain informed on how students are developing in many skills and understanding, balancing informal and formal forms of assessment, and formative and summative forms of assessment is beneficial in teaching and learning in general music. A form of informal assessment could be an observation of students' behaviors during whole group or small group learning and/or discussion. Checklists are useful and time-saving to make notes on students' progress without the child even knowing they are being assessed or feeling some amount of stress or pressure from the assessment. For example, when reading a book that includes timed, pitch or rhythmic response, an educator can carefully observe whole group and individual response to assess children's development in ability to match pitch or echo rhythms.

Formal assessments often involve a task or written demonstration of students' understanding. Often, rubric grading comprising several levels of achievement and quality of an assignment is useful for evaluating and measuring student learning. Worksheets on factual knowledge usually involve straightforward grading.

**Formative assessments** inform educators as to where students are in their learning. A formative assessment could be a question-and-answer session at the end of a learning segment aimed to summarize main points of the instruction and to assess whether or not students have understood the content. Another formative assessment might be to provide students with a non-graded written questionnaire on the content they had just learned, or an observation of students demonstrating something learned earlier in the week. "Let's see if we remember the movements we learned on Tuesday for the song *We Love to Eat*. Everybody up and let's form our circle to review what we learned."

**Summative assessments** provide educators with information on what a student has learned, retained, and is able to do as a result of the teaching and learning experience. Summative assessments usually reflect learning over a period time. A summative assessment might be a written theory test or rubric assessment of a demonstrated skill practiced over several weeks. Summative assessments assess what should be the logical outgrowth and results of the teaching and learning instruction and learning activities. Unit tests and portfolios of student learning are two common forms of summative assessments.

A very important form of assessment for general music educators is **embedded assessment**: A task or assignment that is part of the learning activities whereby the product of the assignment demonstrates the level of understanding of the instructional content and learning activities experienced during the instruction. **Creative Corner** assignments in the text *Playing the Soprano Recorder for School, Community and the Private Studio* are examples of embedded assessment (Guderian, 2008; 2017). **Cornerstone Assessments** as part of the 2014 National Standards for Music Education are also an example of embedded assessment (NAfME, 2014).

**Authentic assessments** are assessments that provide information on students' progress in learned skills and understanding for application in "real life" situations. For example, use of a rubric or other tool to evaluate sight reading ability would be an authentic assessment.

There are numerous forms of assessments, and most are very useful when carefully aligned with learning goals and the instruction students have experienced. Excellent examples are provided in method classes textbooks, and various online resources. See also excellent text resources on assessment for music education by Dr. Timothy Brophy including his resource *Assessing the Developing Child Musician: A Guide for General Music Teachers* (Brophy, 2000).

### In Conclusion

Besides the short list of principles, under the umbrella of **balance**, to keep in mind when teaching general music, there are many additional aspects and considerations for teaching general music. An individual cannot learn everything in a four or five-year degree program. However, they can learn a substantial amount and certainly enough to enter the field as an effective educator whose work will benefit children and youth in wonderful ways. The life-long learning journey, post degree program, through self-learning and professional development is an exciting one.

The development of musicianship and understanding in education are ongoing throughout life. While the many areas of preparation to teach general music may appear daunting, during the first few years of teaching in the schools, educators can start by introducing music teaching and learning in the areas of general music they feel are their strengths and build their knowledge and abilities over time. Successful preparation in music methods classes and successful music making experiences with students in general music classrooms help to build an educator's understanding and abilities to teach general music. Opportunities for professional development are numerous both during the school year and during summer months. Human beings develop musical skills and teaching abilities over the span of a lifetime. There are many effective ways to teach and learn in music.

The opportunity for a career in teaching and learning in general music is a golden opportunity to contribute something of substantial value to humankind: the nurturing of children and youths' musical potential towards the ability to participate in and make music throughout their lives. As general music educators, not only do we need to know how to nurture children and youths' musical potential, we need to know how to accomplish the teaching and learning in ways that children experience joy, meaning, a sense of accomplishment and musical experience during the learning process. The personal joy, satisfaction and meaning derived from helping children and youth to develop their musical ability is well worth the efforts and often, sacrifices made by general music educators. As mentioned earlier in this article, "There are few experiences in this life that are as rewarding as helping other human beings learn. Nowhere in the school curriculum is this truer than in the general music classroom."

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#### Biography

Dr. Lois Veenhoven Guderian is Professor and Music Education Coordinator Emeritus, UW-Superior, composer, author, clinician, program designer. Lois has worked tirelessly throughout her career to develop innovative, effective ways to engage all children, youth and adults – in any given setting – in enjoyable music education. Her efforts have resulted in new models of arts education, teacher preparation, and international programs. Awards and service include fellowships from Northwestern University (Evanston) and UWS, the UWS AS-L Award in 2012, WMEA Research Chair, ISMTA Voice Chair, Vice President Chicago Composers Forum, NAFME National Adjudicator in Composition. Throughout her life, Lois has served churches as an organist/pianist, choral director, educator, program designer and composer. Internationally published, Lois has composed hundreds of songs, choral works, musicals, instrumental pieces for children, youth and adults and authored articles and textbooks for music education. Publishers include: NAFME-Rowman and Littlefield; Sage, Oxford University Press; Corwin Press; NAC North America & International.

# The [Digital] Beat Goes On: Music and Meaning in a University Music Therapy Program during COVID

by Dr. Andrea McGraw Hunt



Up until the spring of 2020, music therapists nearly always practiced face-to-face with clients in a wide range of settings—from assisted living facilities to elementary school classrooms to bedside in private homes or perhaps in an ICU of a research hospital. Clinical training experiences included students shadowing clinicians in these settings, assisting their supervisors with preparing musical materials, supporting clients' hands as they played instruments, singing along with songs, or perhaps playing instruments to accompany clients' playing. Music therapy education sought to develop these skills through in-person classroom experiences involving live music making and spontaneous interpersonal interaction. The notion of music therapy telehealth was primarily an ethical question that we discussed in class: Is telehealth really the best way to do music therapy? What are the potential risks if we cannot be physically present with a client?

Not to mention the interstate regulatory questions and the need for secure and reliable online connections (Bates, 2014). Though my program included a great deal of asynchronous online work, I also insisted on some face-to-face teaching time for our hybrid courses so that students could experience and practice live music therapy interventions and demonstrations in the classroom.

In mid-March 2020, New Jersey shut down businesses and schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The university swiftly announced we would move to all-online teaching. As the situation evolved, our department eventually developed protocols for ensembles to meet in our building, but any class involving singing, including most of ours, had to move online, all the way through the 2020-21 academic year. Thus, my colleagues and I had to confront our assumptions about the practice of music therapy and how to best teach it so we could adapt to the circumstances.

## CHALLENGES AND ADAPTATIONS

### Clinical Musicianship

Students typically received instruction in clinical musicianship through live, interactive classes with instructors and their peers. However, along with all our other courses, our clinical piano, guitar, and Music Applications (a course addressing voice and many other instruments and their applications) classes moved to Zoom. Though Zoom was a stable and easy-to-use platform, it did not work well for live, interactive music making due to the sound delay. Our guitar and piano instructors immediately set up their home studios with camera angles and microphones that would best support their demonstrations and teaching. When they led playing for students to follow, students remained muted to avoid feedback and sound delays over Zoom.

For Music Applications, I was inspired by someone on Twitter who, while on COVID lockdown in New York City, made a video of herself improvising on piano along with an after-market car alarm sounding on her street. Thus, I addressed clinical improvisation in this course by asking students to record themselves improvising on instruments along with recordings of environmental sounds or mechanical sounds, such as a car alarm, or with the beeping and pumping sounds of machines from an intensive care unit, which were readily available on YouTube. Working with a recording from the ICU also directly related to actual clinical work known as Environmental Music Therapy (Canga, et al., 2012). Though these experiences were very different compared to improvising music live with another person, they provided a robust musical challenge, particularly for students with limited experience improvising with instruments. The resulting improvisations opened up interesting discussions around instrument choices for different clinical environments (e.g., can a cello provide a calming, rather than a more evocative, soundscape in an ICU?) as well as stylistic choices for ways to incorporate environmental sounds in improvisations (e.g., exactly matching pitches of the environmental sounds versus creating a chordal backdrop with more rhythmic contextualization of the sounds).

In addition, in Music Applications we worked with receptive music experiences, such as leading a progressive relaxation exercise with live guitar or piano accompaniment. This kind of experience did not need much adaptation for Zoom other than ensuring the sound settings were appropriate for live music. When we offered other acoustic experiences, we quickly adapted them to involve turn-taking and call-response structures to avoid any problems with lag over Zoom. Beyond this, however, we needed to incorporate much more digital music than we had before.

### Digital Music Skills for Music Therapy

At the start of the pandemic, I had limited experience with Digital Audio Workstations (DAWs) or ways to use digital music making in telehealth and had not yet incorporated much digital music making into our curriculum. Our students in clinical training moved immediately into telehealth while our online courses had to pivot from creating live music together, in person, using acoustic instruments to digital applications that would work in telehealth sessions. Through emergency Zoom meetings, social media posts, and webinars, music therapy colleagues in the region and around the world quickly shared techniques that we attempted and would troubleshoot in class. One method involved using desktop sharing over Zoom while allowing clients to access the practitioner's applications. This eliminated the need for clients to have their own software or apps to make music with therapists. Thus, we experimented with desktop sharing using DAWs (Soundtrap, Logic, Ableton, or even Chrome Music Lab, <https://musiclab.chromeexperiments.com/>) where clients could choose and arrange their own sound loops with the practitioners' support. Local music therapists such as Hausig shared videos of specific tutorials around clinical applications, such as referential beatmaking (2020, May13) and songwriting (2020, October 2) using DAWs. Our class tried out and demonstrated these techniques on each other.

We also worked with web-based apps such as Plink ([www.plink.in](http://www.plink.in)) where clients and practitioners could engage in real-time music making through the app directly, without the need for screen sharing. In addition, classes worked on collaborative recording projects in Soundtrap ([www.soundtrap.com](http://www.soundtrap.com)) such as our project working with a student's parody of the song "Stand by Me" (King, Leiber, & Stoller, 1961). This song was written for a presentation at our last class before lockdown, and the lyrics begged listeners to wash their hands and "Stay away from Me." Our collaborative recording included multiple tracks including vocals, piano, guitar, flute, and bass.

In addition, students also experimented with video editing for some clinical projects and expressed interest in learning more about audio and video editing. Fortunately, though I lacked these skills, other students already had some background knowledge in these areas and shared some introductory steps in our classes.

### Meaningful Connections with/for Students

When all the music therapy courses moved online, students lacked regular face-to-face interaction with each other and their instructors. In addition to the change in course delivery format and expectations for coursework, all of us were under excessive stress during the pandemic with changes to our personal lives as well. I felt that students needed self-care strategies to sustain involvement in their studies through a long-term emergency situation. Inspired by a colleague at another institution, I added extra-credit components to the academic courses to encourage students to engage in self- and community care practices. Each month, students submitted monthly statements of ways they took care of themselves or others, whether via exercise, doctor or therapist appointments, mental health days, caring for family members, visits to a park or beach, engaging in hobbies, etc. I also shifted to using pre-recorded videos for course announcements, responding to online discussion board questions, and explaining the syllabus and specific assignments. Students reported that this shift was more engaging than having to read a lot of text, and though it did not replace live classroom explanations and informal questions after classes, it helped provide a sense of connection among us. In the spring of 2021, I switched the name of my Office Hours to an "Open Door" hour and encouraged students to visit my Zoom room for any reason, whether to ask for help with coursework or to just have a chat with someone. Several students took advantage every week, sometimes without a specific learning need, but for some social and informal interaction instead. For live classes over Zoom, we experimented with video filters and backgrounds, exploring their social and clinical usefulness for classes and telehealth.

## Meaningful Connections with/for Clients

One aspect of teaching that stymied every music therapy educator at the start of the pandemic was clinical training. Many clinical sites around the country closed entirely, others carried on with few changes and presented great risks to students. In our program, several students were already in clinical placements at the start of the pandemic, and several others began clinical training during the next academic year. All these placements moved to telehealth or were completely restricted until safety and legal protocols could be implemented. Whether students were on site or seeing clients via telehealth, their hours were often reduced or greatly limited, thus preventing them from meeting requirements for both pre-internship and internship training established by the American Music Therapy Association (AMTA). In response to the many questions arising from this situation, my colleagues of neighboring programs in the Philadelphia region and I began meeting biweekly to develop feasible alternative assignments and options for clinical training that would satisfy AMTA requirements, and to share site contacts and resources. Given the close proximity of our programs, we had often competed for clinical placements in the past, but now we were working together to focus on our students' needs in a collective manner. After working together for a few months, we shared about our collaboration with colleagues via a national webinar for music therapy faculty to help guide other faculty about what we had learned.

In our program, students generally satisfied their hours by simply shifting to telehealth, and then once vaccines became available in mid-spring 2021, gradually returning to on-site assignments. Early in the pandemic, one student interning at a hospice agency spent a period of time making bereavement support calls to family members, while her supervisor (who continued to see patients in person) offered patients the opportunity to take part in telehealth sessions with the intern. Most patients declined this option. Once we had legal and safety protocols in place, the intern resumed seeing patients for visits through their windows ("window visits") and eventually in their rooms. Other students made pre-recorded videos addressing specific clinical needs. One student made sing-along videos for his hospice agency focusing on particular decades of popular songs. Another student wrote an original song for a specific client to help teach him how to tie his shoes, and then edited together his performing the song with lyrics on the screen and his actions showing how to tie his shoes. In the former case, the hospice agency handled the video editing, adding the lyric captions to the screen and adding opening and closing images. In the latter case, the student used his own copy of iMovie and personal knowledge to create his video. He then shared some of his knowledge with his classmates as part of the Music Applications class. By the 2020-21 year, some practices and schools had resumed face-to-face work, while a few others remained online. When students were short on hours, for example, we assigned videos and case studies of real clinical material and developed options for students to analyze and write about the work.

## Building and Supporting Student Community

Though we are a young program, we already had a very active and sociable music therapy club on campus when the pandemic started, providing social and academic support. Students living on campus were now isolated in their dorm rooms, whereas others had moved back home with their families. Because the club had such strong leadership, the group swung into action to provide online meetings for the remainder of the spring 2020 semester, and then scheduled and held regular meetings, social events, and workshops throughout the 2020-21 year. The executive board also initiated a peer tutoring program, "A Tempo," and matched upper-level students with newer students to provide support with the online environment as well as for specific course and program requirements. The students also mirrored the increased collaboration among faculty at neighboring universities by designing and hosting the free, online Harmony Conference. Club leaders from each program solicited guest speakers, including graduate students and faculty from the regional universities, and a keynote speaker who practices at a major research hospital. The students also hosted networking sessions to connect students and professionals around several themes: Internships, Marginalized Groups in Music Therapy, Music Therapy Advocacy, and Communications.

## Remaining Challenges

As mentioned in the introduction, throughout the pandemic we sought student feedback through informal check-ins as well as through formal course evaluations, and did our best to adjust to meet requests and needs. Students also demonstrated their capacity to learn and gain new skills through their coursework as well as through playing evaluations at the end of each semester, showing that despite all the numerous challenges of online learning, they made progress. Though teaching and music-making online during this pandemic has been much more successful than I would have imagined, there are ongoing challenges that preclude us from remaining entirely online despite these successes.

First, playing music together in real time online was simply not feasible. Though we tried real-time jamming platforms and apps such as Jamulus (jamulus.io) and JamKazam (jamkazam.com), these applications were not very reliable and required a great deal of time to configure. Until technology catches up, we will continue to need face-to-face music making experiences in our program. If we need to continue taking precautions during this pandemic, we will have to generate solutions that allow students to meet in person in a safe manner so we can make music together. Even once technology does enable remote, live music-making, students still need access to specific instruments and experience leading music-making experiences in different physical spaces—therefore, there will always need to be some element of live interaction with each other and clients in our training program.

Second, nothing could replace the spontaneous interactions and support we would experience with meeting and working together in our building. We aimed to create more live and spontaneous "hang" times for students, and student feedback from the 2021 semester indicated that they appreciated these efforts. However, students also wanted more interaction than we could feasibly provide. Thus, even once we return to face-to-face classes on campus, for courses that will continue to involve mostly online and asynchronous delivery, I plan to continue to offer frequent, optional live meetings for students who want and need them.

Finally, all-online teaching revealed learning differences in students who were not previously aware of their learning needs. Many students had not identified as needing accommodations prior to this academic year, but once they faced specific tasks involved in online learning, they had difficulty digesting and synthesizing all the information in the asynchronous format. Thus, I learned I need to urgently review my online course requirements and consider ways to make these and all the content more accessible. The Rowan Faculty Center sponsored a webinar featuring Jay Timothy Dolmage, an educator versed in Universal Design and who shared his ebook with helpful resources (Dolmage, 2017). I will not be able to realistically address every aspect of accessibility in my courses for this next year, but my first steps will include reducing written work in lieu of spending more time meeting with individual students, and I will endeavor to retain a mindset of centering accessibility in my teaching moving forward.

## Conclusions

Though the COVID-19 pandemic brought great hardship and tragedy to us and people near to us and around the world, I am enormously grateful for our students' dedication to learning and willingness to work through the unique challenges of learning and connecting through the highly dynamic situation spanning multiple semesters. My colleagues and I could plan all kinds of brilliant ideas and offer the most sophisticated solutions, but students would still need to collaborate on our learning goals for any of them to be successful. Though this cohort may not have experienced particular modes of learning or had opportunities to practice specific skills because of the limitations of online interaction, they also gained unique skills that will serve them well in their careers, for example, expanded digital music making and audio/video editing. Thus, we will continue to incorporate these digital skills into our coursework. This cohort also highlighted the limitations of our online teaching methods and content, prompting us to rethink the amount and nature of written work, the format of live meetings, the importance of interpersonal connection, and the need to enhance accessibility of course content and online materials.

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## Biography

Andrea McGraw Hunt has practiced music therapy since 1997 with clients in various settings, including skilled nursing, inpatient psychiatric, and residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation, in addition to private practice in the Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music. Dr. Hunt has presented both nationally and internationally on her research and clinical practice, particularly on the topics of neurophenomenology and the interface of the neuroscience and music therapy fields. Her research focuses on the use of electroencephalogram (EEG) in live music therapy experiences, particularly addressing mental health needs. Her interests also include exploring the role of community music therapy in social justice movements in the US. She is a founding member of Mandala, an interfaith devotional music ensemble, which performs in the Philadelphia region and across the country. Outside of music therapy she enjoys doing gymnastics and flying trapeze, gardening, and traveling with her family.

# Inclusion in the Music Classroom: Four Tips and Strategies for a More Enjoyable Experience for Everyone

by Michelle Yaciuk



As many of the school systems across North America are moving more and more into inclusion models, music educators are being forced to think outside the box in how to accommodate these individuals in general music classes, bands, and choirs. For some, this may feel like a daunting task since training on making classes accessible varies. Due to the lack of standardized training available, I am going to share with you some of the tips and strategies that I like to start with when working with music educators.

## Tip #1: Strive for Equity over Equality

Being fair is something that we always think of as a good thing, and it is. However, we often link fairness in how we deliver our materials rather than trying to create fairness in the outcomes. When we shift our focus to the outcomes, equity is much more readily achieved. For example, let us pretend you are a parent of two children (for some this will be easier than others). One child has perfect vision while the other child needs glasses. Since you do not play favourites with your children, you are now getting glasses for both of them, right? Of course not, that would be silly on multiple levels. The goal is not to give each child the exact same thing, the goal is to give them what they need in order to achieve the same outcome. In this example, what they need is perfect vision. Now let us continue this vision example into your classroom. You have a student who has low vision, and the typical score is not big enough for them to read even with glasses. What are a couple of things that you can do so they can read the music? Increase the font size, only have their staff on the page so they are not having to read other individual's parts, perhaps you would change the position of the music stand. Are some of these accommodations different from what their peers are getting? Absolutely, but when you focus on outcome equity you will be able to create a barrier-free environment where everyone can thrive.

## Tip #2: Allow for Accommodations and Modifications

In the above example we discussed a variety of accommodations for your low vision students. These most likely feel the easiest to achieve when thinking about the diverse learner. Essentially, accommodation is anything that needs to take place in order for the student to achieve the same expectations as their peers. Bigger fonts, extra time to take the same test, visual schedule so they know where they are in the lesson plan, etc. Modifications allow the students to complete an altered version of the task or assignment. Providing modifications can sometimes feel tricky especially if we are still focusing on equality over equity. Rather than having them play two octaves of the B flat major scale on their instrument, you are looking for them to play one octave. Providing modifications requires the teacher to look at the assignments on a granular level, decide what the actual learning outcomes are, and adapt this to meet your diverse learners. Is this tricky, for sure, is this doable, absolutely!

## Tip #3: Look at your Physical Space

Have you ever been to someone's office or seen their space on a zoom call and the amount of clutter gives you a bit of anxiety? Well, the same can be true about how your music room is set up for some of your students. I am not saying it has to be spotless all the time, but you can look at certain areas of your room and see if the setup is enhancing or detracting from their learning. Here is a concrete example: the bulletin board. We love our bulletin boards, who doesn't? But how many messages are you trying to show on one board? Do you have pictures of note values, treble and bass clef lines and spaces mnemonics, and a bunch of pictures of composers mashed together? Do we do this to help our students? Yes! But is it actually helpful- maybe not. Would you get more mileage out of your resources if you posted one thing at a time and then changed them regularly, or had a wall for notes, then a different wall for composers etc. A lot of us can tune those things out, but for some of our students that is too much distraction and then you and your beautiful lesson plan is what gets tuned out which is not helpful for anyone.

Another big trigger can be lighting. As a migraine sufferer, I can attest that if I am having an off day, one of the sure triggers for myself is being in a room with fluorescent lights. Honestly, I do not know many people who state that fluorescent lights are helpful to them, but I digress. It is not just about those of us who are migraine or light sensitive. There is something about using natural light to help calm the energy down in a room. Picture this, it is the middle of January, and it is so cold that your students have not been able to be outside to blow off steam for say, I do not know, the entire month of January. Those students are probably climbing your walls and you are supposed to be teaching them. Have you ever tried switching to natural lighting? There is a shift in energy sometimes, or just even a novelty of newness when we make some changes that might be beneficial for all. Obviously, some band rooms I have been in do not have any windows to the outside, so that is not super helpful. In those cases, what else can you do to support your students' energy?

#### Tip #4: Find your Students' Strengths

Something that is tricky as a music educator in a school system is getting to know all your students the same way a classroom teacher knows the students. Therefore, it takes you a lot longer to figure out all of your students' strengths, both musically and non-musically. Utilize the resources you have in your building to help you figure out what some of your diverse learner's strengths are. Your support team (counsellor, resource teacher, instructional assistants etc.) may not know about their musical strengths, but they would know their non-musical strengths, likes, and even dislikes which will help you successfully teach these students at a deeper level. Is there a way to have some one-on-one conversations with these students? One thing to look for in individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder is where on the perfect pitch spectrum they fall (if at all). I will list a couple of resources at the end of the article if you want to delve deeper into this topic. But in a non-scientific look at my private music studio, my students with ASD also have either perfect rhythm or perfect pitch in a much higher prevalence than my neurotypical students. Once I was able to tap into these gifts and skills, it changed how I taught them music or how we approach learning. Music can connect and open neurodiverse learners in a way that we may not see in a math class. So, while I did say to use your support team at the beginning of this segment, also do not be surprised if what you see in music is completely different than what they are experiencing in general education classes.

It can feel like the weight of the world is on our shoulders, trying to create this amazing learning environment for everyone. At the end of the day, going back to some basics might help ground us. In connecting with parents around what they hope inclusion looks like for their children, common thoughts have included the following: a desire for meaningful and purposeful inclusion, wanting educators to see their child first and not the diagnosis or behaviours, time to be with their peers, and a desire for educators to think outside the box so the above can happen. If you let those principles lead you, your students will flourish no matter what!

If you are looking for additional resources, I have included a couple of books.

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#### Biography

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# Mental Health Advocacy for the Young Music Educator

by Brenna Ohrmundt



#### Author's Note

I have no conflicts of interests to disclose. The inherent biases found within the results of this research derive from interviews of a majority neurotypical, rural Midwest music educators, many of which represent the cis-female gender demographic. Many of the anecdotes are from a handful of perspectives and do not represent all dimensions of mental health. The content of this presentation is not the solution to circumstances, but may be adapted to unique situations as needed. The advice demonstrated in this presentation has been formulated during my second year of education, and models advice presented in a "for young educators by a young educator" format. This information was presented at the virtual AIME Conference on January 30, 2020, and this article summarizes the

content presented at this conference during this session. Any questions, concerns regarding this article, or requests for supplemental materials should be sent directly to the author at [brennaohrmundt@gmail.com](mailto:brennaohrmundt@gmail.com).

Although American collegiate programs adequately prepare music educators for their first few years of education in regards to content, many new educators struggle to balance their careers and personal lives. The stressors of a new environment and high expectations pose a strain on young educators who may feel unprepared or inadequate for their position. This, combined with possible pre-existing mental health concerns, could create an unhealthy state for the music educator's mental health. This article will disclose valuable information collected from surveyed educators and anecdotal evidence in order to equip future teachers with valuable advocacy techniques to utilize in the first years of their career.

Throughout the duration of this article, a "young music educator" includes new educators of all ages. In this article, a young music educator refers to a person within their first three years of music education; the physical age of the educator is not reflected in this term, solely the years of experience. The stressors that affect a beginning music educator can be influential for adults in their 20s similarly to those in their 50s.

#### Advocating for Mental Health as a Priority

One of the key components to mental health awareness in the school district is to advocate for one's mental health needs. Advocacy comes in many forms, but ultimately derives from communication; discussing one's needs and desires with trusted colleagues. Initiating the conversation can be intimidating at first, especially in districts where mental health feels stigmatized. These discussions are invaluable to the development of mental health advocacy in our schools, and can be done with faculty, staff, or other trusted colleagues within the building. One surveyed individual stated how their trusted colleague was one on the kitchen staff, and how their relationship developed over the first few years of the band director's career and made them feel more welcomed in an environment that they had initially felt alone and lost. Relationships such as these are crucial to the overall camaraderie between staff in the district, whether they are strictly professional or purely based on interest. Each district has colleagues in the district and neighboring area that truly care about others' well-being, and it may take time to develop these relationships. Those who work in the schools understand the obstacles that a new educator may encounter, and that support system may just be custodian or the choral teacher in a different district. The development of meaningful relationships is crucial not only among colleagues, but most importantly among students. Fostering relationships with students and building a culture surrounding mental health advocacy is key to destigmatizing the culture. A supportive community benefits all inclusive members, whether they are students or educators. As a music course, the music room houses a community, and the health of that community is vital to the success of its members. Developing a culture of valuing community care over self-care in the classroom is vital. Community care involves valuing each member's position, and working in tandem to ensure achieving needs and desires rather than solely pressuring oneself to reach them alone. This is crucial to the music ensemble, where mutual support is key to a valuable musical experience for our students.

## Advocating for Mental Health Through Curriculum

Music educators are in a special position to destigmatize mental health through our content. Teaching social-emotional subjects to our students is a way, not only to advocate for mental health awareness, but most importantly develop a community that fosters support through music making. Students may come from backgrounds that do not value emotional transparency, and music class may be their only time to learn, explore, and discuss those subjects in a comfortable environment. All grade levels are perfectly capable of discussing the emotional contexts of a piece, reflecting on the emotional impact of such a piece, and all activities in between, and must be integrated into the curriculum. These activities that one creates for their students impacts them beyond the music room walls, and educates valuable soft skills that students will continue to use past their formative years.

As a music educator, one has the special opportunity to develop relationships with students over many years, unlike our core subject educators who may only see them a handful of times. This provides us the rare opportunity to teach beyond the notes and incorporate valuable emotional skills paramount to their development. If one values the importance of advocating for mental health, then one must integrate practices into the curriculum as to the comfort level of the educator. The importance of emotional growth for the educator and the student are just as, if not more, important than the musical content provided to students.

## Dimensions of Wellness – What It Looks Like for Music Educators

The closing portion of this presentation provided advice on combating various scenarios in the format of the Dimensions of Wellness, a widely used curriculum utilized by physical educators and guidance counselors. These Dimensions of Wellness are various aspects of health, including physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, and social well-being (*Dimensions of Wellness*, 2021). It was stressed in this presentation that all educators are unique, and benefit from a dimension more than others. For example, a focus on physical health may benefit someone more than a focus on spirituality, or vice versa. Despite which dimensions an individual may thrive in, the importance of tending to all in some capacity is key to mental health.

In regards to advocacy, if one feels that their career is suffocating one dimension of their wellness, it is imperative to advocate for that need. For example, a band director surveyed stated during their first year their hesitancy to say no to having lessons with students and would schedule over their lunch and preparatory times. A fellow colleague noticed their absence at lunch, and both advocated for the band director to have adequate lunch time to complete their duties. Easily, educators become carried away in one dimension of health and diminish others, and allowing time to reflect on how duties affect overall health is imperative. Much like music educators care for these dimensions for students, educators must for themselves as well. A supplemental material was provided during this presentation describing various techniques specific for music educators within each dimension, ranging from monitoring emotional triggers in the classroom to advocating for community support. This material can be attained by contacting the author directly.

## Conclusion

In summary, mental health should always take priority throughout the duration of an educator's career. Refining techniques within the first few years are paramount to the longevity of an educator's mental health and overall comfort in a new profession. These techniques are unique to the educator, and are dependent on the Dimensions of Wellness from which one may benefit. Music educators are placed in a unique opportunity to provide affective content to support themselves and their students simultaneously in the classroom. Practicing social-emotional learning as part of the curriculum is imperative to supporting an environment where both the teacher and students can succeed. By recognizing the importance of mental health in the courses taught, music educators have the power to destigmatize mental health in and out of the classroom.

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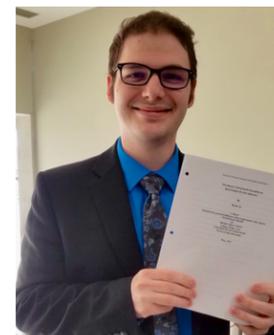
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## Biography

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# Practicing Productively: How Practice Journals can help K-12 Musicians be more Productive in the Practice Room

by Brian Cyr



For the longest time, I and many other musicians, were told that more practice leads to more success. The statistic that it allegedly takes 10,000 hours to master a skill (from Malcom Gladwell's book *Outliers*) was something everyone in my college music classes could recite. While this is the sentiment among many musicians, research suggests that increased time spent practicing is not a reliable predictor of musical success (Duke, 2009). It was not until my sophomore year of college that my percussion teacher suggested a goal-oriented approach to practicing. He introduced this concept with a practice journal that prompted me and my fellow percussionists to plan out each practice session. Additionally, he offered the following incentive: If we completed all our goals for the practice session, we could be done. No matter how long it took. If we completed all our goals in half an hour rather than two, we could wrap up, go home, and watch Netflix. I found my practicing improved immensely after planning out my practice sessions. I was using more strategies, spending less time off-task, and overall increased productivity.

This personal experience was very influential in deciding to study the effects of practice journals on band student practice behavior. The modality of large ensemble classrooms (band, orchestra, choir, etc.) was also significant in my decision to pursue this research. As ensemble teachers, we expect our students to do most of their learning outside of class during self-guided practice sessions. This article discusses a study I designed in the Fall of 2020 analyzing the impact of structured journaling on band student practice behavior. It involved having high school band students recording themselves practicing, using a practice journal I designed for four weeks, then recording themselves practicing a second time. I will discuss the research behind the study, its methodology, and its results and implications.

## Self-Regulated Learning & Self-Efficacy

While there has been substantial research in the area of musical practice, there are limited studies available in the area of practice journals and diaries and their effects on practice behavior. The journal designed for this study was informed by two main ideas: Self-Regulated Learning Theory, and Self-Efficacy. Self-regulated learning is learning guided by metacognition, planned, strategic action, and self-reflection. Self-efficacy refers to one's belief in their own abilities. Research has shown that increased levels of both lead to increased music performance success, meta-cognitive awareness and academic success in all areas, including music.

Barry Zimmerman (2002), a professor of education philosophy and educational researcher, described self-regulated learners as:

“productive in their efforts to learn because they are aware of their strengths and limitations and because they are guided by personally set goals and task-related strategies, such as using an arithmetic addition strategy to check the accuracy of solutions to subtraction problems” (p. 64-66)

Self-regulated learning is a cyclical process with three phases: forethought, performance, and self-reflection. The forethought phase is the planning stage during which the learner analyzes the task at hand, creating goals and determining strategies to complete them. During the performance phase, the learner applies the strategies determined in the previous phase to their learning goals. During the final phase, self-reflection, they compare what they achieved in the performance phase to what they planned in the forethought phase analyzing successes and shortcomings. These findings then inform the following forethought phase, completing the cycle. The structured practice journal used in this study was designed to stimulate the forethought and self-reflection phases

of self-regulated learning. It stimulated the former by asking the participants to select piece(s) of music, musical elements to improve, and strategies to improve them and the latter by asking them to identify things they did that worked well and did not work well.

Self-efficacy is a core part of self-regulated learning and a reliable predictor of music performance and academic success. Albert Bandura (1997), a professor of social science in psychology and educational researcher, defines self-efficacy as follows:

“Self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the course action required to produce given attainments... Such beliefs influence the course of action people choose, how much effort they put forth in given endeavors, how long they will persevere in the face of obstacles and failures, their resilience to adversity whether their thought patterns are self-hindering or self-aiding, how much stress and depression they experience in coping with taxing environmental demands, and the level of accomplishments they realize” (p. 3)

Self-efficacy refers not only to the belief in one’s own ability, but also the awareness of the determined effort in relation to a specific task. The means that one’s self-efficacy is not the same for every task. An orchestral musician’s awareness of determined effort is likely to be much higher when learning a new orchestra piece than if they were introduced to an Afro-Cuban jazz piece. This lack of awareness would potentially lead to more ineffective strategies and goals. Within the cycle of self-regulated learning, self-efficacy is primarily developed in the performance and self-reflection phases when the learner’s belief in their own ability is confronted with the effort required of them. If they are successful, this will likely lead to higher levels of self-efficacy. This increase in self-efficacy beliefs is a result of something called inactive mastery experience, which is described as success in the face of obstacles through perseverant effort. Self-efficacy beliefs are then applied in the subsequent forethought phase when they are determining the quantity of work that can be done and the necessary strategies. Several studies in the area of music have found high levels of self-efficacy to have positive correlations with performance and academic success (McCormick, McPherson, 2003; McPherson, McCormick, 2006; Clark, 2010).

## Methodology

What made this study particularly unique in the area of practice and practice journals is its methodology. It combines ideas from two studies to collect both self-reported and observed changes in practice behaviors. The first is a study conducted by Susan Kim (2008) where she had string players use a practice journal for four weeks and noted changes in their own practice behavior using an exit interview. The second is a study conducted by Peter Miksza (2012) where middle school band students were videotaped practicing for approx. 20 minutes each. The videos were then quantitatively coded for how much time participants spent exhibiting and frequency of specific behaviors including specific practice strategies and time spent off-task. The study I conducted combines both these elements: self-reported changes through a pre-study and post-study survey, and observed changes through quantitative coding of before and after practice videos.

This study began with participants completing a pre-study survey about their current practice behaviors. Questions were asked regarding how often they practiced, how long they normally practiced for, how often they planned their practice sessions in advance and reflected on them afterwards, and if they had used a practice journal before. Afterwards they recorded the first of two practice videos. Participants were instructed to videotape themselves practicing as they normally do for approximately 20 minutes, working on material assigned to them by their band director. The participants were then given a structured practice journal to use before and after every time they practiced for the following four weeks. The before section of the journal asked the participant to identify the pieces of music they would be working on, the aspects of the music they would like to improve, and list strategies they would employ to improve those areas. Under the aspects section of the journal, I included some examples to pick from including rhythmic accuracy, note accuracy, dynamics, articulation, etc., and gave them the opportunity to include areas that were not listed. In the after section of the journal, participants were asked what they did that worked well, and what did not go well. The journal stimulates the forethought and self-reflection phases of self-regulated learning and promotes the development of self-efficacy. After using the journal for four weeks, participants filmed themselves practicing for 20 minutes a second time after completing an entry in their

practice journal. The study concluded with an exit survey asking them questions about how the journal changed their practicing, if it improved their practicing, if they felt more productive, and how likely they were to continue using a journal, planning their practicing sessions, or reflecting on them afterwards.

After data was collected, the practice videos were coded for time spent exhibiting and frequency of various behaviors, analyzed for trends, and cross-referenced with journal entries and survey responses. When coding the videos, behaviors were split into four broad categories: typical playing, strategy implemented, and instrument maintenance. Typical playing refers to anytime a participant was practicing without modifying the music using practice strategies. Strategy implemented is defined as anytime a participant modified the music using a practice strategy, some of the most common strategies included repetition, slowing the tempo, using a metronome or tuner, or clapping/tapping a rhythm. Not practicing included any time the participant is not engaged with the music, including taking a break, getting music out, or leaving the practice space. The final category, instrument maintenance, referred to any instrument-specific activity that is necessary for practicing. Some of these included adjusting a mouthpiece or reed, emptying spit valves, tuning timpani, and adjusting instrument height.

When analyzing data from the practice videos, I compared the proportion of time spent in various activities between the first and second videos. Additionally, I compared the total amount of time spent practicing by combining the “typically playing” and “strategy implemented” categories and compared it with the amount of time spent “not practicing.” Finally, I compared the proportion of time spent practicing typically playing vs. using a strategy. Instrument maintenance, on average, took up less than 0.1% and was not included in the data analysis.

## Results & Discussion

The most significant observation made from the data came in how time was managed throughout between the first and second practice video. While in general, the participants spent about the same amount of time not practicing between the first and second videos, there was a significant (13%) increase in the amount of time spent using a strategy. While this was the case, there was not a significant change found amongst the number of total and unique strategies. This is likely a result of participants not being introduced to novel practice strategies during the study. Instead, they thought more critically on how to best utilize the strategies they already used without expanding on the content of those strategies. When it comes to students spending the same amount of time not practicing, it is possible that there is a necessary amount of time a majority of the students needed to spend not practicing to be productive while practicing. Taking time for mental breaks, switching music, and resting one’s playing muscles may contribute to increased productivity while playing. Three primary trends were observed in how participants managed their time between the two practice videos.

Participants that exhibited Trend One spent more time using practice strategies and less time spent not practicing. These participants exhibited the greatest success from the practice journals. In addition to spending more time playing, they spent that time using strategies. When looking into their practice journals and surveys, it was evident these participants were more aware of how they were spending their time. One participant noted in their practice journal that the primary elements that caused them difficulty during practice sessions were motivation and environmental distractions. In the videos, there was a clear effort to mitigate these distractions. The first video took place in a practice room at their school where another classmate frequently interrupted their practice, and they would frequently leave the practice space to socialize with their friends. The second video was taken at home in an environment with no external distractions where the participant could spend much more time practicing rather than being distracted. Other participants that exhibited this trend also noted in their journals that they struggled staying on task and avoiding distractions during the practice session. This was clearly addressed as, between the first and second practice video, each participant decreased the amount of time spent not practicing.

Participants that spent more time using strategies, but a decrease in the amount of time spent practicing overall were categorized under Trend Two. While these participants did not spend more time practicing overall, the time they did spend practicing included more time using practice strategies. While environmental distractions were not mitigated, journal entries suggest that these participants were more concerned with how they were spending their time playing. Some participants noted that they focused on areas of the music they did not need to work on as much as others, or that they played through the music without fixing mistakes. This focus on how they were spending their time playing was evident in the positive reflections of their practice sessions as well. When

prompted “what did I do during my practice session that worked well for me?”, some of responses noted that focusing on problem areas of the music, and stopping to fix mistakes were beneficial to their practicing.

Participants that fell into Trend Three spent less time practicing overall and less time using strategies. These participants experienced the least success with the journals. However, these participants demonstrated very productive and focused practice in their initial practice videos. These participants spent over 75% their practice video playing and over 90% of that time, on average, using a strategy. By the metrics of this study, these participants were already demonstrating more self-regulatory behaviors in their first videos than their fellow participants did in their second video. The intervention of a practice journal may have disrupted what was already a successful practice routine. Additionally, the journal entries of these participants were reflective on the musical results of their practicing, rather than what may have been the cause of their practicing woes.

According to the results from the pre-study and post-study survey, most of the participants believed the journal was beneficial to their practicing. Seven out of twelve participants reported that using the practice journal improved their practicing. Eight out of twelve participants believed it helped their practice sessions to be more productive. In addition to entries made in the practice journals, data from the post-study survey also suggests that participants experienced an increase in metacognitive awareness as ten out of twelve participants reported that they had learned more about which practice strategies were most effective for them. While only five out of twelve participants said they were likely to continue using a practice journal in the future, eight reported that they were more likely to continue planning their practice sessions, and ten said they were more likely to continue reflecting on their practice sessions afterwards. It is likely the time it took to fill out the practice journal was seen as a burden, but the participants found value in the self-regulatory prompts.

## Conclusion

A finding that was particularly surprising to me was that there was not significant change in the number of total strategies used or unique strategies. I had personally hypothesized that there would be change in the specific strategies used. This was likely due to students not being introduced to novel practice strategies and approaches as part of this study. The purpose of this study was to see the effects of the self-regulatory prompts included in the practice journal on practice behavior.

This study has implications for music teachers and musicians alike. When it comes to music teachers in primary, secondary, and post-secondary schools, along with private studio instructors, this study has shown that routine, self-regulatory prompts lead to increased self-regulation and metacognitive awareness during individual practice. Especially in large ensemble classrooms, it can be difficult to assess the musical progress of all students especially in situations where individual lessons are not an option. Using a journal such as this provides an opportunity for teachers assess student growth. For musicians, studies have shown that increased metacognitive awareness and self-regulatory behaviors often lead to academic and performance success, keeping a journal (whether assigned by a teacher or not) can benefit these aspects of learning. Furthermore, increased self-awareness of how one learns can expand to success in other academic areas as well.

I chose to design this study for two major reasons: 1) My own personal experience and success with practice journals and goal-oriented practice, and 2) because of the high level of expectation ensemble teachers have of students to learn independently through individual practice sessions. It is a cliché in the amount ensemble directors that ‘you do not come to rehearsal to learn your part, you come to learn everyone else’s.’ Despite this, it is not often discussed how to practice effectively and discover how one practices best. This study has shown that structured journaling is an effective tool to increase metacognitive awareness and improve practice productivity and can be a useful tool for an ensemble teacher. If you wish to read more in-depth about this study, it will be published in my thesis entitled *The Impact of Structured Journaling on Band Student Practice Behavior* in the late summer/early fall of 2021. If you would like more information about the practice journal or use it in your own instruction, please do not hesitate to email me at bricyr@live.com.

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## Biography

Brian Cyr is from Weston, Wisconsin and received a bachelor’s degree in Instrumental Music Education and Percussion performance from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point in 2020. He is currently pursuing his master’s degree in Music Education from UWSP where he is the Graduate Music Education Teaching Assistant. Brian also teaches private percussion lessons through Noteworthy Music Studio in Stevens Point. During his time as an undergraduate student, Brian was active in performance ensembles including conducting the Symphonic Wind Ensemble and the Campus Band. He has performed with the Central Wisconsin Symphony Orchestra, Central Wisconsin Area Community Theatre, and Wausau Community theatre. Brian has been teaching percussion lessons for over three years and has served as the percussion coach for the Central Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestra Program.

# 'The Sky's the Limit:' How to Take Your Ensemble to the Next Level

by Dr. Shawn Cody Miller



Have you ever sat through a performance of another ensemble and been amazed, or maybe envious of their skill and level of ability? I certainly have. I congratulate them and give them a round of applause for their superb singing, and yet sometimes I think to myself that this “competing” ensemble, the choir down the road from me, has it better than I do. I could not achieve that with my choir, with my singers, or under my circumstances – our tenor section is too small, budget too constricted, and students too challenging and unmotivated. I know this is self-talk to which many of you can relate.

These thoughts limit the potential for us and our students by placing a ceiling on what we can achieve. When we believe that reaching a benchmark is not possible, regardless of the actual circumstances, we create a self-fulfilling prophecy. We teach our students

that success or a benchmark is not achievable, so why try. We have been told in education that students will meet our expectations, which works against us when we set the bar too low. This is exactly the opposite of our desired outcome and an unhealthy lesson to teach our students, but changing that can be more challenging than simply acknowledging the issue.

## Ownership

As a graduate student, I once complained to my teacher that the choir was not singing to my expectations, and I simply wished they could be better. My teacher responded, “you want your choir to be better? Give them a better conductor.” This was a shocking realization; it meant their failures and deficiencies were my fault, not theirs.

I conduct three choirs at my institution, one of which is the Choral Union, which comprises majors and non-majors and sits between our unauditioned Campus Choir and auditioned, select Concert Choir. They are a wonderful group of students who work hard in rehearsal and are eager to perform well. However, we also have students in the ensemble who have never sung before. They can be successful too, but they need additional support and guidance. I always treated the choir as such, asking our accompanist to help them out with their parts nearly until the concert, ignoring minor intonation issues, and accepting that we could not discuss high-level musical concepts. We worked hard in rehearsal, improved our tone and overall quality, and they successfully met my expectations.

While reflecting during the winter break on our experience together, I realized just how low I set my expectations. Did I accept those intonation issues or neglect to teach high-level musical concepts while directing my high school students, middle school honor choir, or auditioned community choir? Of course not! So why would I do that with a college choir? In fact, while this ensemble sits in the middle of the choral offerings, they are better than all the “top choirs” I previously had, and yet my expectations were noticeably lower. I treated them differently simply because of their place in our program. What would happen if I treated every choir like they were the best?

Joy Lawrence’s (1989) article, “The Right Stuff: Success Begins with the Director” inspired me to teach differently. In so few words, she teaches us to look within when our students are not meeting our goals. Are we inspiring? Do we lead with passion? Is there another way to explain that concept our students do not understand? Instead of asking what the *students* can do differently, let us ask what *we*, the directors, can do differently. Somewhere out there, another teacher faces the same challenges and is making it happen. They have recruited ten more tenors by chatting with students who walk by the classroom, created a madrigal dinner to raise funds for a biennial tour, and created a community where students love music and want to perform at a high level. To get to that level, we need a mindset shift.

## Growth Mindset

Dr. Carol Dweck, Lewis and Virginia Eaton Professor of Psychology at Stanford University, discusses the profound impact of a growth versus fixed mindset in her book *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. According to Dweck, “believing that your qualities are carved in stone – *the fixed mindset* – creates an urgency to prove yourself over and over... Every situation is evaluated: *Will I succeed or fail? Will I look smart or dumb? Will I be accepted or rejected? Will I feel like a winner or a loser?*” In a growth mindset, “... your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through your efforts. Although people may differ in every which way – in their initial talents and aptitudes, interests, or temperaments – everyone can change and grow through application and experience” (Dweck, 2007, pp. 6-7).

We explored how a fixed mindset can affect teachers, but how might it manifest itself in students? They might believe it is impossible for them to do something well and therefore it is pointless to try, that skills are innate, or that they will never be as good as their more talented peers. By demonstrating a positive, growth mindset to our students, we can display the power of perseverance, determination, constructive criticism, and effort and reflection. When we see someone perform well, we say to ourselves, “how did they do that? I’m going to figure it out!”

We are often privileged at the university level to have many skilled singers join our ranks every year, yet inevitably an individual or two in the class stand out for their talent and ability. Sometimes those students graduate still at the top, and many times they are passed up by others who were less skilled at the start. Growth mindset is the difference. I tell my students often that over the long run, effort and determination beat talent.

## Choral Leadership

High-quality choral leadership, when paired with a growth mindset, can dramatically affect the quality of our teaching, and improve student success. There are three pillars to successful choral leadership: personal qualities, musical knowledge, and effective teaching (Lawrence, 1989, p. 37). These pillars provide a foundation for excellent teaching and place the burden of improving the program on our shoulders.

Personal qualities include elements that make our classes positive and enjoyable, and ensure our students feel safe and look forward to rehearsal the next day. Successful directors show excitement for music, demonstrate a passion for teaching and learning, care about their students and their lives, leave their personal problems at the door, and have great interpersonal skills.

Musical knowledge represents the bulk of information we learned from music theory, history, conducting, and choral methods classes during our undergraduate career. Great musical knowledge means that we: know the voice and how it works, have a concept of good choral tone, know the score through study and preparation and can sing every part, and understand the musical and historical context in which the piece was written.

A successful director employs effective teaching techniques that offer multiple means of representation, engages students, and leads to an excellent musical product. These directors plan goals and objectives for each rehearsal, set high expectations, anticipate problems through score study, lead fast-paced rehearsals, limit feedback to only a couple words (7-10 words or fewer), and keep the students singing as much as possible.

It is easy to become overwhelmed when practicing self-improvement, and while the list above is not exhaustive, it can be exhausting to implement quickly. If you are ready to change but feel overwhelmed, here are three things you can do today to give your choir a better director:

1. Imitate your favorite conductor or teacher
2. Set high expectations for your students
3. Be intentional in your planning

Imitating your favorite teacher or conductor will certainly give your students a better director. Imitate their rehearsal techniques, pacing, passion, motivation, growth mindset, grit, and determination. This certainly requires discernment – imitating a tyrant or diva could do more harm than good – to ensure we employ only their effective and appropriate qualities. Combined with high expectations and intentionality in your rehearsal planning, you will be a more effective teacher and yield a better musical product.

## Conclusion

After realizing that I was not giving Choral Union the best teacher, I returned the following semester with a mission: I was going to treat them like they were the best ensemble I ever had. I asked myself: *What would this rehearsal look like if one of my conducting idols were leading? How would the choir sound?* We no longer rehearsed with piano, since it covered up their intonation issues – they needed to rely on their ears and struggle through. I had both a long-term rehearsal plan and a daily objective for each piece. I relentlessly corrected tone and intonation problems and shaped the music from the first rehearsal.

As one might imagine, the choir met my expectations, just as educators have been saying for decades. I was astonished at their growth over a couple of months. They sang more beautifully, more in-tune, more musically, and retained more information and skills than I thought possible. On some days, they sang better than the Concert Choir, and I could not have been prouder.

Our students perform, but we are the catalysts for their learning. As Joy Lawrence (1989) wrote, their success begins with us. To have a better ensemble, we must first give them a better director.

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## Biography

Dr. Shawn Cody Miller is the Director of Choral Activities at the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point, where he conducts three choirs and teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in conducting and music education. Prior to his university work, Dr. Miller worked in K-12 education as Director of Choirs at Texas Christian Academy – Waco and Associate Choir Director at Milstead Middle School in Houston, Texas. He also has extensive experience in church, community, and children’s choirs, and currently serves as Artistic Director of the Monteverdi Chorale, a 63-voice auditioned community choir in Stevens Point. Dr. Miller is in demand as a guest conductor and clinician, and has presented sessions at state and regional conferences on rehearsal planning, musical interpretation, and performance practice. He holds degrees from St. Olaf College, Baylor University, and Michigan State University.

# Surprise and Confusion: Making the Most of Professional Change

by Dr. Elizabeth Bucura



It is a strange time to give a keynote address, although the topic of obstacles feels like an obviously pressing concern. It seems like a funny time to do just about anything, really. There is so much uncertainty, which is of course tied up in the Covid-19 pandemic, but also in many social struggles and concerning situations, which I see many of today’s writers are discussing. These topics include social justice, mental wellness, and anti-racism. These are important topics, and we must value dialogue as a way to foster understanding and perspective.

I think a lot about young people—the college students I work with, and even those I do not, who are in processes of professional preparation. Some of today’s attendees fall into this category. It is a strange time to embark on one’s career. It is always difficult to make decisions about a professional pathway, and it is challenging to forge ahead in coursework

and internships to fulfil requirements as one steps piece by piece into the professional domain. It is necessary to formulate an understanding of norms that include social and cultural norms, but also those specific to professional practice. We typically lean on strong mentors and role models for guidance, expectations, and imagery to help navigate such change. But at this peculiar time, we *all* feel swarmed by change, including those mentors and role models, and so we may need to navigate new professional waters. There may not always be clear role modeling or assured guidance, but even without all the answers we must seek to steady the waters for those coming into the field and with one another. We must come to our own answers situated in this time and place.

The Covid-19 pandemic has now lasted more than a year and is ongoing. One remark I hear lately is that it is *such a strange time*. We know it has not been our normal, and we are inundated with thoughts and questions about it. Is this the new normal, for instance? What aspects of our former normal might we be relieved to return to and when might that happen? What adaptations might we need to make in our professional and personal lives moving forward from here? Maybe some of us are asking questions about normalcy itself: What should or could be our normal? What circumstances and influences have contributed to our prior conceptions of what constitutes normal? Conversely, what improvements to our lives might potentially be attributed to this time that we would choose to adopt, and how? Change has come and will continue. The topic of the 2021 AIME conference is *Overcoming Obstacles*. Today I will talk to you a bit about surprise and confusion in the face of change, and the obstacles—but also opportunities—it can present.

In July 2019 I left New York and moved to Austria with my young family. We traded a cozy suburb with good friends and spacious American home for a flat in the city of Graz. It was a big change. I was on a sabbatical leave from the Eastman School of Music, and I took on the role of guest researcher of music pedagogy. During this time, I was prepared for change. I was excited to embrace it. Although I had some expectations of what it might be like to live abroad, I tried to keep those expectations at bay in order to fully appreciate whatever the experience became. Nevertheless, it is no easy feat to become a foreigner; I expected to be surprised and confused. I frequently was. But I also had an incredible opportunity to gain new perspective on my assumptions, expectations, on my home culture, and on myself.

Some of these assumptions felt trivial. For instance, I never thought much about my assumption that people needed vehicles to get around. I grew up on a farm. I have driven vehicles my entire life. I remember driving tractors, trucks, four-wheelers and snowmobiles from a young age. I did realize that a vehicle-less life can be common, even for many people who did not live far from me in New York. But now that I did not use a car whatsoever—because I did not have one—the ways I went about my daily life, including how to get to work, travel kids to school, show up at doctor appointments, complete the grocery shopping, and so forth, were so changed that I could see that seemingly obvious need in my own life as not-so-obvious. But more importantly, beyond myself and my own experiences, I took note more specifically of the cultural norms that might make it more difficult to not have a vehicle in some places than in others, as well as of course less possible for some than for others.

Musically and educationally, cultural assumptions become more apparent as well. In Austria I saw students majoring in recorder, harmonica, and accordion, and popular music held a prominent role in the university music program. These

were not considered novel, forward-thinking endeavors, but had historically existed in the university. Secondary schools prepared music teachers for general, comprehensive, integrated music classes that did not resemble large ensembles, whereas secondary general music in the United States seemed to be an emerging sub-field of secondary school music considered dynamic and evolving. Our assumptions are powerful things. Even when we are aware of them, it can nevertheless be painful to let those assumptions come to light. We must then potentially make changes. If we are not challenged by someone or something that likely surprises us, stops us, and maybe confuses or frustrates us, it may feel easiest to let those assumptions remain unchallenged.

I have heard colleagues refer to the substantial shift of perspective as a *decentering experience*. I am certainly decentered in Austria. I have been decentered in the United States as well. This can be experienced in a number of ways, for instance moving from one state to another, from a rural to urban setting, or from a homogeneous to a diverse population. I have also been decentered in the field of music education, moving from university student to general music teacher, from a public school to private school setting, from K-12 to higher education, solo pianist to accompanying pianist, and so on. Most decentering tends to involve a shift of role, place, culture, or more likely, all of the above. I am sure you can think of ways you have also been decentered, whether personally or professionally.

Lately we have likely all felt at least a bit decentered as music teachers, but beyond our profession as well, as we experience lockdowns, social distancing, and the necessity of online interactions. We have possibly been surprised and confused. We may have had questions and obstacles. In the face of these obstacles however (and in decentering experiences generally), opportunity exists for change, innovation, and collective growth. In an uprooting of normalcy, we can sometimes imagine new possibilities, or adapt old ideas in new ways.

As one example, many of us have recently been challenged with new technological mediums for virtual teaching and learning. These mediums, often software that functions as a learning platform and communication system, may not be new, but may be new to us or used in new ways. The educational models we use them for may include asynchronous or synchronous online learning, hybrid models of in-person and online learning, or maybe mixed classes of all the above.

While many may wonder what to do with music education in shifted learning modalities, others seem to create interesting innovations. Music collaborations exist online, that often involve many participants who make music from different places and are synchronized into a musical whole. Sometimes these videos are spliced together in a way that allow the achievements of musical balance and blend through audio production. Some display compelling visual effects as well, that complement or perhaps enhance the audio experience in satisfying ways. While these kinds of products may have increased lately, or perhaps simply sharing of them has increased, the idea of it will not likely be unfamiliar to you. You may call to mind similar examples you have seen, or perhaps in which you have participated.

These can be fun to listen to. They can inspire us, motivate us, and allow a piece of human connection through virtual musical interactions. Although the ways we define musical interactions may be in flux, such endeavors could feel like a way forward for music educators. Sometimes they are described in these ways, but this might even decenter one further. It may leave you wondering if these endeavors are *the* ways forward and it could create feelings of overwhelm and underpreparation.

These kinds of collaborations also can stir questions among those curious about replicating them or adapting them for and with students. These tend to be process-oriented questions, the *how-to* of music teaching and learning. For instance, did an experienced video editor compile separate recorded videos together, and were audio engineering skills required in order to achieve balance and blend? What level of musicianship had already been achieved through traditional means by the musicians? How would this then work with young students? What kind of learning curve would exist for someone who lacks access to funds or connections to other skill sets needed to coordinate such an activity? Can this project be achieved synchronously? What would be gained or lost? What might beginning instrumentalists gain from a real-time large ensemble experience when still focused on manipulating their own instrument and body, on hearing themselves in relation to others, and perhaps learning to read notation? And what is *my own role* then, as director or facilitator in such an environment?

These are all important questions and may point to knowledge gaps or experiences that would benefit music teachers. Perhaps they can lead to pathways toward acquiring new skills that would be helpful. When taking inspiration from the world around us and engaging new curiosities and questions, we have the potential to grow, as do students. Growth comes about as a result of struggle, which is never easy or straightforward, and for which one cannot fully prepare. Surprise and confusion, even frustration, will be present. But before jumping to questions of skill preparation, let us take

a step back. Our questions may be new now (or feel new), but we have always had professional questions such as these. Before becoming lost in a tangle of *how-to's*, let us not lose sight of the purposes and values that might guide what *how-to's* we deem important. These are not broad purposes and values of our field necessarily, but of our own that are centered in our place, in our role, and with our unique students.

When I was a new music teacher, in a time obviously prior to this pandemic, I had such questions that I regarded as important. At that time I wondered, what was the *right* way to design my classes, including setting up the room and dividing up time into appropriate-length activity segments. I also wondered, what were the best curricula to use? To what extent could I do a good job covering necessary content? How might I identify and prepare good repertoire to meet the performance expectations of others? These questions reveal my assumptions and were riddled with problems, yet I did not regard them in that way at the time.

My initial foray into the field of music education involved a lot of decentering experiences that challenged me to grow. I lived in Maine. I had built a large piano studio and I loved teaching. In my senior year of college, a local Catholic School had a one-year opening for a PreK-grade 8 general music teacher. My piano students were from predominantly wealthy families and in general had highly educated and involved parents. Some of the children at the Catholic School fit a similar profile, but many others had only recently immigrated from other countries and some did not yet speak English. While I was a new music teacher, concerned with curricula, lesson plans, and assessment, I also was struck by significant language and cultural barriers with students and families that made me question my priorities. I struggled to make sense of my role there. Once I graduated, I took on full-time load of part-time positions, teaching under five separate district contracts that involved six different school buildings each week. These positions involved a diverse array of school-communities including religious, independent, and public schools. One school building was an hour's drive south along the coast, some were in the heart of biggest city in the state, some were in suburbs, and one was located on a small island to which I commuted by ferry each week.

I had expectations of the professional field of music education. I had expectations of the school communities I would encounter and in which I would participate. Although it was difficult to foster deep connections with so many, and such different communities of people, I still somehow did not necessarily expect the level of surprise and confusion that I probably should have as I went about doing my job in ways I expected I should. Those surprising, confusing, and frustrating moments decentered my prior experiences—even decentered my career preparation—and pushed me toward reconsiderations of myself and my practice.

Seemingly important questions about curricula and use of time, of repertoire and outcomes, were somewhat reinforced to me by professional resources. Some of these expectations involved time. For instance, each grade level corresponds with a time (particular years of childhood) and comes with its own expectations, like *make sure 3rd graders can accurately count and play dotted sixteenth rhythms, or begin recorder by 3rd or 4th grade in preparation for learning band instruments, or December concerts are expected and necessary*. Similar views were reinforced through curricular handbooks, teacher manuals, and district policies. These resources communicated clear expectations that I interpreted as solid, even obvious. They did not necessarily mention surprise or confusion, nor do I recall an acknowledgement of adaptations and adjustments that might be welcomed or necessary.

Some of the expectations I interpreted were reinforced by other people. I was observed by senior music teaching colleagues and arts administrators who provided me feedback on my teaching. Some noted that I ought to take Kodály training in summers, or felt I should use guitar in order to accompany groups with mobility rather than piano. Such suggestions typically came with supportive intentions.

Some folks outside the schools too, reinforced the “shoulds” and “have tos” specific to their own musical and cultural values. For example, in the religious school I should include only Christian repertoire for the Christmas concert, which must take place in the Cathedral, but could not include dance or movement. Conversely, in one of the public schools I worked, no celebration was deemed appropriate in that it might be off-limits to students of varying religious and cultural backgrounds. The district administration's attempts to foster equality resulted in forgoing all holidays and celebrations in favor of one, week-long spring event simply named “celebration.” In other places, expectations included that students would perform during specific community festivals, sometimes with particular repertoire included that echoed traditions held dear to the people there. In other places I had incredible autonomy that sometimes felt liberating and sometimes felt overwhelming. Individuals held expectations of me and my work in their communities and with their children—and rightfully so, as they were invested in musical and sometimes cultural outcomes. They anticipated that I would conform to the expectations of community culture, an expectation I attempted to fulfill.

They did not expect to be surprised or confused by me. I did not expect to be surprised or confused by them. But of course, as is common in any new relationship, we had those moments and needed to negotiate our own expectations in relation to existing and expanding cultures that included new and different families, as well as to our own values.

The field of music education has been held tightly with conceptions about what has to be, sometimes what is considered *best*. We have been brought up in a culture and a system of music education that is largely unchanged and sometimes unquestioned in practice, typically adhering to traditions (Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Bucura, 2020) that can include specific repertoire (Humphreys, 2004) pedagogies (Freer, 2011) and experiences in music teacher preparation (Bartel, 2004). We enter the field and may feel we know precisely what it is. We may be attracted to the field of music education by its familiarity. We know what we are supposed to do, what the outcomes are, how to personally succeed, and perhaps even who we are personally within it. We may have expectations and assumptions that may go unquestioned, and we do not always anticipate being surprised or confused. When entering the profession as new teachers, we would navigate new relationship-building and have moments of surprise and confusion, however we now navigate an entirely changed context alongside colleagues, students, and communities who may face the same questions.

Some of the traditions and expectations I recall from my early music teaching speak to the specific people and places I worked, and they were sometimes telling indications of their individual or collective values. These were important for me to learn. It helped me understand the communities in which I not only worked, but to which I gradually became a part. Values and traditions have their place, and some students and teachers achieve and feel grounded because of them—as I mentioned, they know what to expect, have clear benchmarks to indicate successes, and have familiar pathways to move forward toward them.

The support for music in some of these communities was unrivaled. Although expectations were sometimes specific, it did not preclude as John Kratus (2007) discussed, making some changes. Rather, room existed for what Kratus referenced as small acts of subversion, by which larger changes could become normalized over time. In other words, there was room for me to contribute myself, and to reflect the broader school community, particularly those who may have been new or expressed less voice than others. At the same time, the culture was something I actively sought to understand and take on, thus it also changed me in each place and in each role. Small acts in such a way can dampen the abruptness of surprise or confusion, favoring instead the subtle changes that can be accepted neither feeling oppositional to existing cultures, nor threatening one’s sense of professional self. During this time, I learned rather quickly that there was no one music education culture, and that no description of the overall professional field can suffice with much detail. Not only did each community look, feel, and act differently, but I found the uniqueness of music education in each place valuable, carrying deep meanings for the school community in each setting.

Recent times have faced us with abrupt changes that demand immediate attention, which might make Kratus’ appeals feel unhelpful. Small acts of subversion that take place over a long period of time? Everything has changed with such urgency that we may not feel we have the luxury of time. Kratus’ appeal to change, however spotlights some of the questions we may have had all along. For instance, how *do* we make positive change in the face of longstanding and often valued traditions? How *do* we make space for our own values and views while respecting and acknowledging those of others? These are broad considerations necessary for organizing what we decide to do and our rationale for why that is so.

Music education must be considered in relation to greater social, cultural, historical, and political contexts. The world currently faces a multitude of intersecting challenges, including climate change, a global health pandemic, virtual education, political and governmental instability, discrimination and inequalities of wealth and power, terrorist threats, and deep divisions. The work of this conference is integration. While music can and should be integrated, for instance in skills, understandings, and practices; and music education can be integrated into schools by fostering diversity and inclusion, there are other ways we might also consider integration. The integration of purposes, domains, and curiosities might be developed to fuse disciplines and negotiate meanings. The work we do might be reimagined in order to integrate domains, for instance of music therapy, music history, sociology, philosophy, and psychology, as well as visual arts, dance/movement, and the humanities broadly, that can speak to the power of music education toward identity-construction, arts and communities, and positive social change.

While divisions between people seem to be increasingly emphasized, at no other time has there been such potential to be connected worldwide, thanks to what we might often regard as a global flow of information. But *we* does not include all people, and it is not possible to be aware of information to which one does *not* have access.

Information flow to those who do have access is also increasingly tailored to already-formed perspectives, providing a false sense of support, perhaps righteousness, and deteriorating opportunities to be surprised, confused, and challenged—to grow. Inequalities and division can be deeply embedded and perpetuated in these ways.

While one may *feel* connected (to others and to diverse ideas), it is appropriate to ask *to whom* is one feeling connected and therefore to whom might one not be connected? It may become less important to “know things,” involving a store of information, but to strive to be informed and thoughtful—to critically consider—when making sense of and decisions about actions to take (or not). Current schooling systems do not always communicate value for such critical awareness and thinking, favoring instead standardization. Despite a widespread focus on standardization of schooling, retention of what one has learned seems to nonetheless suffer (Regelski, 2004). In a spirit of analysis, discussion, perspective-building, and negotiation, it feels pressing to make space through the arts and humanities to seek experiences among diverse others, and the empathy and humanness it might foster.

While the experience of perfecting a piece of classical repertoire has worth and can be personally meaningful, music education can deepen far beyond that facet of traditional experience. One of these actions must be to seek perspective, actively and purposefully, and to engage in, as Sandy Stauffer (2017) prompted, radical listening, involving mindful, patient, imaginative, repeated, and intentional acts of listening. We might therefore seek understanding *with* others’ perspectives, particularly those who see things in different ways, who create art in different ways, and who interpret uniquely. Sensitive understanding, rather than agreement, is a worthwhile goal, which can result in nuance, complication, and frustration—the challenge and struggle of growth.

Musically and professionally we may feel that we are similarly connected, informed, and united. But again ask, *to whom?* And therefore, to whom are we not connected and what ideas or perspectives might we not have deeply considered or been exposed to? While I felt connected, informed, and united when I embarked on my career as music teacher, I immediately came into tension with the nuance, struggle, and complications of my roles in the differing places, values, and cultures that I encountered. It is to confront the uncomfortable that one can potentially glimpse what they have not previously considered.

We likely realize the field of music teaching can go far beyond the limits of our own professional preparation. We might all be able to name some musical practices and cultures we would like to learn more about, and we seem to readily acknowledge that we cannot be an expert in everything. But sadly, in music education, the perspectives we often lack are *those that might be the closest within our reach*—those perspectives and interests of our very students. Odena and Spruce (2018) point to the importance of students’ experiences and perceptions in music classes, noting that although it is indeed challenging to address their needs (musically and otherwise). However, curricular practices have the potential to be disempowering for students. Their feelings of self-efficacy, particularly among adolescent students and maybe particularly about musicianship, may be fragile and therefore should be of great concern for music teachers (Bucura, 2019). While students may not always clearly articulate or communicate how they feel or what they want, while they may not express interests we might consider, it is our responsibility to nevertheless seek them. This takes great sensitivity, as well as an investment in students as whole people, and experiences together that build trust and safety. This is not just that students can trust teachers as caring adults, but that they can trust teachers genuinely value their musical lives, interests, and motivations, and that they are willing and able to make space for them in music classes.

In an attempt to seek any different perspective, we must, as Stauffer encouraged, radically listen. We must listen to students as musicians and as whole people—people with their own questions. Williams (2019) noted that little connections may exist between traditional school music classes and the musical practices of one’s culture, particularly youth culture. Students may regularly feel decentered in our music classes. They may struggle to understand their own feelings of surprise and confusion in the face of longstanding music education traditions that may not appeal to them or connect to their musical understandings or interests. Critical (and radical) listening skills are needed among students and teachers so that we might find music a catalyst for understanding oneself, seeking to acknowledge and gain empathy toward others’ perspectives, perhaps toward positive social change. Social change is possible in all creative efforts, whether studying others’ arts or creating our own.

Worldly change and potential for misinformation and disinformation becomes particularly significant when asking the kinds of professional questions in music education that I have mentioned. What might become a positive state of normal (for you, in *your* world, with *your* students) and for what reasons? How might we reimagine expectations of music teaching and learning when the ground beneath our feet seems to be shifting? In a context of change we might

be emboldened to envision something new, to be created together, while the shifting context necessitates flexibility and continual reflection on these changes.

Changes can be considered in terms of place, of time, and interactions. For starters, *places change*. While one may consider the place of an island, a public school, or elementary general music classroom, now place also can include online learning platforms and virtual meeting rooms. These take shape in new mediums and come with their own limitations as well as novel and intriguing possibilities. They often surprise or confuse as we try to recreate, adapt, or perhaps imagine anew. The place of online learning may lead one to imagine students in the place of their own homes in order to counter an abstract online space with a concrete conception of what the learning place is, different for every student. Seeing students in their homes, therefore somehow experiencing bits of their home cultures, may be incredibly instructive, as we must then come to regard them in greater context and with a possibly changed perspective—as a whole human learning within the complexities of their own lives.

Times change. I do not refer here to simply the time of third grade, of middle school, the time of the 45-minute class period, an 8am-3pm school day, or the time of an August-to-June school calendar. We now include conceptions of flexible learning time, of hybridized learning and synchronized times, or of the almost non-time associated with asynchronous learning, which may interrupt taken-for-granted constructions of time itself. Flexible learning time may also unhelpfully mask the time needed to engage in learning. An assumed flexibility of time does not mean that time is not still spent. There are limits in any conception of time. Forward momentum in time may be disrupted in new conceptions of flexible learning time. Static time may be experienced, which for some can feel like a time warp. We might feel a loss of time sense altogether in state of flow, particularly when making music, or we might feel an endlessness of time emerging from a consistent scene of home, possibly resulting in boredom, monotony, or depression.

Another change, however, involves human interactions. As Shorner-Johnson (2020) recently pointed out, technological progress has brought about a concurrent sense of disconnect and disruption to human relationships. Lapidaki (2020) encouraged a countering sense of trust and intimacy that, in the face of school standardization and accountability, can communicate value for things that cannot be quantified: unpredictability, curiosity, vulnerability, empathy, and teaching and learning. These values present tensions in relationship to current educational norms, as well as disrupt hierarchical relationships that tend to structure educational experiences. Yet, it is human connections, when prioritized in all interactions—whether in-person, virtual, peer-to-peer, principal player to 2nd part, teacher-to-student, or otherwise—that can enable a shared community of meaning-making.

In change there is typically a concurrent sense of loss. One may miss an old normal and sense of togetherness, one may miss unexpected interactions and gestures or touch that bring about spontaneity and make them feel alive. This is almost certainly so in music, where interactions may be felt in particularly deep and meaningful ways that are difficult to replicate with virtual or live distances. Students similarly crave interactions, whether kindergartners, seniors in high school, undergraduates, or community music participants of any age. It is a time for creative interaction—however that is safely possible. It is a time for curiosity, collaboration, and projects, for ownership and negotiation across peoples, places, and domains that may foster a creative flow and growth of perspective. It is a time for higher order thinking that makes space for personal connections and sensitive interactions. It is a time to value the surprise, confusion, and challenge of growth that come about in the whirlwind of a suddenly decentered world. These wants appeal to the human spirit, the interactivity of people, a collective sense of care, and creativity in teaching and learning.

The education system changes incrementally, but it has recently appeared to make an abrupt turn that may feel out of control. It is in fact out of any one's control, and we become changed within and among it. It may surprise or confuse us, we are likely decentered, and we may feel a sense of loss for a past way-of-being that has seemingly disappeared. One could be concerned about how to adapt to virtual learning spaces, how to get kids on board when interacting through technological mediation (or perhaps through masks and distancing). One may wonder how to facilitate ensembles, how to learn new technologies and skills, and how to produce concerts.

One might start by considering what questions may actually function as their own, new assumptions. No different than *“how do we get the fourth-grade recorder ensemble to master this piece in preparation for the spring concert,”* we must interrogate our questions and call out the assumptions for the limits they impose as well as the values they communicate. In a decentered experience, we might more easily confront our expectations *as* assumptions than we would otherwise. I suspect I was more ready to adapt to Covid changes in Austria than I would have been in New York

because I was prepared for change and uncertainty. Perhaps the needed changes in music education that may have gone unconsidered, like issues of inclusion, access, tradition, and community, might be more readily considered at this very moment. It is a moment of opportunity. Could it be an assumption that students must be “on board,” or that we must provide large ensembles, or that they must resemble something they used to, or that we must quickly learn new software platforms, or that we must produce concerts? Could it be an assumption that we must figure it out *for* students rather than *with* them?

While assumptions should be called into question, those that stand as our values should also provide us the stability to make decisions forward. We need not start from scratch. Although some conceptions of time have been expanded or adjusted, we still must adhere to *some* of them, like being prepared to teach class before it begins (in whatever way it occurs). Practical concerns need not steer all decision, but of course they will still matter.

Naturally, if one wants to organize and direct large ensembles or concerts they should find ways to do so regardless of the platform. All sorts of possibilities exist in some way despite the obstacles of Covid, or any other obstacle. Large ensembles can indeed be rehearsed virtually and synchronously, private lessons can still occur and be meaningful, students can collaborate and create, and music class can take on entirely new forms and strive for new learning and musical goals. Students can be motivated and engaged from home. In-person singing can take place outdoor and with precautions. Students can propose interdisciplinary projects and create and produce digital media that interfaces with music in interesting ways. Many are already making such decisions and some were doing so prior to the pandemic.

The possibilities are vast. If it is important for you and your students to resemble music classes pre-pandemic, then it is certainly possible to find a way. If you see gaps or problems you would like your program to address, then it can be an ideal time to imagine how that might occur. When one's values (our own and our students') become clear, program adjustments may also become increasingly clear. When assumptions are identified, decisions can be made to either disregard them, adjust them, or allow them pillar positioning. We must make thoughtful decisions about what to do and what not to do, how we might accomplish it, where to spend time and energy and where not to—perhaps *when* to do *what*.

What will benefit students in specific places and what might not? These are not the same kinds of how-to questions I began with when I was in an early career stage, but it would have been beneficial for me to ask them even at that time. Educational cultures may be shifting, and we must be sensitive to people—to students, *with* students—as we imagine what, when, where, and why to facilitate music learning. Perhaps this is an opportune moment to welcome a professional refocusing. Rather than ‘how,’ to do the ‘necessary’ things, and teach music in ways we recognize that simply adjust formats or shift things around, perhaps now is a moment to instead ask broader questions of music teaching and learning.

While these questions sometimes seem unhelpful given the immediacy of “I’ve got a class to teach,” likewise consider the helpfulness of gaining *how-tos* when one may face insecurity about the role of teacher, of school, of the arts, and of music, as well as what constitutes meaningful music teaching and learning at these times, in these places, and with particular people. Before one can gather skills, compose curricula, identify activities or repertoire, or consider assessments, they must first consider what it is they are doing, why they are doing it, and for and *with* whom they do it.

We have opportunities. We have had them, but now they are thrust upon us. We can view them as obstacles. For instance, we have no time to prepare, students are not engaged online the way they were in person, we cannot really rehearse our ensembles in virtual ways or asynchronously the way we would like to, and how can one manage all of the students in a class when it is a 50-person ensemble?

Or perhaps we can choose to embrace them as opportunities. Maybe large ensemble classes did not really allow space for assessing individuals in meaningful ways. Maybe smaller class sizes are necessary, or perhaps students must take up a greater role in self- and peer assessment. Maybe a few virtual platforms can be learned to some degree now that will help as we move forward, but it does not all have to become perfect, one does not have to be an immediate expert, and certainly not all at once. Maybe we do not need to provide all the answers when students can be challenged with projects and questions that they take up of their own curiosity. Maybe there are ways students can engage differently, more meaningfully, and with more autonomy than before. Maybe we can focus on the whole human self as a growing musical person in ways we might not have before, considering their home, their family, their potential for creative pathways of their own.

Covid-19 changed the world during the same time that for me, I have been living abroad. Friends remark, “That must be unbelievable go undergo a global health pandemic while living in a foreign country!” But in fact, at a time and in a place where I expected to be surprised and confused, and completely decentered, where and when I was already disoriented and faced with challenging my assumptions, I was somewhat prepared for discomfort, for growth, for challenge, and for difficulty. Covid folded into my constructions of understanding, and I believe I therefore adapted. I was prepared for surprise and confusion and loss of at least some aspects of my life that once seemed so normal. I was prepared to take on elements of a new normal.

Imagine if we were prepared for surprise and confusion in music education. How might we view our field and our practice—and ourselves—differently? How might our perspectives inform innovative, people-centered music teaching that we can clearly articulate and rationalize? How flexible and adaptable might we become? How might our goals shift and practices change? How might students’ experiences change and how might their relationships with us also then change?

For those of you who are only beginning to emerge in your professional lives, consider yourselves thoroughly decentered in what can be an instructive way. You would likely be decentered anyway as you take on new roles in new places, but here and now you have an opportunity to see the world with a fresh perspective and to imagine how the field of music education might work well in a different context. I invite you to consider how this new context can work well with the students you teach. In some ways colleagues may look to *you* to lead the way—and I invite you to not have the answers, but to look to your students for inspiration and collaboration.

For those of you who have been in the field for some time, I similarly invite you to consider the gift of a decentered experience. While it is certainly overwhelming and unnerving to experience such shifting, it is you who can help steady the waters for new colleagues and students. We must make things work and get creative in doing so. I invite you to look to—and with—your students for inspiration, as well. Band does not have to look like band, lessons do not need to resemble traditional lessons, you can set new goals and adjust as you continually reflect on what works well and for what reasons. We should hope for a lifetime of musical meanings in students’ futures that inspire and motivate.

Perhaps this is an opportune moment to disrupt what constitutes music learning in the lifespan. Adults can and should learn, music learning can be in students’ hands, and they can continue to claim it for themselves and to further their abilities, their creativities, and expressions of humanness throughout their life. Music should be made among generations and in diverse places and moments, with diverse repertoire and diverse others. As I discussed recently (Bucura, 2020), “Rather than a static tradition . . . we might view culture as dynamic. In this way, culture can act as a reflection of students here and now as well as in their varied states of becoming. That is, the culture of music in any school can and should look unique as it reflects the people who are there in [that] time and place. When teachers and students instead conform to static cultural traditions, they conform to fit the structure rather than actively shape their own” (p. 13).

We must refrain from quickly asking how, and instead articulate why and what. We can forge a collaborative plan by seeking solutions to those questions that are impossible to respond to without the very people we teach. We cannot know the answers but must find them together. In specific places (including virtual places/spaces), in specific times (including asynchronous flexible time), and with specific people (now and in their states of beoming). Among great changes and challenges, we can address pathways forward in a spirit of togetherness and care. We can liberate ourselves from traditions and expectations in order to collaboratively embrace surprise and confusion. We can demonstrate value for the wonder and possibility of a decentered struggle that moves us to grow together.

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## Biography

Dr. Elizabeth Bucura is Assistant Professor of Music Pedagogy at Kunstuniversität Graz in Graz, Austria. There, she teaches graduate coursework and advises graduate research, as well as coordinates *Meet4Music*, integrating participatory music experiences connecting university and community members. Previously she was Assistant Professor of Music Teaching and Learning at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. Bucura has investigated music teacher identity, creative approaches to secondary general music, and community music participation. She was awarded the 2013 Outstanding Dissertation by the Council for Research in Music Education. Bucura formerly taught general music with grades preK-8 in Maine public and private schools, and has taught many piano students in Maine, Arizona, and Austria. Bucura has shared research and workshops at conferences and events internationally. Her work is included in peer reviewed publications, such as the *Oxford Handbook of Music Teacher Education, Journal for Music Teacher Education, Teaching Artist Journal, and General Music Today*.

# Can I Fix That? Instrument Repairs in the Band Room

by Dr. Patrick Lawrence



It's inevitable that instrument repair problems will occur. Early in my public school teaching career, I soon discovered that in all the hours of method classes studying the pedagogy of each instrument, I wasn't well prepared regarding the mechanics of *how* the various instruments worked. I was often confronted with an un-easy feeling as soon as something wasn't playing as it should. Not only did problems seem to almost always happen right before a concert, but I wasn't sure if the problem was something simple that I could/should be able to fix, or whether it was an issue that truly needed to go to the repair shop – plus, the added headache of the student being without an instrument for days or weeks.

I was fortunate to have received two professional development grants to study instrument repair over two summers in Colorado. I now teach a hands-on summer repair class at UWSP. This course is designed for band directors and provides maintenance and repair skills to help keep the instruments in their band rooms in tip-top condition and hopefully keep some of the smaller repairs out of the shop.

Most problems have a simple logical solution, look for the obvious issue first. Is there an obstruction? (mouthpiece cap, paperclip, oil bottle in the instrument). On woodwinds, to what note does the instrument play down? That usually isolates the problem area (more on this later). In doing any of your own repair, please remember the Hippocratic Oath "First, Do No Harm". This is especially important when working on a student's personal instrument. Know your limitations and skill level before getting in too deep.

Brass and woodwinds often have maintenance and repair techniques that are similar in those families. Brass instruments certainly are more straight forward and many of the playing issues fall under the care and cleaning fixes.

## Brass



Brass instruments should be bathed (at least) twice a year. There have been several scientific studies about what's growing inside brass instruments, and the news isn't good. That, combined with the recent pandemic, makes me believe we should be doing a better job in this area. This is a simple process that can be done at home or as a larger group in a kiddie pool outside the band room on a nice day. Simply fill a bathtub with warm water (don't use hot water, it will remove the lacquer), pull all the slides, caps, and valves, and submerge in the water. I recommend not dismantling the piston valves, too many small pieces that can be lost or reassembled incorrectly.

Additionally, I think it's acceptable to submerge rotor valves on horns, trombones, and tubas--just be sure to blow them out really-well and oil liberally. Ideally, the rotors would be fully removed, but that is a more complicated process and I believe that partial cleaning is better than none.

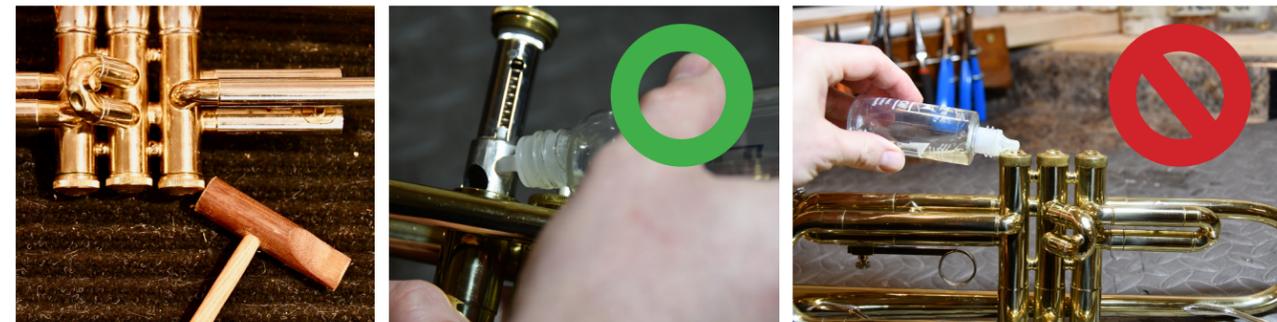
Let the instrument soak for about ten minutes, then add a few drops of Dawn Dish Soap in each tube and run a cleaning snake-brush through every opening. Rinse with cold clean water and dry with a clean towel. Oil, grease, and re-assemble. Once the instrument is completely dry, I like to apply a squirt of Lemon Pledge and then buff that in with a clean cloth. The Pledge smells nice and makes the lacquer shine while helping to prevent fingerprints. It is good practice to clean and oil all the brass instruments before storing them for summer break. Dry, dirty brass tends to develop stuck slides. If/when you have a stuck slide, don't use a rag or try to tug-of-war the slide out. Do use penetrating oil. I recommend Aero Kroil, their slogan is *The oil that creeps!*



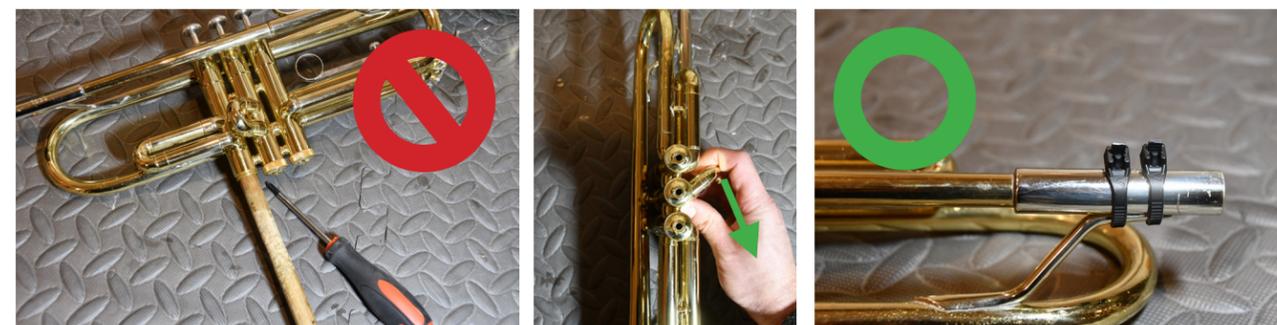
Apply a few drops of oil between the two slide tubes, you'll see the oil be absorbed. Let it sit for a few hours and try to move the slide; a really stubborn slide might take a day or two to dissolve the "glaze" that is holding the slide together.

Similarly, rotor valves tend to lock up when not used regularly. Several drops of Kroil down the inside of the valve tube and around the stop arm will help free the valve. Never use pliers to loosen the rotor, only light pressure with your fingers, oil, and patience.

Top and bottom valve caps are notorious for sticking. Please don't ever use pliers, which will leave teeth-marks in the soft brass. Instead, lightly tap the valve cap with a rawhide mallet.



I teach students when oiling piston valves to not remove them from the casing, instead, bring the valve up part way and apply a few drops. This limits the risk of the piston being dropped while out of the instrument. Don't ever oil valves from the bottom, this brings all the *stuff* that lives in the bottom of the valve casing up into the valve.



If a piston valve is sticking, check to see if the instrument needs cleaning. If that doesn't solve the problem, it will likely need to go into the shop. The most common issue is that the player has dropped their mouthpiece and it has landed on the valve block while putting it in or out of the case. That repair will need to go to the shop. If the second valve is the one that is sticking, the instrument likely fell on the second valve slide, causing the second valve slide to pinch the valve. Apply a small amount of outward pressure as shown. Most often, this is enough to get the valve working again.

Solder joints on brass instruments break from time to time. Don't use rubber bands, tape, or super glue. Do use Zip Ties to secure the broken solder joint.



Trombone slides need care and maintenance too! The slide stocking gets gunked up as slide cream builds up after a few weeks. I recommend bathing just the slide alone more often. The minimum working standard that we should have for our students is that with the end of the slide (bumper) on the floor, unlock the slide and move the inner part up and down. The outer slide *must* stay on the floor while the inner part goes up and down. If it doesn't, the slide likely has small dings or is out of alignment.

Water key corks dry out and must be replaced when they start leaking. Valentino Adhesive Corks are available in a variety of sizes and are made of neoprene. Find the right size, peel and stick in the pad cup. Real cork requires a drop of super glue in the cup before installing the new cork.



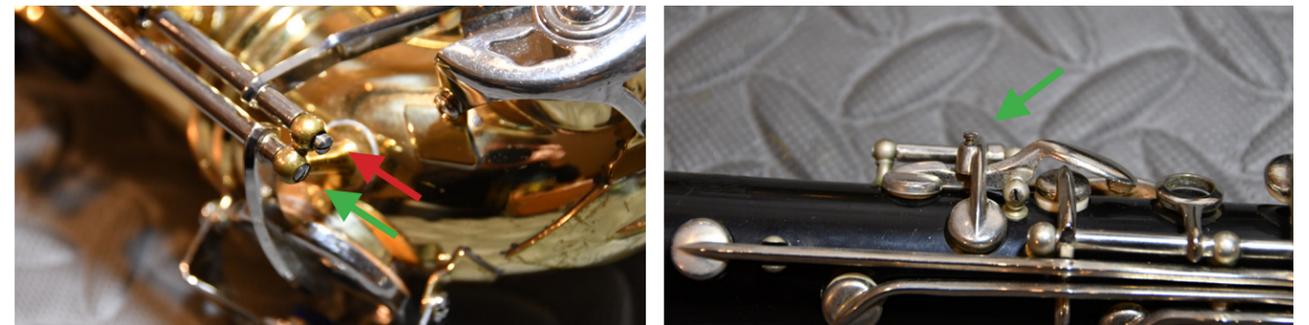
Please use hair-ties rather than tape or a rubber band to hold a water key closed when a spring breaks. Trombones often bang their water key into the music stand when playing, a small amount of pressure using your fingers will realign the water key

### Woodwinds



Woodwinds certainly are fussier than brass instruments. I recommend keeping them in their cases when not in use. This helps to regulate their humidity so they don't crack, and it prevents dust and lint from collecting under and around the keys. Do have the students swab the instruments after playing, I prefer from the bell up. Do make sure that the swab is fully unraveled before pulling it through.

Don't try and push out a stuck swab with a drumstick, you'll likely damage the pip on the inside of the upper joint. Make a small hook from a wire coat hanger, try removing it from the direction it went into the instrument. Be careful not to scratch the inside of the bore.



Keep an eye out for pivot screws that are slowly making their way out, it's really hard to find them on the band room floor once they fall out. Tighten them up using a small screwdriver. If you over-tighten them, the key will bind. If you have a pivot screw that repeatedly comes loose, use a drop of red Loctite, be careful to keep it only on the threads.

\*Note, the adjustment screw on the clarinet A key can look like it needs to be tightened, but it doesn't, there should be a tiny gap between the A and Ab key. Encourage students to use cork grease to keep the cork from drying out and shrinking.



If a cork falls off, use blue painting tape to build up clarinet tenons or saxophone neck corks until the cork can be replaced. Use a bread bag twist tie if you lose a saxophone keyguard screw until a replacement can be ordered.



If the instrument doesn't play correctly below a certain note, there is likely a spring that has come undone. Look for a spring that it off its post. Using a spring hook or a crochet hook, reset the spring on the post. If the spring breaks, use a hair tie until you can get it repaired.

Aside from unhooked springs, there isn't much you as a band director can do with flutes, oboes, and bassoons, they're best worked on by professionals. If there is a problem with a flute, check the spring for the two trill keys, they tend to come unhooked.

For sticky pads, squeeze a piece of paper between the pad and the tone hole, holding the key closed, pull the paper out. I don't recommend using a dollar bill for this, money is often rather dirty.



Avoid using saxophone neck straps with open hooks. Locking clasps are best because there is much less chance of a dropped instrument.

Saxophones tend to get out of adjustment after a while. I recommend getting a leak light which you can make your own from a 3-foot length of LED rope light available at most hardware stores. When you put the leak light into the instrument and close the pads, you'll be able to see where the leaks occur. I wouldn't recommend moving any adjustment screws, but you'll be able to see if there is a problem pad. If the saxophone isn't playing in the lower octave, the octave key (on the neck) is likely bent. Be sure that it closes all the way. If not, put your thumb in the lower section and bend the key down a small amount until it closes. There should be a very small gap (where the thumb is in the photo) before contact with the neck portion of the key.

I hope you've found this article helpful. Please join us for our summer repair class, information can be found on the UWSP Music website. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.



## Biography

Dr. Patrick Lawrence, Associate Professor of Trombone, Euphonium, and Tuba at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, maintains a vibrant low brass studio and hosts the yearly UWSP Tuba Christmas Concert. A passionate educator, he enjoys teaching students of all skill levels, elementary through college-age. He is active in educational outreach, working with students across the state in clinics and honor bands. He is the recipient of the 2013 UWSP Excellence in Teaching Award. His recently published book, *Solo Literature for Low Brass and Organ*, is an extension of his doctoral study and is now available from Amazon.com. An active performer, he is principal trombonist with the Central Wisconsin Symphony Orchestra and conductor of the Wausau Symphonic Band.

# Training Active Audience Members Through Deeper Listening

by Dr. Rachel Brashier



We all know that it is an ongoing and important work to strive to educate future audience members, who are both our students and ourselves, to actively listen and engage. However, as any good musician can attest, there is a difference between hearing and listening. Whereas hearing is more generalized and passive, listening is a more active activity that is more intentional and involves going beyond hearing towards engagement with more understanding and meaning making.

Learning how to listen is important for musicians. How often as music teachers have we realized that we are sharing some music and listening to it, only to realize that many of our students may be only passive hearers, not focused listeners. Learning to listen is of course a focus of many general music classes, but also important for ensemble

students, both for their own playing and the good of the overall sound of the group. But, too often, music teachers do not seem to have a systematic approach or plan for how to teach their students to listen.

## Something to Hang Your Hat On

How do we teach people to listen? One approach I have found success with is to find something students can aurally 'hang their hat on.' There is a range of options for what that 'something' can be. For those who are beginners it can be as simple as a lyric or a melodic phrase, and for those who are more advanced it might be the type of harmony or instrumentation they are hearing while they try to listen. Regardless of whether students are not listening because they have no musical knowledge on which to 'hang their hat' or whether they are advanced players who may check out because they 'got the answer' already, helping students listen can involve the same approach because what we want is constant and ongoing engagement with what they are hearing, in order to teach them to listen for a lifetime.

## Deep Listening

Pauline Oliveros talked extensively about "Deep Listening" and the difference between hearing and listening. As she puts it, "listening is a lifetime practice that depends on accumulated experiences with sound..." (Oliveros, 2015). Early in my music education career, Oliveros' work, and her words, inspired me to find a way to help children learn to listen more deeply, and so for many years now, I have worked to develop an approach to teaching listening with music students that I refer to as 'Deeper Listening for Learning.'

This project began when I was teaching in a K-12 position and would teach the same students over the course of their elementary and secondary school years, so I had a built-in longitudinal study. I began with the desire for my students to listen to music more intently, and for longer periods of time, with a growing sense of interest and discovery. I wanted them to interact with the music and move beyond hearing towards listening. Over the course of a decade of teaching, I created many permutations of the worksheet I share with you at the end of this article, as well as the approach I outline below for helping students find ways to listen deeper.

## Deeper Listening for Learning

First, I begin by explaining to students the notion that there are some fundamental concepts that all music shares, regardless of genre, and secondly, that it is fundamentally important to not talk while hearing music if one wants to truly listen. Then, I encouraged them to listen for different concepts each time they listened, and, as I put it, to "be fair" we should always listen to each piece a minimum of three times before deciding if we liked it or not. I explained to them that it would not be fair to decide if we liked a person or not until we had at least talked to them (or played with them at recess) at least three times, so we should treat music similarly; like a potential new friend.

Without telling the students, I simultaneously designed the listening the students would experience with a few guidelines in mind. I chose pieces, or segments of pieces, that were only about half a minute long, or less, for students who are beginners at this process to listen to. I also began with pieces that were likely to be familiar to them, including a mixture of movie tunes, folk music they likely would recognize, popular music selections of good quality, and musical excerpts they likely would recognize from the classical genres only sparingly. Over time, I increased the length of recordings, and the complexity of the musical choices, gradually. Therefore, students who started with me in the 3rd grade (about age 7-8) on this project (since it assumed students' ability to write) would by the 6th grade (age 11-12) be listening to pieces or excerpts as long as 2-3 minutes. To my delight and surprise, by the time they reached 9th grade (age 14-15) many of these students would voluntarily sign up for trips to the opera and symphony, or come to my classroom during their lunch breaks for 'listen-ins' where we could listen to whole works three times in a row! But, beyond their seeming increase in attention span and interest, what was most remarkable to me was the students' markedly more complex and interesting ways of describing what they were listening for while they were listening. I found students explaining concepts to me in ways that were very sophisticated, and involved a depth of musical understanding going far beyond yes-or-no and black-or-white answers. For example, on one field trip to the opera house, one 15 year-old young man who had participated in Deeper Listening exercises since he was a fifth grader, was heard at intermission arguing with an older high school student about how a compound meter from the overture had changed to a simple meter in the later aria using the same motif! Each student, of course, is different, but I share the information below in the hopes that you and your students might derive some benefit from this systematic approach to music listening.

## The Process

First, I either pass out a copy of the chart attached to the end of this article, or I post it and pass out notebooks to the students. Next, I inform the students that they will hear the excerpt three times. Then, we talk about the items they should fill in on the chart during each listening. I ask them to start with just the first two boxes, and then jump to the note at the bottom to free write or draw the colors that this work elicits in their mind and include either a scene, story plot, or concept. I explain that they must start writing when the music starts, and must write or draw until the music stops. When the music stops students must cease writing or drawing and put their pencils down.

We then discuss how to listen for a melody, and that they can circle or write down while they are listening whether the tune is mostly stepwise or mostly leaps, and whether it is conjunct, disjunct, or tonal or tuneful. With younger students I use only the terms flowy, jumpy, and tuneful. Then, I ask the group for more suggestions to add to the chart. I add the ones that are appropriate, and make sure they can and should select more than one item in the melody box. Next we talk about harmony, and while I let students see the words monophonic, homophonic, and polyphonic at all ages, I explain that these mean they should be listening to determine if they think, harmonically, that there is only one main musical line (no matter how many people are singing or playing at once together), or an accompanied line such as one hears on most songs on the radio, or if there are many musical lines happening at the same time that seem equally important. I then play a very short example of each, usually via a video clip so they can see how many people are on stage and who is singing or playing which lines. Then I show them an example of dissonance and consonance. More advanced students should circle or write whether it is dissonant or consonant, but beginners often just circle one of the three main choices: monophony, homophony, or polyphony. I then again ask the students if they have ideas to add to this category, and we add them into that box.

Now, I remind them again that it's time to listen without speaking and to pick up their pencils. I then play the music excerpt and model listening in silence and writing in my own notebook or on my own handout. As I stated earlier, I start with a very short excerpt of half a minute or so, but gradually increase this as the students get more practice with the process. After the music stops, I model putting my pencil down. I then say very little, except to point out perhaps what the melody might be, and then play the excerpt a second time, again modeling what the students are doing. After the second playing, I might ask them what they think the harmony is, and give a little nudge towards the correct answer. Then we listen a third time, and I again model what the students are doing while they listen. After this third listening, I ask the students to share what they drew or wrote about if they wish. I also take a poll for what colors they chose, which I tally on the board. (It is interesting to the students, often, that many of them choose similar colors!) Only then do I ask the students to indicate, by a show of hands, whether

or not they liked the music we just listened to. It is important to wait and ask this after the students have actively listened three times, not before they're familiar with the music. Sometimes I ask one student to share what they liked about it, or to share what they didn't like about it. I always remind students that it is very important to have your own opinion about a piece of music, especially after you have given it three chances to make an impression on you. That means, in essence, that they should not like it just because I like it or their friends like it. This is important to say, aloud, so that students are very aware that the goal of these exercises is deeper listening, not learning to like a certain type of music. They should be reminded often that this exercise will help them listen more deeply to ALL types of music.

As the weeks go on, we practice more, and one at a time we add meter, rhythmic ideas, instrumentation, and timbre into the listening exercises. When I introduce each concept, I explain each term, show an example, and ask students to add their own options to each box. As they get older, we will continue to add to all of the boxes as we learn new concepts in our classwork and rehearsals. Also, as time goes on, the length of time the students can listen increases, and as they begin to learn new ensemble pieces, I often introduce them this way first. Once they have really spent time with the music aurally, I have found that often rehearsals and performances come together more quickly and with a greater sense of musicality and joy. I hope you and your students can use all or part of this systematic approach and I look forward to hearing from some of you how you change it to make deeper listening practices a part of your own ways of teaching and learning music.

## References

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## Biography

Dr. Rachel Brashier is the Director of Music Education at the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point where she teaches music methods courses, graduate seminars focused on critical pedagogy and social justice in music education, and advises graduate research. Brashier taught K-12 music in the Chicago area for 12 years, and holds Masters degrees in Musicology from Southern Illinois University and in Ethnomusicology from the Eastman School of Music, where she also completed her PhD in Music Education. Brashier is currently doing research in the areas of music teacher identity development, informal music learning, and embodied musicking in communities of praxis. Dr. Brashier was awarded the T. Temple Tuttle Prize (Society for Ethnomusicology), and in addition to her dissertation *Identity Politics and Politics of Identity: A Semiotic Approach to the Negotiation and Contestation of Music Teacher Identity among Early Career Music Teachers* (2019), has published in ACT (2016) and Ethnomusicology Review (2014).

## Listening Template

Name of Work \_\_\_\_\_

Composer(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Genre \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Melody:</b> Stepwise Mostly leaps Conjunct (flowy) Disjunct (jumpy) Tuneful (tonal)	<b>Harmony:</b> Monophonic (one line) Homophonic (accompanied line) Polyphonic (multiple important lines)  Mostly Dissonant or Consonant?
<b>Meter:</b> Duple or Triple Simple or Compound Does it change? Are there shifts?	<b>Rhythmic ideas:</b> Syncopation Triplets Hemiola Stop time
<b>Instrumentation:</b> Voice: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass Woodwinds: flute, clarinet, sax, oboe, bassoon Brass: trumpet, French horn, trombone, tube Percussion: drums, marimba, chimes, cymbals Strings: violin, viola, cello, bass Piano Harp Other instruments:	<b>Timbre:</b> Bright Dull Dark Reedy Mellow Warm Harsh

Free write or draw the colors this work elicits in your mind and either a scene, story plot, or concept. You must write or draw until the music stops, when the music stops you must cease writing or drawing.



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