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BUILDING EFFECTIVE TEACHING THROUGH EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
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The State of Maryland is gaining increased recognition nationally for its education reform initiatives and its commitment to high standards of accountability in education. It further recognizes the need for high quality arts education as an essential part of our children’s education. In 1989, after a decade of requiring experiences in dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts for all students in grades K-8, Maryland became one of the first states to require that students earn a credit in the fine arts to receive the Maryland High School Diploma. Maryland’s reform initiatives have traditionally focused on envisioning what students should know and be able to do, providing resources and enhancing instructional practice, and documenting student learning. This particular project focuses on informing instructional practice.

In 1995, the Maryland State Board of Education adopted a goal that 100 percent of Maryland’s students will participate in fine arts programs that enable them to meet the content and achievement standards established by State standards for the arts. By 1997, K-12 standards for dance, music, theatre, and visual arts education, developed by a 38 member task force, were approved by the State Board. The following year Project BETTER was initiated to develop a resource tool that would inform instructional practice in each of the art forms.

The concept for Project BETTER – Building Effective Teaching Through Educational Research – was created by the Division of Instruction of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) during the late 1980s as part of its mission to promote effective instruction. The development of the four volume publication for the current project was guided by the same three major objectives: 1) to identify current research on effective instruction, 2) to synthesize this research in the form of non-theoretical summaries, and 3) to deliver this information directly to practitioners.

The information in this publication is designed as a resource to assist teachers in expanding and refining their repertoire of teaching strategies and to guide instructional planning and decision-making that supports student achievement of State standards in the arts. It is not intended to prescribe a particular style of teaching or one “best” method. This resource provides a guide to teachers as they consider their curriculum objectives, the nature and needs of their students, their personal style of teaching, and their available instructional resources. The application of this knowledge will result in more effective teaching and more powerful learning.
The first edition of BETTER Practice in Music Education was written by Anita Haushild-Cooper for the Maryland State Department of Education and published in 1991. The present edition was commissioned in 1998 with the goal of supporting the Maryland Essential Learner Outcomes in Music. A team of music educators at the University of Maryland, College Park—Regina Carlow, Kathleen Gabriele, Margo Hall, Judy Moore, and Robert Woody—prepared the text, and Marie McCarthy coordinated their efforts. This considerably restructured edition includes research studies that address the Essential Learner Outcomes. In cases of repeated topics, the authors revised and updated each entry to reflect research findings published since the first edition was compiled. For example, the topic of problem solving now falls in the context of developing critical thinking skills; the expanded definition of minority students includes research on ethnicity and ESOL students; and visual aids and manipulative materials are presented as multisensory elements.

In the intervening period between the publication of the first edition and the present one, we have witnessed significant developments in music education research. Of central importance is the publication of the Handbook of Research on Music Teaching and Learning (1992), followed by the New Handbook of Research on Music Teaching and Learning (2002), both of which synthesize research findings pertaining to a comprehensive range of music education topics. New research journals in music education provide additional forums for publishing findings; for example, the Philosophy of Music Education Review, the Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning, and Research Studies in Music Education. The MENC: National Association for Music Education publication Update fulfills a unique function in applying research findings to classroom practice.

In general, research methodology expanded to embrace various forms of qualitative research, exploring best practices in music education in innovative ways and also encouraging teachers to carry out practitioner research in their own classrooms. Even in light of all the positive developments in music education research in the past decade, the gap between research and practice presents an ongoing challenge. Sources such as

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**Introduction**
BETTER Practice in Music Education seek to bridge that gap by identifying the implications of research findings for classroom instruction.

The vast research literature base we had to draw upon required us to make choices and narrow the literature search. For example, we chose literature published after 1990. The 25 topics selected for the first edition were consolidated into two broad categories: learners and the learning environment, and teacher effectiveness. The first of these covers research findings that offer insight into aspects of instruction such as classroom management, use of media, learning styles, and gender issues. The second category focuses on teacher attitude, knowledge, and competence, in addition to a broad range of instructional strategies, from modeling to critical thinking, motivational feedback to verbal instruction.

Our third area is intended to support the learner outcomes described in the Maryland Essential Learner Outcomes in Music. The Maryland Fine Arts Standards, which are aligned with the National Standards for Arts Education and were created with the participation of over 2,000 Maryland teachers, are a set of documents entitled “Maryland Essential Learner Outcomes for the Fine Arts” (dance, music, theatre, and visual arts) for elementary, middle, and high school. They describe what children should know and be able to do in the arts by fifth grade, eighth grade, and 12th grade. We have chosen to highlight research on best practice in the four outcome areas in the following ways: We synthesized research in the area of singing and playing instruments to support Outcome 1 involving students perceiving, performing, and responding to music. Outcome 2 focuses on historical, cultural, and social contexts, which we address in terms of best practice in presenting a broad variety of repertoire and performance practices of diverse music. Outcome 3 involves creative expression and production. We stress offering an environment that fosters creativity and improvisation, as well as providing for structured compositional activities. We chose to address Outcome 4, concerning aesthetic criticism, through several current philosophies of music education.
We devised the following format for each topic: A central research finding on the topic appears as a BETTER PRACTICE at the outset. A THEORY section follows, which provides a context for research on the topic and summarizes findings from studies examined. A quotation considered useful to the practitioner is included for each topic. The final component consists of references and, for selected topics, resources. The authors drew on studies in music education, education, psychology, and other disciplines related to the topics under study. For each reference we provide a brief annotation. The majority of studies cited here are quantitative in style, since that has been the predominant methodology in music education research until recently.

As mentioned above, given the vast research base in music education, and the state of constantly evolving research, this document must be considered “in progress.” During the writing of the document, the New Handbook of Research on Music Teaching and Learning was in preparation and is now published and available to music educators. We encourage our colleagues to read these entries in the context of their own teaching experience and to allow BETTER PRACTICE findings to enrich their perspectives on music teaching and learning, and to stimulate new questions about the music teaching and learning process.

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October 2003
# Table of Contents

Foreword  iii  
Introduction  v

**Learners and the Learning Environment**

I. Learning Environment  1
   - Physical Environment  2
   - Models for Organizing Instruction  4
   - Classroom Management  7
   - Multisensory Media and Materials  8
   - Technology  10

II. Learner Characteristics  13
   - Learning Styles  14
   - Gender Issues  15
   - Ethnicity  16
   - Students with Limited English Proficiency  18
   - At-Risk Students  21
   - Students with Disabilities  22
   - Gifted and Talented Students  24

**Teacher Effectiveness**

I. Teacher Attitude, Knowledge, and Competence  27
   - Teacher Attitude  29
   - The Reflective Teacher  30
   - Action Research  32
   - Professional Development  35
   - Assessment  36
II. Teacher Strategies 39

- Preassessment of Student Knowledge 40
- Articulating Goals 42
- Motivational Feedback 43
- Critical Thinking: Musical Problem Solving 44
- Question-Answer Technique 47
- Modeling 48
- Teacher Verbal Instruction 50
- Repetition and Drill 51

**Topics Related to the Essential Learner Outcomes**

Outcome I: Perceiving, Performing, and Responding—Aesthetic Education 53

- Singing 54
- Sight-Singing 56
- Playing Instruments: Instrumental Music Classes 58
- Playing Instruments: General Music Classes 60
- Movement 62
- Music Reading 64

Outcome II: Historical, Cultural, and Social Context 67

- Historical, Cultural, and Social Context 68

Outcome III: Creative Expression and Production 71

- Environments Conducive to Learning 72
- Improvisation 73
- Composition 74

Outcome IV: Aesthetic Criticism 77

- Aesthetic Criticism 78
Learners and the Learning Environment

I. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Physical Environment
Models for Organizing Instruction
Classroom Management
Multisensory Media and Materials
Technology
Physical Environment

**THEORY**

The physical environment of a classroom affects all learners. Bright students will most likely succeed regardless of the setting, but at-risk students often face the danger of dropping out. The classroom environment might encourage at-risk students to remain in school.

Classroom features affect students in varying ways. Boys and girls respond differently to classroom decor. Girls prefer more dramatic and diverse classroom features. Students and teachers can tolerate noise in the classroom only to a certain point. The constant background of a faulty circulation system or motor, or the excessive talking of students, for example, can cause stress for students and teachers. The comfort level of some students with the classroom environment can be seen in higher achievement.

**BETTER PRACTICE**

A positive classroom environment enhances the efforts of both teachers and students. Heating, air conditioning, noise level, ventilation, classroom arrangement, lighting, decor, and traffic pattern all contribute importantly to the classroom environment.

Studies have shown that aggressive student behavior is less likely to occur in classrooms that allow easy traffic flow of students and have materials arranged conveniently. Disruptive behavior occurs less frequently in a neat classroom. Teachers cannot always control the temperature, the humidity, the light level, or other environmental factors, but they do control the classroom arrangement. Some teachers periodically alter teacher-student and student-student relationships by moving students to different seats.

Dust, mold, new carpeting, or the flickering of fluorescent lights affects some students. These conditions may contribute to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), Tourette's syndrome, or autism. Research suggests that students in classrooms illuminated by full-spectrum fluorescent lighting with ultraviolet supplements have better attendance records and are healthier.
Classroom environment may affect students’ learning attitudes and behavior before it influences their academic achievement.

(Cheng, 1994, 224)

REFERENCE


A study of the relationship between student performance and classroom environment, social climate, and management style of teacher.


Student preferences for size, shape, color, complexity, texture, and lighting in a school setting, and differences between male and female preferences.


An investigation of the classroom environment related to the effects of stress from noise, temperature, spatial arrangement, and room design.


How some individuals react strongly to the learning environment.


Student dental records, attendance, growth, and academic achievement were correlated to develop possible cause-and-effect relationships.


A review of the literature on the effects of noise in school settings.


Speculation on the problems of allergic reactions to school settings by students with known medical problems.


Four major factors that define classroom environment are outlined and discussed. Short vignettes illustrate classroom problems. Management solutions are suggested.


A study in classroom neatness and flexibility. Students in neat classrooms were judged to be better behaved.
Models for Organizing Instruction

Theory

Although music education philosophers and cognition experts disagree on the types of musical knowing, they concur that the process of acquiring musical knowledge is multifaceted, involving performance and intellectual and neuromuscular learning. Different types of learning occur from a variety of organizational models.

Models for organizing instruction include sequencing for effective instruction, lecture/demonstration, questioning techniques, modeling and gesturing, feedback systems, and verbal imagery. A variety of instructional approaches can help the teacher address different learning styles and types of musical knowledge.

Research shows that the presentation of material is more effective if delivered in the following sequence: teacher presentation of task, student interaction with task, and teacher feedback related to task. Inherent in this approach is teacher clarification of task, student-teacher interaction, and supportive feedback. Strategies for presenting the task include lecture/demonstration, modeling, use of verbal imagery, and gestures, covering both verbal and nonverbal instruction.

Better Practice

Effective music teachers make use of a wide range of instructional models.

To promote student interaction with the task (the second step in sequencing instruction), the teacher may use question-and-answer techniques. Questions that set a direction encourage the student to discover, analyze, classify, personalize, hypothesize, reorder, synthesize, and evaluate. These steps, leading the student to understand the act of forming aesthetic judgments, are crucial to music education. Understanding, rather than rote memorization, occurs when the classroom environment permits errors or incorrect answers to be used as a learning opportunity. Allowing “wait time” before calling on a student to answer gives other class members time to think through the questions before hearing other possible answers. Questions that are irrelevant, unclear, or misleading are unproductive.

Students also interact with the task through modeling, gestures, verbal imagery, and cooperative learning. Music educators make extensive use of modeling strategies when they teach performance skills. Modeling enables students to discriminate between desired and undesired musical effects. It can be a prelude to independent learning. Gestures can take the place of many words. The teacher can avoid excessive verbalization by communicating through body movements and effective eye contact. Effective music teachers make frequent use of verbal imagery to guide student aesthetic thinking during rehearsal or performance. Students work together to complete assigned tasks. Cooperative learning has been credited with improved student relationships and attitudes toward school, strengthened self-esteem, and higher academic performance.

Feedback, the final step, is crucial in the sequential learning model for students to acquire skills and knowledge. Immediate feedback saves time in the learning process, and learning time increases when students are permitted to practice mistakes without teacher intervention. The process of unlearning the mistake and relearning the correct response consumes time and leads to frustration. Immediate feedback promotes both short-term and long-term learning.
A teacher’s ability to model, and the degree of use of demonstrations in the instrumental class, has bearing upon pupil performance levels. Teachers who apply stronger modeling skills are more likely to produce students who perform better than teachers who do not.

(Sang, 1987, 136)
Why is student behavior becoming steadily worse? Schools always reflect the nature of the society they serve. When society is humane, gentle, and caring, so are students in the schools. When society is hostile and uncaring, students behave in accordance. At present, societies around the world are showing a progressive decline in humane behavior.

(Charles, 1999, p. 4)
**Classroom Management**

**Theory**

Systems of behavior management have changed since the pioneering work on group learning in the 1950s. In the 1970s, discipline was thought of as control. During the 1980s, teachers turned to such other systems as Assertive Discipline, Positive Discipline, Cooperative Discipline, and Discipline with Dignity. In the 1990s, Inner Discipline and a new concept, Beyond Discipline, emerged as successful systems.

In reaction to the evolving role of the teacher and the changing attitude of the student, discipline has moved from an authoritative stance to community building in the classroom. Beyond Discipline, a concept developed by Alfie Kohn, is based on trust and caring between teacher and student. Some of the hallmarks of Beyond Discipline include communication, conflict resolution, class meetings, empowering students by letting them make decisions, and abstaining from bribes, threats, and rewards. The following are suggestions gleaned from the experience of teachers and from research studies:

- State clearly defined classroom guidelines at the beginning of the year.
- Review and apply the guidelines and expectations consistently.
- Maintain a positive atmosphere.
- Build time for student input and class meetings about conducting the class.
- Structure the environment to increase student learning.
- Engage student attention with a challenging curriculum and effective teacher behavior.
- Individualize instruction when necessary.
- Be prepared to change strategies if necessary.
- Provide feedback about academic and behavioral progress in a constructive, positive manner.

**Better Practice**

Students who develop a sense of community and caring, and who participate in decision making, are less likely to have behavioral problems.

**References**


Ways in which classroom management, instruction, and teacher behavior can combine for the benefit of the student.


Discipline, classroom organization, meeting academic needs, and strategies for responding to unproductive student behavior.

Kohn, A. (1996). *Beyond discipline: From compliance to community.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Author questions the idea of traditional classroom management with the implication that students need to be managed by teachers. Kohn stresses the need for teacher and students to work together to build a communal classroom.


Multisensory Media and Materials

THEORY
Effective teachers use multisensory modes of learning—aural, visual, tactile, and kinesthetic. A multisensory approach includes modeling, verbal instruction, media, movement, and tangible materials. In this way, the learning process fully involves the student. Although verbal instruction and modeling are vital to instruction, kinesthetic activities cannot be ignored. Instructional approaches such as Orff, Kodály, Carabo-Cone, Dalcroze, and Suzuki commonly incorporate multiple modes of learning.

Textbooks, scores, literature, media, visual aids, and other tangible materials should be developmentally appropriate. Teachers should examine them for sequential activities, for evaluation materials, and for the philosophical background of a textbook series. Research findings indicate that music reading activities do not interfere with the development of aural and performance skills.

The use of tangible materials in the classroom enhances understanding of abstract concepts by simultaneously invoking visual, kinesthetic, and tactile modes. Tangible materials can be utilized for all school levels and by performing groups, but they must be age appropriate. For example, drawing circles for notes may be difficult for young students. Discs, such as paper circles, bingo chips, and coins, provide a solid medium for learning. The use of tangible materials also makes evaluation of student progress easier because the percentage of error is linked more directly to conceptual understanding and less to physical and verbal immaturity.

Tangible materials include balls, ropes, rhythm/melody cards, electronic equipment, straws, sticks, percussion instruments, or anything that can be safely and easily handled by students while delineating concepts in concrete ways. Another point in favor of tangible materials is their motivating power.

REFERENCES
Modeling strategies and devices such as melodic echoes and rhythmic movement encourage both ear-to-hand and kinesthetic response skills for middle school band students.

Comparison of vocabulary words in textbooks with general oral vocabulary. Findings indicate that children need to develop an appropriate music vocabulary, drawing and expanding on what they already know.

Music reading activities did not interfere with the development of aural and instrumental performance skills for beginning instrumentalists.

Guidelines for selecting repertoire for skill development and for performance, including suggested resources.

A multimodality approach to education. Samples examines and describes learning modalities, and asserts that education needs to address the student holistically.

Ideas and resources for finding quality music literature for young children. Resource list includes music and activity books and recordings.
Appreciation for the different ways of knowing can provide a wholeness now missing in schools, where reason alone is honored.

(Samples, 1992, p. 62)
Technology

THEORY
Computer technology is especially promising for music education because it presents and receives information aurally, visually, and kinesthetically (e.g., MIDI controller instruments). Results have varied, but research shows that, generally, technology-assisted instruction can be effective. Teachers can capitalize on the natural enthusiasm many students have for technology.

Technology can be used effectively in many ways. Computer-assisted instruction with individuals and small groups of students has improved tonal memory and aural discrimination skills. Music notation and MIDI sequencing programs have been effective in music composition training and other creative activities. Teachers can also use music notation software to produce professional-quality print materials for music class, as well as “music-minus-one” MIDI technology to create personalized musical accompaniments for performance training.

With hypermedia technologies, including the Internet, students can explore information beyond the imposed structures of formal learning environments. Teachers must guide students in developing strategies to use this freedom effectively. They must help prevent students from moving off task or from developing a game mentality encouraged by some instructional software programs. The Internet can improve music instruction by giving teachers the ability to add to their own knowledge base of music, teaching, and any number of education issues. Teachers can also obtain advice from colleagues via e-mail and online discussion groups.

The manner in which a teacher integrates technology into the classroom greatly influences the effectiveness of the technology. Common problems include failing to consider previous student experiences (i.e., employing skill-inappropriate drills, musically weak exercises, or activities that are unrelated to course objectives) and failing to supplement the technology with adequate human interaction. A general rule is to employ only those technologies that readily contribute to accomplishing the educational task at hand.

BETTER PRACTICE
Music educators who integrate computer technology appropriately into their teaching gain an effective tool for increasing student motivation and learning.
Musical and educational technologies are new teaching tools to be used by teachers in ways to improve instruction. However, these new tools certainly do not automatically guarantee success. Technology will be of value only when it is used appropriately, in conjunction with sound teaching methods that are rooted in a good philosophical base.

(Berz & Bowman, 1994, p. 62)
Learners and the Learning Environment

II. LEARNER CHARACTERISTICS

- Learning Styles
- Gender Issues
- Ethnicity
- Students with Limited English Proficiency
- At-Risk Students
- Students with Disabilities
- Gifted and Talented Students
Learning Styles

THEORY
Children differ in the way they receive, process, and recall information. Some prefer bright light to soft light, to study alone or with others, to work in a highly structured environment, or to be in a more flexible situation in which discovery is encouraged. The personality of the child plays an important role in education. The differences can be identified through study, casual observation, and learning style inventories. Teachers can make accommodations as they become aware of the nature of the differences, perhaps by changing student seat assignments or by changing eye contact, facial expression, and voice level.

Many terms and theories about learning styles have emerged recently. Studies have illuminated various ways of learning, thinking, and knowing. Acknowledging differences and complexities challenges teachers to make instructional accommodations that will help a broad range of learners to succeed.

Research findings indicate that students have more success using a combination of teaching techniques. Once teachers are aware of their own learning styles, they can begin to recognize the learning styles of their students. Attention to learning styles must accommodate at-risk students, inclusion students, minority students, and gifted and talented students. It is of utmost importance to incorporate as many techniques and approaches as necessary to reach every student in the most effective way.

Every person has a learning style—
it is as individual as a finger print.

(Gremli, 1996, 24)

REFERENCES


Moore, B. R. (1990). The relationship between curriculum and learner: Music composition and learning style. Journal of Research in Music Education, 38 (1), 24-38. Few studies show the actual effect of specific learning styles on specific tasks. This study indicates that learning styles affect instruction in composition; the study, however, does not isolate the individual effects of each learning style.
**Gender Issues**

**THEORY**

Teachers can divide the classroom power structure more equally among girls and boys if they prevent calling out and other forms of disrespect. Research has shown that girls are often quieter and less aggressive than boys, and less confident in tasks that require risk-taking. Boys receive more attention when they exhibit independent behavior rather than follow the rules. The teacher must spend time with them negotiating the rules and answering their questions. For girls to be successful in activities that require independent thinking, like composition, they need encouragement, female role models, and opportunities to exhibit independence.

**BETTER PRACTICE**

Teachers who divide their attention equally among students, use more than one instructional method, and permit no disrespect help students succeed in the music class.

Teachers who use a variety of instructional methods can encourage both boys and girls to be successful in music activities. Music teachers are incorporating technology in their composition instruction. Boys are more comfortable with technology; in fact, technology might be a roadblock for girls. Other options, like the use of keyboards, need to be available to girls.

Teachers who divide their attention more equally among boys and girls in mixed chorus help both succeed. Boys demand much of the attention through their behavior. They also need more help with vocal problems. Teachers who are sensitive to the thoughts and feelings of girls will provide challenging opportunities for them, like high-quality, auditioned girls' ensembles.

Music teachers can use many means to address the challenges raised in studies about gender in the music class. Findings indicate that teachers should assume that boys and girls can be equally expressive in the arts and should encourage all children to participate in music activities at a young age. It is helpful for teachers to introduce the contributions of both male and female musicians and composers, to have students perform music by women composers, and to avoid repertoire that perpetuates gender stereotypes.

**School has a hand in the perpetuation of the gender politics of music not only through gendered musical practices but also in the discourse surrounding music, and, most fundamentally, in the very meaning and experience of music itself.** (Green, 1997, p. 229)

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**REFERENCES**


A replication of Green’s study (1993). Hanley found that the impact of gender beliefs was most evident in composition. She also discusses other gender issues in music education.


Issues concerning the general education of girls, and girls in choral programs. The framework for this article came from the AAUW research cited above.


Connection between the self-concept of girls in the middle grades and their academic achievement. Rothenberg gives suggestions for the classroom teacher to help establish a classroom atmosphere that promotes learning for both boys and girls.
Ethnicity

**Theory**
The issue of ethnicity can be divided into two subcategories. First, teachers who respect ethnicity acknowledge that their students represent diverse cultural backgrounds. Yet, many curricula still approach music education from a Western music perspective, which may inhibit musical learning for some students. Sensitive music teachers seek opportunities to celebrate and honor cultural differences. A curriculum rich in multicultural education benefits all students as they experience music of different cultures and come to appreciate cultures different from their own.

Second, a multicultural curriculum includes a broad repertoire of non-Western music. This involves more than simply singing a few non-Western songs or creating one unit on a particular culture. Less familiar, non-Western music can help students learn because it illustrates and demonstrates musical concepts already outlined in the curriculum. The greatest challenge for teachers is to find as many authentic materials as possible to allow them to present the culture authentically.

**Better Practice**
Teachers who approach music education from a multicultural perspective expose students to musical diversity, honor the diverse cultures of the students, and increase knowledge of other cultures, all of which may raise academic success and lower discipline incidents.

Music teachers can work together with classroom teachers to develop a culture study including geography, history, dress, food, customs, songs, dances, games, instruments, and language. Music teachers can also develop multicultural lessons about celebrations of holidays, animals, harvest, love, heroes, and nature, utilizing folk, work, dance, and devotional songs and lullabies.
History tells us that musicians and composers are continually pushing out the envelope of the sonic barrier, using increasingly expanded definitions of what “music” is. Amidst all the excellent reasons to begin multicultural music education, from responding to changing demographics to promoting world peace and understanding, there is an often overlooked musical reason: Through the continual exposure of children to their planetary musical heritage, we daily widen the scope of how music can speak. (Goodkin, 1994, p. 43)

REFERENCES


Fung, C. V. (1994). Undergraduate non-music majors’ world music preferences and multicultural attitudes. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 42*(1), 45-57. Findings suggest that teachers just beginning to incorporate multicultural music should start with instrumental music. Also, musical study of China, Indonesia, Japan, Africa, and India may serve as a good introduction to non-Western music.


Shehan, P. (1985). Transfer of preference from taught to untaught pieces of non-Western music genres. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 33*(3), 149-158. Students were taught traditional African, Asian Indian, Japanese, and Hispanic songs. They demonstrated increased preference for the selections they learned, but preferences did not transfer to untaught, unfamiliar pieces.


THEORY
Research indicates that teachers face the increasing challenge of educating students with minimal English skills. Teachers who alter their instructional styles without lowering standards to meet the needs of LEP students help these students to achieve as they become competent, literate adults.

Effective teachers expose LEP students to meaningful literacy activities, especially modeling good language use and encouraging classroom interaction. Studies show that interactive vocabulary instruction leads to gains in vocabulary knowledge, which consequently increases content area learning and mastery.

Many linguistic adjustments call for the use of peer translators or student mentors. Techniques such as breaking difficult ideas into manageable units (conceptual and linguistic), pausing during speech to allow students to catch up, stressing the main word of a sentence, and using visuals, graphics, rubrics and icons facilitate learning.

Studies also suggest that cooperative learning and collaborative projects increase meaningful interactions between teachers and students and among students.

Students who speak two languages should be encouraged to maintain their skills in both so they can enjoy the benefits of bilingualism. Teachers should validate students’ cultures, using familiar communication patterns; thus providing a richer and more effective approach. The following strategies benefit LEP students in the music classroom:

- Stress contextual and theme-based vocabulary through word walls, stories, games, and songs, using onomatopoeia.
- Utilize student mentors, buddies, cultural brokers, and informants.
- Present a variety of styles and cultures in listening and performing repertoires.
- Practice language through singing, conversations, and chants.
- Highlight the content area with visuals, graphics, and rubrics.
- Give students methods of asking for clarification, such as icons and hand signs.
- Build preparation time and rehearsal of teacher instructions into lesson plans.
- Praise students when they make reasoned guesses.
The languages and dialects that students speak can and should be made an explicit part of the curriculum if we are to give them the message that language diversity is valued in our schools. Rather than viewing linguistic diversity as a deficit, we need to see it as an asset on which further learning can be built.

(Nieto, 1992, p. 299)
Behavior and conditions that define a child as at-risk are part of a self-perpetuating cycle of failure across generations, a cycle of failure that often manifests itself through school dropouts. Participation in the arts in school can help at-risk youth break this cycle.

(Taylor, Barry, & Walls, 1997, p. vii)
At-Risk Students

Theory
Students are considered at risk when they exhibit certain characteristics, such as a dysfunctional social and family background, an attitude of apathy and low personal expectations, and a history of learning disabilities and school behavioral problems. A school music program can make a difference for some at-risk students. Often, the motivation provided by music classes is the sole reason a student stays in school.

Music classes, like other school classes, present challenges to students who need to develop learning and skills, but the study of music can provide especially rewarding experiences. Music classes often involve hands-on activities, satisfaction in creative achievement, opportunities for personal expression, and an environment of high standards and expectations. Teachers who emphasize these qualities of music involvement will serve their at-risk students best.

Better Practice
Teachers who take advantage of the naturally rewarding qualities of music make their classes a powerful means of motivating at-risk students to stay in school.

Additionally, because most music classes rely on teamwork or group activities, students can experience much-needed feelings of belonging. This sense of community can even approach a family concept for some teens. Such a connection with other students represents a well-established strength of school music activities and is an important objective of at-risk intervention programs.

At-risk students who participate in a music program can find it to be a positive element in what otherwise would be another disheartening school day. Music offers students something to look forward to in school. In some cases, at-risk students excel in music classes and the resulting self-confidence spills over into other classes.

References

How educators and schools can foster resiliency in youth. A number of strategies based on education research are suggested.

Florida Department of Education. (1990). The role of the fine and performing arts in high school dropout prevention. Tallahassee, FL: Center for Music Research, Florida State University.

A review of relevant literature on the dropout and at-risk problems, and a report of interviews with music teachers and students.


Detailed characteristics of at-risk students related to social and family background, personal problems, and school difficulties. Among the recommended programs for at-risk students is involvement in music and drama activities.


Teachers share strategies for getting at-risk students to engage in music activities.


Research on how the arts help at-risk students. The authors share accounts of successful intervention approaches by music teachers and offer research-based conclusions.
THEORY
Music teachers who are prepared to go beyond the one-size-fits-all approach in regard to students with disabilities consider the individual student learning strengths and deficits. Usually, this information appears in the student’s Individual Education Program (IEP), which details the student’s current level of educational performance, annual goals, short-term instructional objectives, specific services to be provided, and the extent of participation in the mainstream program. From the IEP, teachers can plan the changes needed for one or more exceptional learners in a single class. Music teachers can play a role in the decision-making process for each child by joining the IEP process and guiding the proper placement of exceptional children.

After individual strengths and weaknesses have been determined and the student has been placed in the regular music class, effective music teachers make accommodations that respect different learning styles. They present material to accommodate auditory, visual, and kinesthetic learners; stress sequencing tasks from concrete physical activities to more abstract verbal and language-oriented responses, and employ simple graphic representations of music concepts before moving to symbolic expressions. Teachers who design lesson plans sensitive to individual needs encourage all students to participate in the music class. Effective teachers engage students through a vast range of classroom strategies, including:

- presenting resources with developmentally appropriate goals for all students
- allocating specific tasks to challenge students according to their respective abilities
- layering an activity with differing targets
- offering several points of entry into the same activity
- addressing and planning for different learning styles.

Effective music educators depend on the same fundamental teaching skills that all good educators use. Successful teachers plan and monitor the physical setting, special equipment, materials, and teaching procedures of the disabled student, all of which are directed by the Individual Education Program.

BETTER PRACTICE
Teachers should plan for individual student needs so they can apply the necessary intervention strategies for children who have difficulty with music learning.
Within a framework of effective instruction, the question of how to teach music to exceptional children should be reinterpreted during the years to come as, “How can good music instruction be more responsive to individual differences?”

(Graham, 1991, p. 233)

REFERENCES

A finding for including study of Public Law 94-142 in the undergraduate music education curriculum. A brief history of the law and its key points explains some of the more vague interpretations of the wording. Discussion of pre-intervention strategies as well as adaptations that can be put to use in the music classroom.

Descriptions of characteristic behaviors common to persons diagnosed with one or more neurological dysfunctions, to assist the music teacher in an inclusive setting. Ten neurological dysfunctions are defined followed by examples of behaviors. Research-based accommodations are given for each example.

Review of research related to students with disabilities in the music classroom. Specific characteristics and research findings are discussed.

Nine groupings of exceptional children, and a philosophy of music education for the exceptional child. Graham emphasizes assessment and intervention, and reviews research findings in the area of music education and exceptional students.

Models of in-service training suited to specific needs of the music educator.

A quick reference guide designed to offer teaching ideas and strategies for use with the disabled student in the music classroom. The booklet offers a progress evaluation form that could be helpful in recording accurate data.
Gifted and Talented Students

**Theory**

There are three basic ways to alter curriculum to meet students’ needs: offering enrichment activities, providing an accelerated pace, and making available a variety of learning options. Teachers may also need to modify regular class grouping practices.

Music enrichment activities may incorporate research skills. Topics might encompass the history of instruments, lives of composers, and historical styles. Students could compose music, participate in chamber music groups, take field trips to attend concerts, use recording studios, interact with instrument makers, engage in mentorships with musicians, and undertake multimedia projects.

Providing acceleration for gifted and talented students can make available extra class time to prepare for more challenging performing opportunities, like music festivals or other projects of the student’s choice.

Differentiation offers learning options that can meet various levels of interest and ability. It can embrace different ways of exploring content, developing understanding of ideas, and demonstrating what has been learned. Music students can master another instrument, create a multimedia presentation, or develop a halftime show. Supplementary materials, computer programs, interest centers, tiered activities, independent contracts, and group investigation are other ways to differentiate.

Grouping students heterogeneously can be counterproductive for high-ability students in certain instructional contexts. Often, high-ability students do more teaching than learning. Sometimes, gifted students should be grouped together during drill and practice sessions and given a more complex task. Heterogeneous groups may work well for critical thinking tasks and open-ended activities.

**Better Practice**

Teachers who modify curricula and grouping procedures and provide alternative activities can help meet the special needs of high-ability students who learn rapidly and need time and resources to pursue areas of special interest.
Before teachers can develop appropriate instructional strategies to meet the needs of high ability students, they must recognize the value of such efforts. For many educators, services to gifted and talented students may seem to be elitist. However, public education is founded on the belief that all students (including high ability students) have the right to instruction appropriate to their needs. Gifted and talented students, like all students, should learn something new every day. (McGrail, 1998, 36)
Teacher Effectiveness

I. TEACHER ATTITUDE, KNOWLEDGE, AND COMPETENCE

Teacher Attitude
The Reflective Teacher
Action Research
Professional Development
Assessment
Even if one is clear as to the direction and strength of the attitude, there is still the problem of what exactly constitutes an attitude. Attitudes are psychological and perceptual. An attitude is a construct, an abstract concept used to explain and classify the reasons underlying what people say or what they do.

(Cutiatta, 1990, p. 295)
Teacher Attitude

THEORY

According to a 1990 survey of 10 independent studies, teachers are effective when they are enthusiastic, stimulating, encouraging, warm, task-oriented, and businesslike. Later studies noted that teachers perceived as caring influence motivational outcomes. Research suggests links between teacher behavior and student achievement.

Teachers help overcome barriers between themselves and students when they establish trusting relationships by sharing personal stories, showing interest in students’ lives, handling confrontations, and planning multicultural lessons that show respect for individual differences.

REFERENCES


A study of 50 undergraduate nonmusic majors to determine the relationship between world music preferences and multicultural attitudes. Findings support the view that social/cultural attitudes play a role in world music preference.


ATTITUDE MEASUREMENT STUDIES HAVE DEALT WITH EFFECTING CHANGE IN TEACHER ATTITUDE IN CROSS-CULTURAL SETTING, MAINSTREAMED MUSIC CLASSROOMS, AND SELF-CONTAINED CLASSES OF SEVERELY PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED STUDENTS. RESEARCH SUGGESTS A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER ATTITUDE AND ATTENDING IN-SERVICE TRAINING SESSIONS THAT FOCUS ON SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS.

TEACHERS WHO TAKE COURSES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION HAVE MORE FAVORABLE ATTITUDES TOWARD TEACHING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND ARE PERCEIVED AS COMPETENT IN IMPLEMENTING DAILY CLASS OBJECTIVES. EFFECTIVE MUSIC TEACHERS CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO EXPERIENCE A VARIETY OF MUSIC CULTURES AND THEREFORE INCORPORATE MANY LEARNING STYLES IN THEIR LESSONS.

REVIEW OF RECENT RESEARCH THAT CLARIFIES PROCEDURES CONTRIBUTING TO EFFECTIVE TEACHING, INCLUDING SUCH VERBAL STRATEGIES AS TEACHER TALK TIME, STRATEGY SELECTION AND SEQUENCING, AND NONVERBAL STRATEGIES.


The effects of multicultural music lesson planning and implementation on the attitudes of 60 preservice elementary teachers toward teaching from a multicultural perspective.


Ways in which student teachers’ apprehensions and misconceptions about their initial teaching experiences begin to change. Usually, change involved teacher attempts to establish personal trusting relations.


An examination of adolescent perceptions of pedagogical caring in relation to motivation.

BETTER PRACTICE

Teachers who demonstrate fairness when they interact with students develop expectations for student behavior that derive from individual differences. They model a caring attitude and provide constructive feedback, creating an atmosphere that enriches and encourages learning.

Review of recent research that clarifies procedures contributing to effective teaching, including such verbal strategies as teacher talk time, strategy selection and sequencing, and nonverbal strategies.

Teachers who take courses in special education have more favorable attitudes toward teaching students with disabilities and are perceived as competent in implementing daily class objectives. Effective music teachers create opportunities for students to experience a variety of music cultures and thus incorporate many learning styles in their lessons.
The Reflective Teacher

**TheorY**
Studies suggest that teachers who use autobiographical reflection to examine their philosophy of teaching are able to integrate beliefs about what and how students should learn and how they should be evaluated. Transformative Learning Theory posits that everyone has opinions that spring from experience, values, thoughts, and insights. As transformative learners, educators examine their practices in new ways, question and revise their opinions, and base their actions on new perspectives.

**Better Practice**
Teachers who look to questioning as a learning tool, and are subsequently committed to ongoing inquiry in their content area, enable their students to become better thinkers and problem solvers.

Teachers who participate in focused reflection report a greater sense of efficacy in their work. Three commonly used reflective practices are teacher journals, videotaping, and teacher portfolios. Teacher journals can serve to document questions that arise while working with the learner. Portfolios and videotapes permit the teacher to trace development over time and to learn from peer discussion and each other’s experiences.

Research indicates that the ability to reflect enables the novice teacher to eventually become expert. Teacher educators who practice reflective teaching instruct methods classes, observe students as they practice teach, and then revise methods courses to be more effective. Studies suggest that reflective teachers and teacher educators give equal importance to the act of teaching and to subsequent thinking about teaching. They guide and expand, question and support, and challenge their students to produce self-reliant, reflective future teachers.

Teachers of reflective thinking strive to improve the process of inquiry of their students. Teachers who believe that knowledge is constructed by students and not given by teachers help reframe the concept of lesson planning to its reflective counterpart—lesson analysis. Peer assistance and think-aloud protocol sessions have contributed to developing ideas about effective teaching practices that reflect revised thinking. In these sessions, both teacher and students are paired with mentors or with partners to share changes in thinking related to classroom practice. Strategies for the reflective teacher include the following:

- participating in regular journal writing, using both focused questions and autobiographical entry
- videotaping and analyzing teaching and rehearsal segments
- creating a teaching portfolio of concert programs, model lesson plans, and original arrangements and compositions
- constructing, revising, and analyzing a working philosophy of music education
- participating in peer observation at workshops and through videotapes
- keeping a notebook or separate place in a journal for new ideas or inspirations
- mentoring a preservice or first-year teacher
- developing a relationship with a methods course instructor at a local university
- nurturing partnerships between schools and local universities.
The study found that videotaped and criterion-referenced evaluations were more meaningful than a written examination. Self- and peer evaluation during class was viewed as helpful for individuals to improve their skills. The videotape helped students visualize their performances better and assess their skills more accurately.

This form of evaluation had the following positive impact on teaching style:

1. The instructor got to know individual students through the midterm conferences.
2. The role of the instructor changed from the only reference for feedback on performance to one of several sources.
3. Use of this methodology provided more accurate and adequate feedback to students and a more defensible final evaluation.
4. Students became skilled at critiquing their own choreography and performance.

A multifaceted approach to designing and assessing a ballet class has positive implications for teaching and learning. The results of this study can benefit those considering ways of assessing a variety of dance forms.

Successful teachers thoughtfully define problems, spontaneously generate solutions, and satisfactorily evaluate them. The mark of success in such a teaching laboratory is not the most perfect musical product but the most thoughtful musical experience for all participants. (Gromko, 1995, p. 12)

REFERENCES


**Action Research**

**Theory**

Many teachers, as they face daily classroom problems, look into the success of certain approaches and how they spur student learning. Effective teachers continually seek ways to examine and improve their instructional practices, frequently by participating in action research.

How does action research differ from traditional research? In action research, teachers value insights into their own teaching practices. Action research proceeds differently from other research designs. It pursues a continuous cycle of reflecting, acting, and thinking as follows:

- identifying a problem that warrants action, and thinking about what would be different if the problem were solved
- stating the problem in terms that imply a goal and procedure, and thinking about what evidence is needed for a solution
- collecting the evidence, journaling, and reflecting with the use of questionnaires, interviews, observations, tests, surveys, note taking, student work, and audio- and videotaping
- examining, interpreting, organizing, and categorizing evidence to discover emerging patterns and themes
- asking new questions that arise from the data, taking action, and repeating the cycle.

Action research projects are not limited to an individual teacher in a single classroom setting. Often, projects are more beneficial when teams undertake them. For example, collaborative action research might involve several teachers, possibly across several classrooms, or a schoolwide action research project might involve an entire faculty and staff. Teachers might also consider sharing their stories and insights with colleagues by writing and publishing their research.

Teachers who desire to improve their teaching practices find action research well worth the time and effort. Action research can build teacher self-esteem and provide support, help, accountability, stimulation, and motivation.
For those of us who wish to challenge our teaching methodologies and the ways we evaluate student learning, conducting action research in our classrooms can lead to improving our professional skills as well as sharing our positive results as sources of information and inspiration for others.

(Rutkowski, 1996, p. 62)
Is an effective professional development activity one that is rated positively by participants in terms of satisfaction with the experience (often called the “happiness quotient”)? Most would agree that the standard must be much higher. Many educators are now advocating a direct link between the professional development experience and an observable impact in the classroom before the term “effective” can be applied.

(Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1998, p. 2)
THEORY
Music teachers spend much time preparing and delivering instruction. Because these activities can fully occupy teachers, they generally have little time available to reflect on teaching, interact with colleagues, and plan strategies to implement new approaches. While lack of time makes organized professional development all the more important, it is also a barrier to maximizing the benefits of professional development. Perhaps the first thing that school administrators and teachers must realize about professional development is that attending a professional development event does not necessarily produce the desired results.

The ultimate proof of a professional development program lies in its influence on student performance. It is not enough for teachers to conceptualize information about teaching; they must implement it successfully in their classroom practices, as determined by student achievement. Accordingly, the most effective professional development activities involve the teacher-participants in their own learning and provide them with supervised “hands-on” experiences in which they can receive feedback. Teachers must not only hear about a new educational approach, but they must also learn how to execute it. If they do not actually try it out during their training, they are unlikely to do so on their own.

Other important traits also characterize effective professional development. The best activities take place in school settings and tie in with other schoolwide programs or improvement efforts. Often, effective professional development allows teachers to select topics and to plan training activities. Perhaps most important, professional development programs should not consist of one-shot sessions; programs should be sustained and accompanied by continual support and resources.

When music teachers are allowed to choose their professional development activities, the following questions can guide their selection process: Does this activity reflect my musical and educational objectives for students? Does it involve applied and interactive teacher participation? Will my district or school provide ongoing support and other resources required by the approach that this activity promotes?

BETTER PRACTICE
Music teachers who participate in hands-on, sustained professional development can more effectively examine and improve their own teaching.

REFERENCE
Part of the By Request quarterly series that addresses current educational concerns and issues. It draws from a large body of research to suggest guidelines for making decisions about selecting, designing, and implementing effective professional development.


Effective policies and practices in the teaching profession. The importance of providing professional support to teachers during their early years, and ways to improve professional development practices, teacher accountability, and incentives.
Assessment

**THEORY**
With the implementation of Goals 2000, teachers are now designing curriculum for their own classrooms. The National Arts Education Standards of 1994, outlining what students should know and be able to do by the end of fourth, eighth, and 12th grades, offer guidelines for the states. Each state is in turn responsible for developing outcomes of education, and school districts develop methods of instruction and assessment.

A recently developed curriculum philosophy, “design-down curriculum,” allows the teacher to “focus down” on the student and “deliver up” to student needs. The approach has two components—setting an instructional goal and designing assessment. The design-down approach begins by identifying a goal of instruction, knowledge, or skill that the student will demonstrate as a result of instruction. The teacher then must define scoring criteria for evaluating the student response. Finally, the teacher must design assessment tasks to be scored by the established criteria that are an outcome of instruction. It is critical for the teacher to allow sufficient opportunity for skill mastery. Design-down curriculum adapts to the diverse population of students because it is student centered, the approach is flexible, and assessment can be aligned with instruction.

Assessment can be traditional, nontraditional, or authentic. Traditional assessments include paper-and-pencil tests, standardized tests, essays, and reports. Nontraditional assessments encompass demonstrations, performances, projects, interviews, story or text retelling, writing samples, and portfolios. Authentic assessments reflect the nature of the tested skills and involve multiple forms of measurements. An authentic assessment may include traditional and nontraditional assessments, rubrics, and constructed responses.

The goal of assessment is to improve learning. Appropriate, authentic assessment can improve learning in four ways:

- by enabling students to learn from their own experiences through the feedback that assessments provide
- by recognizing the multidimensional nature of learning through traditional and nontraditional measures of assessment
- by establishing a collaboration between student and teacher
- by helping students understand the purpose and need for assessment as an outgrowth of instruction.

Expanded assessment possibilities are developing at a time when diversity in student population, in student abilities, and in student backgrounds challenges teachers to provide adequate learning for all. With the focus on student achievement as measurable, authentic assessments can help the student and teacher improve teaching and learning.

**BETTER PRACTICE**
The goal of assessment is to improve learning. Assessment strategies have broadened beyond the traditional paper-and-pencil test. As a result of the standards movement, teachers are at the center of assessment development in the schools.
Assessment of student achievement plays a vital role in instruction. The main goal of assessment is to improve learning.

(Gronlund, 1998, Abstract)
Teacher Effectiveness

II. TEACHER STRATEGIES
- Preassessment of Student Knowledge
- Articulating Goals
- Motivational Feedback
- Critical Thinking: Musical Problem Solving
- Question-Answer Technique
- Modeling
- Teacher Verbal Instruction
- Repetition and Drill
Preassessment of Student Knowledge

THEORY
Teachers who consider student social and emotional development, as well as musical development, often begin a lesson by presenting a nonmusical preassessment activity, such as telling a story or inviting the student to take an imaginary journey. Preassessment activities engage the student and help the teacher who attempts to gauge the levels of student learning readiness. Research indicates that observing preschool-age students during play affords an important preassessment tool. Through this observation, the teacher will learn not only the student’s level in terms of music but also what the child values about music.

Music aptitude testing is considered to be a valid predictor of musical potential. Such evaluations can serve a number of functions, including predicting what the student can achieve at the time of testing and in the future and indicating whether the demonstrated ability results from formal training or from innate aptitude. According to Edwin Gordon’s Music Learning Theory, the best way to account for musical difference among children is to adapt musical guidance and instruction to individual musical strengths and weaknesses. A valid music aptitude test yields the best profile of each child’s musical potential.

Music Learning Theory also stresses Whole/Part/Whole sequence as a template to organize music content. Using this approach, the synthesis, or Whole stage, introduces or establishes the topic and what students know about it. This technique is useful in ensemble classes in which students play or listen to the entire piece of music to be learned. The instructor then makes comments and takes questions about the nature of the piece before proceeding to the rehearsal of its sections.

Studies recognize musical intelligence as one of several loosely related multiple intelligences to be considered in preassessment activities. Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences (MI) Theory stresses that the ability to perceive, conceptualize, manipulate through some performance medium, and respond to aural pitch and rhythm patterns is present in all music learners at different levels of musical intelligence. Research spotlights four stages of lessons that utilize MI Theory. The first involves awakening the intelligence through exercises and activities that make use of sensory bases, intuition, or metacognition.

Preassessment exercises for the music classroom involve Webbing or word wall games, stories, fantasy trips, singing games, edible props, K W L charts (What I Know, What I Want to Know and What I’ve Learned) in individual or cooperative groups, coffee-can theatre games, role playing, personal journal keeping, riddles, puzzles and brain teasers, music aptitude testing, and the Whole/Part/Whole (synthesis) approach to instruction.

BETTER PRACTICE
Teachers who recognize different levels of readiness and aptitude, accommodate many styles of learning, and offer both cooperative group and individual activities when they grant students an individualized entry point to music learning that enhances the learning environment.
The music children have within them, as well as their thoughts about music, are starting points for understanding their values, their knowledge, and their needs.

(Campbell, 1998, p. 5)
Articulating Goals

THEORY
There are two types of goals: behavioral and expressive. A behavioral goal defines specific objectives. Behavioral goals increase understanding of music concepts. Listening to a performance for a particular quality, such as crescendo or decrescendo, presents an example of a behavioral goal. Expressive goals relate to experience from which each individual may draw different conclusions. Outcomes of expressive goals, dealing with individual reactions, are not measurable. Expressive goals lead to higher levels of thinking. Learning to listen to music for its aesthetic qualities offers an example of an expressive goal.

BETTER PRACTICE
Effective teachers clearly articulate their instructional goals to their students.

Music teachers use both verbal and nonverbal goal articulation strategies. Verbal imagery is a highly effective method for helping students understand a desired outcome. By contrast, many effective teachers use nonverbal methods of goal articulation. Modeling—teacher demonstration followed by student imitation—is a form of nonverbal goal articulation. Modeling helps students discriminate between desired and undesired musical effects like precise attacks as opposed to sloppy articulation. Modeling can be the prelude to independent learning.

Effective teachers relate learning outcomes to the student’s experience and devise strategies for monitoring and improving learning. They use language that suits the age and learning levels of the class. Strategies for improving learning might include keeping a notebook, reviewing the lesson at home, and developing organizational ideas. In the choir class, the teacher could help students identify recurring musical ideas to link learning from one section of a composition to another.

Effective teachers set goals for themselves in teaching. They review the daily lesson outside of class, evaluating both successful and unsuccessful strategies. They may find it necessary to modify the teaching plan. Teachers can develop insights into practice through keeping a reflective journal.

Teachers promote learning by communicating to their students just what is expected and why.

(Porter & Brophy, 1988, p. 78)

REFERENCES


A review of the literature on general music teaching highlights both positive and negative findings of general music teaching.
Motivational Feedback

**Theory**
When teachers give students specific positive information about performance and specific ways for them to improve, they promote growth. This type of verbal feedback helps students know what they are doing well and what changes would benefit them. Some researchers have found that music teachers often tend to be more disapproving than approving. They are inclined to be more specific with disapproval and more general with approval. Music teachers help students improve their skills if they give specific feedback when approving their performances, as well as specific feedback when suggesting improvement or correction. Specific approval encourages student attention and positive attitudes.

Recent studies have found additional evidence for the value of approval feedback. Secondary choral students gave their perceptions of effective versus ineffective feedback, assigning the highest value to approval feedback that focused on student improvement and the least value to feedback that compared their accomplishments with those of other students. A study involving nine elementary music specialists who were judged “excellent” revealed that they used a higher rate of approval feedback than disapproval feedback. They also used specific feedback more often than general feedback.

Research studies that support specific approval feedback focus on elementary general music classrooms, private instrumental lessons, and secondary band and chorus groups. All types of music instruction benefit from positive and specific feedback.

**Better Practice**
Teachers use many motivational strategies, such as encouragement, high expectations, peer modeling, group experiences, and specific feedback. Specific feedback has been found to be especially important in music learning contexts.

*They (excellent music teachers) reinforced students most frequently by approving their academic performance—verbal, nonverbal, and musical—with specific feedback* (Hendel, 1995, p. 196).

**References**

Music educators tend to be more specific when giving disapproval and more general when giving approval.


The teaching characteristics of nine excellent elementary general music teachers.


Sequence of instruction and the use of specific feedback when suggesting improvement.


The identification and description of characteristics of effective teaching in the piano studio.


Teacher use of approval and disapproval and its relationship with student learning outcomes in a secondary choral setting.
Critical Thinking: Musical Problem Solving

THEORY
Students are better able to think critically in music when they have a broad base of musical knowledge and experience. They can analyze and invent musical works. Teachers can encourage students to build a knowledge base. The skill of critical thinking can transfer to other subject areas, and the skills and strategies of critical thinking can become automatic.

Several barriers limit use of critical thinking skills. Musical biases develop within people, hampering their open-minded exploration of music. Groups of people tend to expect a certain amount of conformity and sometimes exert pressure on individuals to conform. Critical thinking in music requires the courage to take risks, think for oneself, and choose one’s own musical course of action.

How can teachers encourage critical thinking in music?
Teachers can create an environment in which students feel comfortable exploring new musical material and making judgments about their compositions, where they can value and model critical thinking. The ultimate goal is to encourage students to think for themselves about musical preferences and ideas. Students can record their performances and work on solutions to musical problems. Music teachers can provide specific and positive feedback, giving advice when asked. Students can discuss their views of compositions or style and explain their beliefs. Teachers can introduce music that is challenging, requiring students to rethink their ideas. They can pose questions to lead students to discover aspects of compositions. They can ask questions that will help students discover relationships among compositions. They can have students write journals and share their thoughts with others in small groups. Critical thinking through musical problem solving can access higher-order thinking skills.

BETTER PRACTICE
Music teachers can offer students opportunities to develop critical thinking ability through musical problem solving. Musical problem solving involves musical independence and initiative.
Ultimately, the best advice for music teachers is that they teach for critical thinking. This means that they must help students explore the world of musical beliefs and practices by continually exposing them to new musical experiences and ideas that present some reasonable degree of challenge to what they already believe. Moreover, teachers must provide students with ample opportunity to explain, discuss, and logically justify their musical beliefs. The more critical thinking is successfully initiated and carried through to its logical conclusion, the more likely it is to become a habitual and enduring part of the personality and belief system of the individual.

(Woodford, 1996, pp. 31-32)

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Watkins, R. (1996). Nonperformance time use in high school choral rehearsals: A follow-up study. Update: Applications of Research in Music Education, 14 (2), 4-8. The relationship between the amount of time choral directors spent in nonperformance activities, the amount of time spent in developing higher-order thinking skills, and years of teaching experience.


Of the several techniques that music educators commonly use—modeling, demonstrating, lecturing, and drawing analogies—the technique most likely to engage students’ full attention and lead to the deepest thinking and sensitivity is high-level questioning in the cognitive and affective domains.

(Kassner, 1998, p. 33)
Question-Answer Technique

The simplest form of question-answer technique, used during and after an explanation, requires the student to repeat or interpret what was said. This verifies how an explanation has been heard and processed mentally, indicating the attentiveness of the listener and the extent to which he or she can remember verbal details and maintain sequence. Questions used in conjunction with explanations repeat the data to help students assimilate the knowledge in a new varietal approach.

The more complex form of question-answer technique requires the teacher to act as guide. Careful questioning leads students to answers that demand thought and consideration of prior knowledge in new ways. They must search for the answer, rather than repeat one previously given. This form of question-answer technique promotes individual thinking, develops problem-solving skill, and teaches students how to analyze and judge various situations. Cause and effect are easily explored.

Teachers should use wait time of at least three seconds between question and response. Wait time of five seconds after the response will give students the opportunity to develop answers more fully. Questions should be asked before a student is called upon to answer. Teachers can involve all students better if they call on students who do not raise their hands. Some teachers employ a system using cards with student names on them. They call on the student whose card is on top, then shuffle the card into the pack. The teacher who can develop the art of skillful questioning can help nurture personal satisfaction in students, which builds self-esteem.

Better Practice
Teachers who employ the question-answer technique promote learning because students strive to think and find answers independently.

Better Music Education

References
Methods of instructional delivery and instructional management, particularly in terms of proper planning procedures, implementation of plans, modeling, diagnosis of student performance, and problem solving for both the teacher and the student.

Joy in discovering all that is new and different in the world through self-motivating learning is the focus of this wonderfully enlightening account of how children teach themselves.

Attitude affects how much is learned in any one way. A student’s attitude is greatly affected by the teacher’s attitude and approach.

The necessity to make students musical thinkers, not musical robots.

The basics of creativity and critical thinking and the need to teach definitive skills.

Teachers who ask effective and carefully crafted questions may help students improve their learning performance.

This analysis of questioning and responding techniques serves as a follow-up to the article in the previous issue by the same author.
Modeling

**Theory**

Modeling and demonstration constitute a widely used teaching tool in instrumental, vocal, and general music. It is an especially useful teaching strategy in music performance training. A teacher might perform a musical excerpt to demonstrate a particular musical concept (e.g., legato articulation) or expressive performance convention (e.g., “tapering the phrase”). The teacher may then ask students to imitate the style or expression of the modeled performance. It is assumed, and generally supported by research, that young music students must have an aural image of a musical concept before they really understand it, and that their imitative performance of quality aural models precedes the development of their own performance techniques.

In addition to music performance instruction, modeling is an important component of effective general music education, and it is seen in the rote techniques of the Orff-Schulwerk and the Kodály approaches. The success of such approaches, as well as the enjoyment they bring to young students, may derive from modeling. Research suggests that effective teachers spend more time demonstrating and modeling than less effective teachers. Also, many music students report a preference for instruction that consists of more musical content and modeling than verbal explanation.

While some music teachers may contend that aural modeling is more effective than verbal instruction in teaching music, research suggests that the two approaches should be used to complement each other. Modeling is especially effective for teaching musical discriminations to students. For example, young students would not learn to discriminate between musical timbres based solely on a teacher’s verbal descriptions such as dark, brilliant, or thin. One purpose of music education is to teach terminology that describes musical sound, and only verbal instruction can achieve this. Verbal communication can supply students with necessary listening cues before hearing a model, and can provide a means for teachers to ensure that students accurately perceive the focal aspects of models.

**Better Practice**

Teachers of all grade levels and music subject areas can use aural modeling and demonstration to effectively teach musical concepts and performance techniques.

**References**


Children are natural imitators regardless of the quality of the model; therefore, in a sophisticated art form such as music, modeling can greatly affect the quality of the learning. (Tait, 1992, p. 528)
Teacher Verbal Instruction

Theory

It is estimated that at least one-third of student time in music classes is occupied by the teacher’s verbal communication. In some classrooms, that amount of time can be well over half. Research generally indicates that teacher verbal usage does not correlate with increased student learning. In fact, more experienced teachers tend to talk less than inexperienced teachers.

In addition to eliminating unnecessary verbalization, experienced music teachers strive to make verbal instruction more illustrative, clear, and interactive. When teachers use descriptive musical language that is technical, conceptual, or metaphoric, they must be careful to use only terminology that students understand. For example, students would be unable to respond to their teacher’s instruction to make a performance “more legato” or “more flowing” if they could not define the terms.

Questioning students can help them interpret verbal information. Useful strategies include rhetorical questioning, informal surveying (“Raise your hand if you think . . .”), and guided questioning (i.e., presenting information to the class through correct answers to focused questions by the teacher). Feedback to student performers is especially critical to music ensemble directors. Research has shown positive feedback, or approval based on appropriate music behavior, to be more effective in promoting student learning.

Teacher verbal instruction in music classes is most effective when it falls in the teaching cycle consisting of teacher presentation of a task, student response or performance of the task, and specific feedback from the teacher. When teachers continually complete these sequential patterns of instruction, their verbal instruction tends to be more efficient because it is directed toward students’ musical learning, as indicated by their performance.

Verbal strategies [tend] to be too generalized and teacher initiated for depth of interaction and communication. The challenge is to use words that enliven and enrich the musical experience. (Tait, 1992, p. 528)

Better Practice

Verbal instruction is most effective in promoting learning when it is concise, engaging, illustrative, and directed toward student musical behavior.

References


Instrumental music rehearsals were videotaped and analyzed according to several factors of interest. The experienced ensemble directors in the study led more diversified rehearsing and talked less in rehearsals.


The researcher videotaped and analyzed the rehearsals of band directors of different competency levels (expert, novice, and student teacher). Expert directors tended to use more specific questioning and complete more “sequential patterns of instruction.”


Undergraduate music education majors were trained to recognize and reward appropriate student behavior during music instruction. The authors conclude that positive teacher feedback to appropriate student behavior is most effective.


The importance for music teachers of completing sequential patterns of instruction, which include academic task presentation to students, student response, and teacher feedback.

Tait, M. (1992). Teaching strategies and styles. In R. Colwell (Ed.), Handbook of research on music teaching and learning (pp. 525-534). New York: Schirmer. A review of research on various approaches and methods of teaching music. Tait discusses nonverbal strategies (e.g., aural and physical modeling) and differentiates among several types of verbal instruction.
Repetition and Drill

Theory
Singing, playing musical instruments, creating dance movements, and reading notation require various types of automaticity. It is essential to attain the speed needed to perform and read music with meaning and accuracy. Careful drill offers the means of achieving this automaticity. Tasks must be reduced to small components, learned correctly, and repeated until they can be performed quickly and with little thought. These small parts can combine into larger parts for practice until they become automatic. It is important for music teachers to remember that the ability to read notation is a separate task from the physical manipulation of musical instruments and from singing. Sight-reading is a skill that requires much drill to become automatic.

Optimum learning takes place when new skills are repeated at least three times. Repetition should occur 10 minutes after a skill is learned. The skill should be repeated again with an intense session of drill within 24 hours. The skill should then be reviewed and repeated within a week. The building of multiple skills in music is most efficient when students practice their skills daily, carefully repeating the skills that are not yet automatic.

Better Practice
Musical skill development requires students to master automaticity—the ability to perform a task through repetition and drill without thinking consciously about it.

The mastery of any skill—whether a routine daily task or a highly refined talent—depends on the ability to perform it unconsciously with speed and accuracy while consciously carrying on other brain functions. (Bloom, 1986, p. 70)

References
The automatic nature of many tasks involved in learning and functioning in various disciplines.
Topics Related to the Essential Learner Outcomes

**Outcome I:**
Perceiving, Performing, and Responding—Aesthetic Education

- Singing
- Sight-Singing
- Playing Instruments: Instrumental Music Classes
- Playing Instruments: General Music Classes
- Movement
- Music Reading
Singing

**Theory**

Singing is one of the most basic performing skills. Children can be taught to sing accurately. Teachers who encourage singing skill help students participate in and perpetuate their rich musical heritage. Students also develop understanding of history and culture.

Before students can learn to sing in rounds or in harmony, they need to be able to sing in tune, discriminate between pitches, internalize melodies, and keep the beat. Singing offers the most effective means for teachers to evaluate whether students are processing tonal information accurately.

Teaching students to sing accurately presents several challenges. Inaccurate singing results most likely from poor pitch discrimination, inadequate pitch production, poor pitch monitoring, or lack of motivation. Intonation problems can be solved with training in unified vowel formation, tension control, proper posture, and breath management.

Children tend to match pitch best from child to child. The next best model is female and piano to child, followed by male and piano to child. The use of male falsetto to help students match pitch continues to be studied. Success depends on the particular situation. Younger students sing more accurately in unison with their peers, rather than individually. Girls tend to sing more accurately than boys.

Participation in singing activities tends to decrease with age, especially for boys. All children entering adolescence experience a vocal change. At this point, vocal ranges are the most crucial consideration. Effective teachers select songs with appropriate vocal ranges and make musical accommodations as necessary.

Most teachers of young students present rote teaching of songs. Studies have shown that immersion is more effective than phrase-by-phrase rote teaching. Teachers who introduce the piece in its entirety before students begin singing foster success because they provide global understanding of the song. Orff and Kodály approaches are recommended to improve reading skills, even through high school.

**Better Practice**

Teachers who engage students in singing activities grant them a lifelong skill of musical expression.
We should be concerned that we have raised a generation of young people who are unfamiliar with the rich song heritage that America has to offer. Our people have been musically silent for too long now, and that silence is becoming deafening.

(Elliott, 1990, p. 27)
Sight-Singing

**Theory**

It is important that students learn to hear music before reading it. The approaches of Orff, Dalcroze, and Kodály focus on experiencing musical concepts that lead to music reading and sight-singing. Although these methods predominate at the elementary level, it has been shown that they are valuable for middle school and high school students as well.

Sight-singing is usually considered an appropriate skill for middle and high school choruses. Elementary students, however, need to begin honing ear training, sight-singing, and notational skills. First-grade students have the most difficulty in reading notation, possibly because they are still learning the left-to-right orientation of reading. From the second grade on, students are capable of learning to read and sight-sing appropriate melodies.

At the middle school level, research has shown that students are more successful when taught and tested with melodies isolated from the harmonic context. Adding vocal harmony to sight-singing examples increases difficulty. Higher pitches are the easiest to hear and match in the early stages of ear training. Later, lower pitches can be added. The most difficult pitch to hear in a chord is the middle note in three-part harmony.

For high school choirs, individual testing has been shown to be an effective means of improving individual sight-singing performance in a group. One example for implementation is to send a student to a private room with a tape recorder. On tape, the student should state his or her name, establish key and tempo, and sight-sing the assigned example. The teacher then evaluates the tape.

**Better Practice**

*Teachers who engage students in daily sight-singing activities encourage musical literacy, musical independence, and self-esteem.*
REFERENCES


Research on sight-singing at the secondary level, 1940-1996. Studies are divided into two categories—descriptive and predictive studies—focusing on instructional time, methods, materials, and achievement.


The efficiency of individual testing for sight-singing skills. Findings indicated that students who were continually tested individually showed more improvement than the students receiving sight-singing instruction alone.


Middle school choral students, with sight-singing examples of melody alone. Students had increased difficulty sight-singing in vocal harmony.


Given harmonic patterns, students were able to match the upper pitch easily, the lowest pitch with a little difficulty, and the middle pitch with greatest difficulty.


Rhythm patterns for first-, third-, and fifth-grade students through various combinations of modalities. Third- and fifth-grade students taught through a combination of modalities demonstrated success. For first-grade students, the visual method was not as successful as aural and kinesthetic methods.


Strategies for incorporating sight-singing in the rehearsal. It also provides a sample activity for teaching rhythm.


Songs, activities, and games presented to individuals or small groups of kindergartners throughout an entire year have a positive effect on the development of the singing voice.


No significant difference between echo responses using solfège, hand signs, and a neutral syllable, more correct responses to a female model, and more correct responses for eighth graders than kindergartners, but not eighth graders and students at other grade levels.

Just as learning to speak preceded learning to read, so aural skills need to precede visual learning in sight-singing instruction.

(Phillips, 1996, p. 32)
Playing Instruments: Instrumental Music Classes

**Theory**
Instruction in instrumental music is most effective when it applies sound educational principles. Foremost, instrumental music teachers must afford students ample opportunity to respond to musical instruction (i.e., play their instruments), and feedback must follow performance. A band director’s instruction to the trumpet section to “articulate more staccato” should immediately lead to performance, which should bring feedback about the quality of the staccato articulation. By emphasizing student performance and immediate feedback, more experienced music teachers give only a few items of instruction at one time and spend less time talking during rehearsal. Teachers enhance learning in large ensemble classes when they listen to individuals or small groups of students and give specific performance feedback accordingly.

**Better Practice**
*Instrumental music education is most effective when teachers direct a variety of in-class music learning exercises and instruct students to practice outside of class.*

Variety also figures critically in quality instruction. Experienced instrumental music teachers seek a varied selection by choosing music material of different styles or by including a fun piece that is more immediately accessible and enjoyable. Experienced teachers also tend to spend more class time on performance activities other than preparing concert music; such exercises include warm-ups, scale practice, rhythm and intonation exercises, and sight-reading. Teachers who direct nonperformance activities further promote comprehensive musicianship. Listening to recordings of instrumental music is a valuable approach. Music learning can be supplemented with singing, composition, and learning the societal role of music and its relation to other art forms. Research suggests that variety in music ensemble classes can add to student learning and motivation with no appreciable loss in performance quality.

Effective instrumental music teachers spend class time training and encouraging students to engage in individual practice at home. Music researchers offer convincing evidence that formal individual practice is the most important contributor to music performance achievement. Practice is most effective for students when they have specific goals and when they carefully monitor their own progress during practice sessions. These factors distinguish productive drill in practice from mindless repetition. Such practice strategies do not come naturally to young musicians, but music educators can bolster them in several ways. Teachers can identify practice goals for students by giving specific “homework assignments.” They can also involve parents in supervising home practice; parents need not be musicians themselves to provide valuable structure and direction to their children’s practice. Because practice is not an inherently gratifying activity, instrumental music classes should provide incentives, perhaps playing tests, graded practice logs, or other achievement rewards.
References


Blocher, L., Greenwood, R., & Shellahamer, B. (1997). Teaching behaviors of middle and high school band directors in the rehearsal setting. Journal of Research in Music Education, 45(3), 457-469. Rehearsal time spent in conceptual music teaching. The researchers suggest that band directors should go beyond equipping students with the specific skills needed for the next performance and assist them in understanding more generalized musical concepts.


Price, H. E. (1983). The effect of conductor academic task presentation, conductor reinforcement, and ensemble practice on performers’ musical achievement, attentiveness, and attitude. Journal of Research in Music Education, 31(4), 245-257. Appropriate approving or disapproving feedback as they affect ensemble performance. The attitude of the college students in the ensemble was also highest with the presence of this complete “teaching unit” (teacher instruction—student response—teacher feedback).


Experienced teachers tend to get on task quickly, spend more time in warm-up, balance the rehearsal time between two musical selections followed by a third “fun” piece or sight-reading, [and] use more nonverbal modeling.

(Goolsby, 1996, p. 300)
Playing Instruments: General Music Classes

**Theory**

Effective general music education involves students in varied music activities. In addition to singing, movement, listening, and composition, students should play instruments in general music classes. Traditional instrumental exercises include playing nonpitched percussion instruments, recorders, and melody bells. Diatonic tonebar instruments, popularized by the Orff-Schulwerk approach, afford valuable performance experiences.

Musical instrument performances lend themselves to teaching certain musical concepts. For example, rhythmic concepts of beat, ostinato, and subdivision can be effectively illustrated and experienced with hand drums, wood blocks, and other nonpitched percussion instruments. Similarly, concepts related to pitch, melody, and harmony can be taught through student performance on recorders and tonebar instruments. Keyboard percussion instruments (e.g., melody bells and xylophones) are particularly illustrative because of the physical layout of available tones. The visual element assists in teaching highness and lowness of pitch, and melodic steps and leaps.

**Better Practice**

General music learning activities should include playing musical instruments, which contributes to conceptual learning, skill development, and attitude development.

In addition to purely musical outcomes, playing instruments can contribute to perceptual motor and psychomotor development. Perceptual motor development (gross muscle movement) is perhaps most important for very young or physically challenged students. These skills develop through simple percussion strokes and other movements common in general music classes. Psychomotor development (cognitively involved skilled movement) occurs with virtually all instrumental music experiences.

Research also suggests that playing musical instruments has a positive influence on the attitudes of general music students. Among the variety of music learning activities typically included in classes, students often report instrumental performance as one of their favorites. In addition to improving attitudes toward music and music classes, playing musical instruments helps students develop self-confidence in musical ability. Attitudes improve when general music classes—especially at the secondary level—cover alternate instrumental components such as instruction in guitar or electronic keyboard and popular music styles.
Structured movement experiences help increase understanding of musical concepts. For example, the most effective way for a student to learn beat is by feeling the beat through locomotor or non-locomotor movement [e.g., playing instruments].

(Cutietta, Hamann, & Walker, 1995, p. 45)
There are many ways to demand students’ attention, but—and I cannot stress this too much—the teacher who uses the least amount of talking and the greatest amount of physical movement and music making (by both the teacher and students) greatly increases the students’ level of attention.

(Caldwell, 1993, p. 27)
**Movement**

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**THEORY**
Teachers who use physical activities in the classroom help students experience abstract concepts in meaningful, concrete ways. Through movement, students can learn to perform, create, and respond to music as they internalize concepts and skills. Movement requires full participation, capturing the attention and efforts of the student. Movement is a tool for expression that helps students with weak verbal skills. It also nurtures emotions and attitudes that have no language counterpart.

Students can respond to music with various movement activities—improvised movement, singing games and traditional dances, moving appropriately to beat, tempo and other rhythmic characteristics, demonstrating repetition and contrast, conducting in various meters, and interpreting different styles of music. Research findings indicate that movement exercises increase understanding of rhythm and expression for all ages and performing groups.

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**BETTER PRACTICE**

*Teachers who present movement activities encourage students to holistically engage in the learning experience.*

Younger children are more successful with large motor coordination. Fine motor skills may be developed with finger plays to prepare for playing instruments. Younger students can grasp abstract concepts like high and low with their bodies, or a complex jazz rhythm performed with body percussion, or tempo that they feel while walking to the beat as they sing.

Middle school, high school, and adult students can also benefit from movement techniques. Large-scale movements help relax muscles for tone production, can delineate the line of musical phrases, and graphically illustrate musical structure and sound quality. Movement in a choral setting can help energize the sound and increase breath control. Small movements develop muscular independence and coordination for instrumental study.

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**REFERENCES**

Principles of Dalcroze eurhythmics and the challenges and learning problems facing contemporary music educators.

Movement as a rehearsal technique for high school choirs has a positive impact on tempo, balance/blend, and attitude.

Historical introduction to the work of Emile Jaques-Dalcroze. Mead presents a short biography and a description of Dalcroze’s development of eurhythmics.

Observation of a movement activity in a preschool music class. She provides an insightful description of the conditions, interactions, and outcomes arising from the observation.

Physical-conditioning exercises as part of the breath management training for students in grades 2, 3, and 4. Results showed improvement in breathing technique, vocal range, vocal intensity, and pitch accuracy.

Psychomotor instruction group demonstrates improved breath support, breath control, range, and pitch accuracy.
Music Reading

Theory
The many parallels between music reading and language reading include auditory, visually discriminatory, mentally associative, and eye-motor coordination skills. The acts of reading music and words both involve scanning the page from left to right followed by a return sweep of the eyes. The process continues from the top to the bottom of the page. The goal of language reading is literacy, but literacy in music reading is not so clearly defined.

Eye movements play a part in music reading. Less skilled readers spend more time looking at notes of longer duration. More skilled readers take in groups of notes (patterns) and are more likely to look ahead in the musical score. This habit, called “chunking,” explains how trained readers can process information more quickly.

Better Practice

As students become more skilled in music reading, they take in groups of notes (patterns) and are more likely to look ahead in the musical score.

Using multiple methods of presentation increases music reading skill. Computer-assisted instruction, coupled with teacher explanation and auditory presentations, and then combined with visual presentations, helps students learn more quickly and with greater retention of patterns. Mnemonic devices create another way to link together known and unknown material. Composing, performing, and listening lead to improved music reading.

Rhythm is more difficult to grasp in the visual form than melody. Rhythmic factors are more likely to limit the rate and accuracy of reading than melodic factors. Study results show that training can improve the kinesthetic response to rhythm.

Some students have difficulty learning to read music. Alternative forms of notation may help students who struggle with learning to read music the traditional way. In many of today’s classrooms, guitar players use tablature, a notation scheme especially suited to the six-stringed instrument. A variety of musical representations in computer sequencing and notation software packages do not require knowledge of traditional music notation.

Some general findings from research suggest the following guidelines for developing music reading skills: Use more than one mode of presentation; couple the visual rhythmic pattern with the sound; devise simplified systems to represent rhythms to help students internalize patterns; dedicate time to the task; and design instruction for a specific classroom, taking student interest into account. The rhythmic learning systems of Dalcroze, Kodály, and Gordon provide valuable approaches for organizing instruction.
REFERENCES

Philosophical study of the term “musical literacy,” the meaning of reading music, and the intrinsic benefits of reading music.

An experiment to improve rhythm sight-singing. Students in the experimental group received specific instruction and practice in rhythmic playing and reading. Results indicate that the experimental group scored significantly better than the control group.

Computer-Assisted Program in Error Detection (CA-PED) as an effective method for developing that skill in college music education majors through a comparison with an effective error detection program, the Program in Error Detection (PED). Results indicated significant gains in error detection in both groups.

Historical review of notation. Several alternative systems of notation are outlined.

Six parameters of the eye movements of graduate music students measured with SRI Eyetracker. The less skilled music readers spent more time looking at notes of long duration than more skilled music readers who moved quickly from long notes to the next pattern of music.

Two beginning public school elementary string classes. A significant difference in favor of the experimental group on the music reading and sight-singing tasks supports the researcher’s hypothesis that reading instruction that focuses on whole-to-part strategies can facilitate music reading skill.

Basic research on music reading, applied research on music reading, and commentary on music reading research.

The effect of three rhythm presentation modalities on the recall of rhythm patterns of first-, third-, and fifth-grade children. Children were tested using visual, auditory, and kinesthetic input. Findings suggest that using multiple learning modalities in teaching style can result in more effective music learning.

The effects of aural and visual approaches to rhythm reading and short-term retention. Second- and sixth-grade students were presented with rhythm patterns in four modes. Results indicated that the simultaneous use of auditory and visual channels facilitated learning and retention of rhythms at both grade levels.

Experienced music readers read ahead of the point of performance in units or chunks. This “previewing” allows the eye to fixate on structurally important features, such as chords... and skip over less important details.

(Hodges, 1992, p. 466)
Topics Related to the Essential Learner Outcomes

OUTCOME II: HISTORICAL, CULTURAL, AND SOCIAL CONTEXT
**THEORY**

Presenting repertoire arising from numerous cultural groups can teach students who the music-makers are, where they live, how they dress, and what they think about the music they perform. Studies suggest that selecting repertoire with consideration for direct analogies to the lives of students can lead students to make value judgments about the music and can help them understand the role that music plays in their lives.

**BETTER PRACTICE**

* Teachers who stress cultural-contextual information that offers comprehensive, integrated, and interdisciplinary experience help students understand that the meaning of music and the other arts is culturally relative.

Effective teachers select repertoire and teaching materials that allow students to perceive how the music relates to their life experiences, drawing repertoire from the various cultural groups within the school community. Cultural brokers or informants can introduce and reinforce knowledge about the music and culture. They use audio and video recreations of music and performances of native artists to enhance understanding and to illustrate the deep connections between music and its social and cultural contexts.

Drawing comparisons between art forms across cultures is an important aspect of music teaching. Research indicates that analysis of music traditions for their shared elements with other traditions should proceed cautiously and recognize that music consists of features that appear in cross-cultural contexts. For example, students can be made aware that aspects of aural learning, imitation, and improvisation play a role in a number of world music cultures.

Teachers who stress historical perspective in the development of a particular concept, event, or instrument help students blend previous knowledge with informed cultural inquiry. Pointing out that Gregorian chant bears a relationship to Middle Eastern cantillation can be a starting point for musical learning. In another example, Fowler (1993) notes that Marian Anderson's 1939 Easter Sunday concert at the Lincoln Memorial is an example of how music reflects its time and circumstance.
REFERENCES

The importance of understanding music as a human capability and its potential as an intellectual and affective force in human communication, society, and culture. Blacking proposes that educators could use music to enhance general education and to help build peaceful, prosperous societies.

Three realities that Fowler perceives as obstacles that compromise American music education. Elliott proposes a value-centered music education that enhances the prospects of music in society and education.

Ways to integrate non-Western elements into standard music appreciation survey courses. Huang notes that exploring cross-relationships between Western and non-Western music forms is an effort to become sensitive to the richness and complexity of history.

Music teaching and learning reflecting a cross-cultural awareness through study, observation, and research. Emphasis of the text extends to the aural and creative components of music teaching and learning as part of a shared human phenomenon.

American society, its schools and musical traditions favored by newer Americans of various ethnic and cultural traditions. Campbell raises some challenges educators face in considering these traditions and poses possible solutions that musicians and educators may adopt in teaching the world’s musical traditions.

The backlash of the multiculturalism movement. Campbell notes that the maintenance of the disciplinary core of music is central to the mission of music educators. She suggests that political correctness interferes with our efforts as musicians and teachers.

Ways of building context in the multicultural music education curriculum. She notes that context building requires matching the content of the curriculum to the life experiences of the students.

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One of the great attributes of all music and all the arts is that they characterize their age, distinguishing our relationship to time by showing us as we were yesterday and as we are today.

(Fowler, 1993, p.17)
Topics Related to the Essential Learner Outcomes

**OUTCOME III: CREATIVE EXPRESSION AND PRODUCTION**

- Environments Conducive to Learning
- Improvisation
- Composition
Environments Conducive to Learning

**THEORY**

Teachers know that critical thinking is important for students to develop and refine their skills, and that encouragement provides a positive experience. Certain assessment practices block creativity. The goal of assessment should be improvement, rather than criticism. Students need to be part of the assessment process. Students can learn to devise multiple solutions, choose and refine ideas, and develop reflective skills. Checklists and rating scales can be useful. Oral or written peer and teacher responses also play a role. Portfolios, in the form of recordings, can show progress. Performance of the creative product may be the most valuable approach to assessment.

**BETTER PRACTICE**

- Teachers who provide positive and supportive environments help students feel sufficiently secure to create and share their musical ideas.

  
  
  **A positive, reinforcing, and accepting climate is a basic ingredient necessary for nurturing creative behavior.**

  (Webster & Hickey, 1995, p. 7)

**REFERENCES**


Improvisation

THEORY
Students can approach improvisational activities by relaxing, listening, and thinking. They explore the instrument silently, visually—touching and looking at it. They can begin to explore the sounds of the instrument. Children put the sounds together into patterns as they continue to explore. The patterns can be tonal as well as rhythmic. Students develop a vocabulary of patterns by imitating the teacher and each other, and by experimenting. They begin to organize the patterns.

In the next step of development, students apply the melodic or rhythmic organizational structure. They might play or sing their patterns with a steady beat or in a certain meter. Their melodic patterns can be in a major or minor tonality. As students master the ability to perform these patterns automatically, they do not have to think much about the fingering or about manipulating the instrument. They perform the patterns smoothly, and patterns flow from one to the next with melodic and rhythmic variation.

Playing automatically allows the students to concentrate on larger structures. Students can apply the patterns to various forms such as ABA, rondo, and theme and variations. At this level of development, students enjoy sharing their improvisations with others. Teachers can encourage students to think of style. Teacher modeling and the use of recordings can introduce students to various improvisational styles. Advanced students may invent their own styles.

Improvisation is not simply an intuitive musical behavior, nor is it only an activity reserved for the most proficient musicians. It is both, and improvisation can and should be a meaningful part of every student’s music education, from preschool through adulthood. (Kratus, 1991, p. 40)

REFERENCES
Discussion of the importance of teaching improvisation. An introduction to the focus of this issue of the MEJ on improvisation.

Dalcroze specialist offers ideas on teaching performing musicians to be improvisers.


Musical characteristics of the improvisations of young children.

Student experiments with sound, rhythm, language, visual stimuli, and form can lay the groundwork for creative improvisation.

The phenomenon of improvisation and suggestions for a learning sequence.

A systematic approach for organizing students’ creative learning in music.
Composition

Theory
In music composition activities, effective teachers guide students in using the musical knowledge they bring to the classroom. Teachers can design composition assignments with minimal restrictions, focusing on musical, rather than extra musical, aspects of the task. Students can develop ideas for their compositions from basic musical elements such as style, texture, and expressiveness. It is best to provide broad parameters. The teacher may specify a form such as AB or ABAB, a metric design like a drum part that moves in fives, a textural structure like a round or a melody with accompaniment, or a series of chords to which the student sings or plays a melody. Conversely, giving students a rhythm or melodic pattern from which to work may hamper their natural creativity.

Another impediment to creativity is notation. When faced with the requirement to notate, children simplify their musical ideas, making it easier to notate them. Children who practice and refine their compositions will remember them without writing them down. They can record their compositions to store them.

Better Practice
Composition requires planning beyond improvisation and spontaneity. It involves developing the ability to replicate a performance. Teachers need to plan and carry out compositional exercises that nurture student originality.

Teachers should respond to student compositions in a manner that validates the students’ work. Depending on the strengths or weaknesses of the compositions, teachers can modify the curriculum and spur the musical independence of their students.

References
A guide for teachers to help them understand the creative process in order to set instructional and behavioral objectives.

Compositional experiences to foster creative processes and augment teachers’ assessment efforts.


One student’s performing, creating, and listening experiences in a fifth-grade general music classroom over a period of five months.

Strategies that seemed to follow a pattern of moving from whole to part and back to whole, used by children who were successful in completing class assignments. There were very few instances of random exploration.

Identification of important trends influential in the cognitive processing of two children during performing, creating, and listening experiences.
Students need opportunities to make music on their own—without unnecessary teacher controls. If we offer our students such opportunities, we will see them soar in ways none may have thought possible.

(Wiggins, 1999, p. 35)
Topics Related to the Essential Learner Outcomes

OUTCOME IV: AESTHETIC CRITICISM

Aesthetic Criticism
Aesthetic Criticism

THEORY
Aestheticicians ask questions such as: What is a work of art? How does one relate to a work of art? Are there universal aesthetic criteria? Maxine Greene asks, "What is it about the 'Ode to Joy' that makes me feel as if I am coming in touch with some transcendent reality" (Greene, 1991, p. 29)? Meaning is not in the work of art but in the viewer's perception of it. Aesthetic criticism involves three considerations: the created object (work of art), its inner structure, and the meaning derived from engagement with the work.

Some philosophers of music education believe that it is responsible for teaching young people to make aesthetic judgments. The Maryland Essential Learner Outcomes offer a framework for the classroom teacher to guide aesthetic learning with the stated outcome: "The student will demonstrate the ability to make aesthetic judgments." The outcome lists two expectations of aesthetic education: The student will evaluate selected musical compositions using established criteria, and the student will formulate, apply, and communicate criteria for evaluating his or her performances and those of others.

Students who develop skills for evaluating music compositions are able to make and defend judgments about works of music. They understand the elements of music sufficiently to speak about harmony, timbre, texture, form, rhythm, and melody knowledgeably. Drawing from an appropriate example as a model, students acquire the ability to compare and contrast other compositions. Criteria for evaluation emerge in the process. Students formulate and revise standards to judge their own performances and those of others. Teachers can assist them in forming models for critiquing by providing recordings of exemplary solo and group performances.

We want to enable all sorts of young people to realize that they have the right to achieve works of art as meaningful against their own lived lives. Because the world that the arts illumine is a shared world . . . because the realities to which they give rise emerge through acts of communication, the encounters being sought are never wholly autonomous or private. (Greene, 1991, p. 38)

REFERENCES

The nature of criticism and its applications.

The necessity for aesthetic education in the schools.


"What is music education?" and "What ought it to be?" Jorgensen’s inclusive treatment of music education philosophy goes beyond European classical music to include the feminist and cross-cultural perspectives. Jorgensen includes suggestions for what should be included in this worldview.


A better practice for the development of a philosophy of music education.