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Segue

The Official Publication of the Arkansas Music Educators Association,
A Federated State Association of the National Association for Music Education

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Photos from the Arkansas Secretary of State photographer

Segue is published three times each academic year in September, February and May. Submission deadlines for the issues are 1 August, 1 January, and 1 April, respectively.

Please email inquiries and manuscripts to:
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Arkansas Music Educators Association is a federated state association of the National Association for Music Education.
Spring is in full swing, and summer is fast approaching!

Please mark your calendars for our 2017 Fall Conference, Friday November 3rd and Saturday November 4th. Also, note, our Festival Chorus and Strings Ensembles will be rehearsing and performing Saturday the 4th. ArkMEA is very excited about our dates this year, and we have some stellar presenters already lined up! Make sure you put your requests in now, and align your PGP with this conference. Our reading clinic for the Festival Chorus music will be at ARACDA’s Summer Reading Clinic in Little Rock—please check the ArkMEA website for more details.

Our MIOSM concert at the Capitol was inspiring! There were over 500 aspiring musicians, along with parents, grandparents, and state personnel. Thank you Senator Jason Rappert, and Miss Greater Hot Springs, Courtney DeVane for sharing how music has made such a powerful impact on your lives. ArkMEA is so grateful for your willingness to support music in our schools!

I’d like to share with you a short portion of my speech, to hopefully inspire you as our school year winds down.

“Do you know what the word inspire means? To inspire means: to fill (someone) with the urge or ability to do or feel something, especially to do something creative. So, what does that have to do with music? Music connects your mind and your heart.

Music creates art in silence. It can motivate you to do the things you love extremely well, or help you push through the things you’re not fond of doing. It takes one song to bring back 1,000 memories. The second meaning, which I think is pretty amazing to think about is- to breathe in (air); inhale. Music brings life into everything…”

“…Music, it seems, can heal and inspire more than one type of wound. It strengthens the mind, inspires memories, and comforts the distressed.”

“… Be the ones who inspire others to feel. Be the ones who create masterpieces. Be the ones who breathe life into your schools…”

As the school year comes to a close, I hope you take the time to enjoy your end of the year festivities. I know many of our schedules are packed full of Spring concerts, musicals, graduations, auditions for next year, talent shows, variety shows, and so much more! We, as music educators, get to be involved in creating memories for our students for years to come. Enjoy every moment! Motivate, and inspire your students!
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Recently a social media posting took over a music education forum I follow. In this post, an elementary music teacher asked for advice regarding an email from a parent of a kindergarten student. The parent is a college professor who was teaching a class titled “Race and History of Jim Crow,” and the concern raised involved the song Jump Jim Joe.

The issue at hand is the fact that this song is rooted in the Jim Crow practices that were common in the South after the Civil War. Jump Jim Joe was made popular by a white minstrel show performer, Thomas Dartmouth “Daddy” Rice. He used blackface to portray Blacks, often based upon stereotypes. In the song Jump Jim Joe, the character is dancing a jig and is representative of the myth of the content, happy slave. Adding to this issue is the possibility that Rice appropriated the character from traditional Black folklore. So the racist past is confounded by the act of cultural appropriation.

The responses in the comments section (back to social media) were mixed. Some teachers felt that the historical context of the song justified removing it from the curriculum. Others felt that the musical benefits (movement, rhythmic and melodic concepts) were the more important aspects of the song and that the historical was irrelevant, especially with regard to the young age of the students. The belief that most do not know the history of the song, yet it has become something that “used to be divisive, and now unites us and delights our children” were among the reasons cited as justification for leaving it in the curriculum. All these responses are valid in the eyes of those who took the time to respond.

The choice of songs and other materials is often rooted in the history of the music teacher, not the students.

The belief in a folk song canon is largely supported by many music teachers and is still used as the basis of instruction in many music classrooms. The choice of songs and other materials is often rooted in the history of the music teacher, not the students. As music teachers, we go to college, student teach, attend workshops and continuing education, go to conferences, and share via social media. All of these practices build our personal musical classroom canon that we come to depend on in the curriculum. But perhaps our canon is more reflective of one side of music teaching and not the entirety of music within schools. Perhaps our canon is a reflection of what we have learned as music teachers, instead of who our students are, and with the understanding that student-centered learning is beneficial, we should recognize this and move forward.

Music is not just about concepts. Music teaching, as stated in both the 1994 National Standards and the 2014 National Core Arts Standards, need to incorporate social and historical connections. When we teach music, we teach a subject that incorporates cultural, social, and expressive elements. A song’s singular use should not only be teaching musical concepts. A song carries with it the history of the person who wrote it, or transmitted it. A song provides a window into the past, whether that be an angst-filled love song, and angry call for change, or a simple folk song that tells of an historical conflict (i.e., Frog Went A Courtin’, a song that originally denigrated the relationship between and English queen and a Frenchman). If we ant to categorize something as part of a canon, then we must justify its inclusion based on the entirety of the song, and not just what is written on a staff.
We become complicit when we rationalize something based on our own ignorance, habit, reliance on concepts taught as results, or because it is easily disregarded. Songs in the canon that have a difficult past can not and should not be dismissed in whole, they should be examined and discussed. In some cases the history becomes part of the teaching and the song remains. Other times, the song is removed and perhaps brought back when students are older and more prepared to have the deeper conversations. The bottom line is we cannot have it both ways. We cannot claim to be teaching music rooted in an established canon when we ignore the historical and cultural realities of those songs. Musical literacy is not just notational literacy.

I have known of the concerns about this song for quite some time and have avoided its use because I know the history. My knowledge of the songs origins is enough for me to say that despite the changes to the song over the years (the substitution of “Joe” for “Crow”) and the possibilities for teaching rhythmic and movement concepts, excluding it from a music curriculum is justified. The fact that this song is not the only song with a racist or difficult past does not permit me the space to ignore its historical content and bypass teaching the context to my students.

We seek to be a foundational part of every child’s education, and so it is incumbent upon us to recognize that foundational role carries with it great responsibility. Answering the call to recognize inequities and to seek pathways to equitable inclusive spaces is part of a larger discussion that is occurring across much of music education.

Jacqueline Kelly-Mchale is Director of Music Education at DePaul University in Chicago, IL.

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Sometimes, I wish 42 year old me, the school administrator, could go back in time and talk to 22 year old me, the new teacher fresh in the world of music education. As many young teachers do, I focused only on my program’s success and often forgot to look at the big picture of the entire school. Through my first 20 years in education, my experiences along the way, and my new role from “the other side of the desk,” I hope I can provide some observations that will help a fellow young music educator along the way.

Develop a well thought out plan. Define your classroom policies and procedures. This can be as much as a handbook for the band or choir program or a classroom expectation poster for the elementary music classroom. A well-written policy will often take away the reactionary instinct when an issue arises. This allows you to follow a decision path developed before your emotions became a factor in the situation. Always make sure the policies you write into your handbook do not conflict with the school policies, discussing with your principal anything you feel might be questionable.

Become a master of organization. We have all heard the phrase, “a lack of preparation on your end does not constitute an emergency on mine.” However, as much as I want that to be true, as the principal it often does become an emergency on my end. Missing paperwork deadlines; failing to request a check for contest fees prior to the day of entry; forgetting to schedule the auditorium for a concert and finding there was an assembly on that date; all these become issues the administration has to fix that could have been avoided with organization and planning.

Understand the challenges. Speak up for the needs of your program, but understand that not every request can be granted. Two of the hardest things I have encountered in being a secondary principal is building a master schedule and developing a budget. The balance of meeting state requirements while defining your own vision of a school is often a challenge.

In one of my band programs, I wished for all alike instrument beginner classes that never happened. As a principal, I was determined to provide that for the band director who followed me assuming it would be a simple fix. It was only as I began to plug classes into the grid that I began to see the thought process that goes into such a decision. One move of that woodwind class may create a conflict in an AP course where a student now has to make a decision, or conflicts cause a whole grade to not have enough course offerings during a period to house them all.

As a teacher, I did not understand the multiple fund areas that went into a budgeting such as Title I, NSLA, Operating, etc. Each of these funds have restrictions on where the funds can be spent. As a young teacher I thought that money was simply money. I erroneously believed we didn’t have money for the tuba I needed, but they sure seemed to be able to spend that money somewhere else. I now know that it was because of where that funding came from, and the mandated areas in which it had to be spent.

Be a problem solver. The best conversations I have are when a teacher comes in with a problem and has a proposed solution right behind it. Even better is when the teacher brings multiple options and we are able to talk though the scenarios and make a decision together. When the decision making process is shared, we know that we both support each other in the final outcome.

Keep communication lines open. As a young teacher, I dreaded calling parents to speak with them. As a principal, I have to make and receive those hard phone calls every day. One of my first questions is always, “have you spoken with the teacher?” or conversely, “have you spoken with the parent?” Most of the time putting these two parties together leads to a resolution of the issue without needing my further involvement. I can tell you with reasonable certainty that the more you call home, the less frequently problems will arise or escalate. As a bonus, the calls get easier the more you do them.

Use social media with extreme caution. Social media has changed the face of education. The frequency of ethical issues arising from social media has been amazing. What you post may have been intended for a small, private, specific audience, but nothing stops another person from sharing it. The same is true with texting and those messages being shared. Multiple times
Let’s Talk About Vision

Hello fellow music educators! As our year comes to a close, I want to share something with you that has been on my mind this year, which is that I’ve come to a place in my teaching where I seem to have a choice. I can either keep doing the same things year after year that are comfortable or that I have deemed “good,” or I can choose to have a vision for next year and next year’s students.

VISION… That word has not left my consciousness this whole school year. It’s brought to mind when I plan, when I rehearse, and anytime my 6th grade class walks in my room. You see, I feel guilty every time I say things like, “Open your music to page 2 and look at measure 29 … let’s get started.” And then, the lesson begins -- and that’s a problem. Are you inspired by those phrases? And for the record, I do NOT have a problem with everyone starting in the same place, but, I do have a problem with the lack of vision that phrases like these create. Does “look at measure 29” get your creative juices flowing? Absolutely not. It’s dull. And even if It’s what everyone does, it in no way creates vision.

Why would you even need vision in a music class? Because vision is the start to everything. Vision ties what we are doing to WHY we are doing it, no matter how big or small.

An effective approach to teaching problematic areas of music is to work backwards, where you start at the last measure of a difficult section and slowly work backwards, adding a measure or a few beats on each time. Many of us have done this naturally -- because it’s effective. But why? It’s effective because it offers a whole new way of looking at a problematic area. We are now looking at our problems with the END in mind, and the end is essentially the vision. In short, it helps us to feel a developing sequence of patterns, how they relate to each other, and how to connect them.

We as humans can’t just simply learn new, isolated concepts… everything is connected, and we need something to hold and glue new thoughts and concepts into our brains. This is the main reason the “back it up” approach is so effective, because we have been able to connect the end to the beginning. If we truly focus on a student’s connections to what we are teaching, instead of attempting to forcibly stick it in their head, we can gift them larger connections to life, history, love, family, and music.

We know that every student who shows up in our room has unlimited potential. But, we must also recognize that it is belief that feeds potential, and potential that feeds action. With action we achieve results, and so the cycle that began with vision.

Some kinds of vision must be created in our minds first. Most of us know the story of Roger Bannister. Roger Bannister had a vision. He had not seen anyone run a 4 minute mile, and so he didn’t have an example vision, but he chose to create one. He trained with the end in mind and set out to change the world and on May 6th, 1954, he did! He ran a 4 minute mile. Never before had this been done in history! This was huge! And the amazing thing is it created vision for others. Within 2 years, 37 people around the world had run a 4 minute mile.

We have to be teaching our students to be delusionally optimistic when it comes to their potential as perhaps was Roger Banister. Delusional optimism leads to serious belief which leads to massive action! And with massive action you get results! And those results will lead to a belief that “I can... and I will!” A solid truth we all know- music is the only class where this type of personal insight is being taught and executed.

If you look back on your career as a musician, would you have changed anything? I know I would! I wish I would have taken more initiative in learning how to create vision for myself earlier, so that I could pass on this sense vision. A vision of “I can.” I hope the vision you and I are displaying as teachers and conductors (and sometimes, it seems, life coaches) trickles down to our students, who are currently learning to create visions of their own.

Jenny Hainen teaches elementary music at JoAnn Walters Elementary in Dierks, Arkansas, and is ArkMEA Chair in Elementary Music.
One of the major life challenges all teachers face is efficiently using time. Time is a commodity we all have in common; we all have the same. What we do with that time, however, is key to working towards our goals and balancing who we are at home and school.

Each of us has your own unique blend of professional identities. For me I have several music identities – musician, music director, music education teacher, music education administrator, music education researcher. I also have several identities related to athletics since I also serve as the head cross country and distance track & field coach for Arkansas State University (A-State). I also have identities within a church community in addition to my most important roles as husband and father of eight children.

Most individuals reading this article are likely music teachers; one professional identity. Some of you may have additional teaching (perhaps coaching as well) duties outside of music. Yet others may have evening, weekend or summer jobs. Some of you may also be involved with music worship groups that rehearse and perform throughout the week for various religious services. These are not exhaustive examples, but samples of a few professional identities some of us attempt to navigate. And learning to balance these professional identities and accomplish professional goals can be challenging.

Why Goals Need Help – Like many of you I have read and thought about how to set goals and move forward in achieving those, including finding balance in life. Perhaps some of us have set goals at the beginning of the New Year. We may even write out goals and place them in a location we see every day. Often, at least in my case, goals have become ignored. For example, I have a goal to compose and arrange music, but I never seem to have the time to work on this goal. What I did not understand until recently is that a goal without a specific measurable action (i.e. objective) and accompanying plan or strategy to accomplish the objective was more like a wish.

Furthermore, I could not answer how this goal fit into my professional or personal life plan – my dream or vision. With a sizable number of goals and no plan to organize them, I ended up with little time to accomplish them. It was clear, my goals needed help.

Balancing Professional Identities - In the past few years, however, I have read and thought more deeply on the topic and in so doing have developed (i.e. borrowed) ideas or tools that have helped me balance diverse job demands with family life. I admit, I have not always been as successful as I had hoped in using these tools, but they have at least pointed me in the right direction and reminded me about what matters most.

Without planning and writing out how to accomplish goals I have found that often what needs immediate completion receives my attention. What receives my attention then becomes my professional identity. If I am not careful, the day-to-day immediate completion demands begin defining my professional identity; and may not be congruent with the life vision and dreams and the supporting personal and professional mission statements and goals I seek.

For me I have found that writing down my life vision or dream, accompanied with mission statements for each personal and professional identity area, with goals supporting those mission statements was effective. Perhaps most importantly, I have written the objectives for those goals (i.e. something measurable or descriptive of a goal being accomplished) to help organize my efforts and time in balancing professional identities. Planning specific strategies and tactics to accomplish those objectives brings about stated goals. The combination of vision, mission statements, goals, objectives, strategies and tactics sits at the center of balancing professional identities in addition to prioritizing and earmarking time to accomplish these.

Below I have provided a framework, in outline form, with definitions for each term. I found that writing my life vision and accompanying personal and professional mission statements and goals was an iterative, or back and forth process. Once I worked out these three levels I then focused on writing out specific objectives for each goal, making sure that the objective was something measurable or qualitative. Then, I could focus on specific strategies and tactics for accomplishing these objectives. This is
where I could prioritize tasks and organize my time more efficiently to accomplish tasks. Each week I budget 30 minutes to review weekly tasks and determine how they align with my vision, mission statements, and goals – and then move forward in determining objectives, strategies and tactics.

**A Framework for Balancing Professional Identities & Accomplishing Goals**

**Term Definitions** – Vision, Mission, Goals, Objectives, Strategies, Tactics – (E.G. meaning, “For example.” I will use identities to provide one example.)

**Vision** – Having a vision keeps a person/organization motivated to continue working towards realizing a dream/vision. (E.G. My dream is to teach music and coach XC/Track & Field)

**Mission** – Addresses how a mission action(s) support the vision. A **mission** statement (It is ok to have more than 1 mission statement) should annually or biennially be reviewed to make sure it is bringing about the vision. (E.G. I have a mission statement in four areas: (1) Personal; (2) Family; (3) Teaching Music; and (4) Coaching XC/Track & Field. My mission for music/music education is to influence individuals to choose music as a career, in all its varieties; and to encourage the lifelong study and participation of music as a wholesome pursuit and as a mechanism to support learning in other knowledge areas.)

**Goals** – Are broad statements that help define how the **mission** is accomplished over time. These should guide the day-to-day decisions but do not necessarily need to be measurable. **Goals** should be regularly (e.g. one to four times per year) evaluated to determine if they are supporting the **mission**. (E.G. One of my music teaching goals is to be an effective Music Education teacher to undergraduate and graduate music education students.)

**Objectives** - A specific measurement of a stated **goal**. A type of unit or effort is measured or described (quantitatively or qualitatively). These **objectives** ought to be evaluated and reworked if necessary as often as the task occurs (E.G. I will devout three (3) hours each week of preparation, teaching, and assessing/feedback for each one (1) clock hour of class time in non-performance classes.)

**Strategies** – Specify HOW the **objective** will be accomplished. (E.G. This objective will be accomplished by creating a weekly schedule.)

**Tactics** – The step-by-step plan detailing what and how a **strategy** will be implemented. (E.G. At the beginning of each semester I will write out how these hours will be apportioned.)

In summary, it has been my experience that to balance professional identities and accomplish goals it is important to write down what matters most, identify and prioritize what will help you move towards balancing professional identities and accomplishing goals, budget time accordingly, and review regularly. The framework presented above has helped me accomplish this and it may be of help to others.

*Kyle Chandler is Director of Music Education at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro.*
As most ensemble directors well know, the bringing together of our students in musical performance goes beyond the instruction of performance skills. We have all witnessed the comradery our students feel after a well-executed concert, or the pride they share when a particularly challenging piece has been conquered. In higher education, we also get to witness the natural cohort that is created through the music major, which often results in deep friendships that can last a lifetime. And yet, something special happens to the students who make music together regularly through the large ensemble experience.

The presidential election results last November brought this phenomenon to the fore in ways that were both deeply heartening and predictable. When faced with a traumatic experience, we all look to our communities for support, reassurance, and connection. Many of our colleagues shared on social media the comfort and beauty their rehearsals brought to students in the days immediately following the election. We have seen it before and will see it again: sharing the beauty of musical performance can heal and lift the soul.

In some circles within university music departments across the country, the role of the large ensemble is being called into question. A recent study undertaken by the College Music Society released in November 2014 presents a new view of the future of undergraduate music instruction, one that prioritizes the “improviser-composer-performer” over the “interpreter performer.” Known as the CMS Manifesto, this document has raised concern within a variety of wind band director professional organizations, including an entire session discussing its possible implications at the March 2015 College Band Directors National Association Conference. It has prompted some welcomed conversations about what the role of the large ensemble is and how or if it should change.

Another discussion around the purpose of ensembles within the curriculum at colleges and universities stresses very real concern for the future job placements of music performance majors. An article in the October 2016 Chronicle of Higher Education discusses the “simple supply and demand problem” our graduates face when they attempt to enter the work force with their music performance degrees. “Arts educators should no longer ask students to continue an endless cycle of rehearsals leading to high-quality performances for dwindling audiences and a striking separation from career preparation.”

These two examples highlight the need to look deeply into the skills and learning opportunities that large ensemble participation affords our music majors, particularly those that go beyond the more widely-known performance-based skills of musicianship. This is where that “special something” that happens between and among our students during large ensemble participation must be more concretely articulated.

Elizabeth Peterson, a band director at the University of Illinois, has been involved in many of the discussions regarding crafting a response to the CMS Manifesto, in particularly a defense of the large ensemble’s role in higher education. During her previous appointment at Ithaca College, she asked members of their band, the following question: “What is the purpose of the large ensemble experience?” Many responses involved the typical musicianship-related objectives, such as better listening skills, the ability to watch/respond to a conductor, and performance skills related to the exposure to a wide-variety of repertoire. However, a large number of responses included skills not directly related to music. Here are just a few examples of what the students said:

“To better our skills in working with others.”

“Playing music is all about working with others, collaboration. We need every opportunity we can get in order to cultivate such skills.”

“Ensembles teach me to co-exist and REALLY listen.”

“Learning to be part of a group reaching towards the same goals stresses the importance of individual practice contributing to a bigger picture.”

(continued on pg 23)
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“To learn how to work together in a group. It should provide a sense of community. All the members should hold each other accountable for all the music learned and created.”

“Working with others to create something beautiful, to not act as individual parts, but as a whole.”

These comments illustrate students’ awareness that large-ensemble participation, in addition to specific musical training, involves the learning of life skills that have more broad applications. There are skills associated with success in group settings, such as cooperation and collaboration; interpersonal skills such as mutual respect and working with differing opinions; and the leadership skills of goal setting and compromise. In addition to skills that can be transferred to careers both in and out of music, creating music together has the potential to teach care, love and respect for others.

These skills are not all naturally absorbed by our students. It takes something on the part of the director to create the conditions that will allow them to flourish. How does the career 3rd clarinet player learn leadership? Is mutual respect discussed as a goal of the ensemble? Do the members get the opportunity to collaborate with guest artists or composers? We have the capability to bring about these skills if we feel they are worthy of our time and energy—the main purpose of our ensembles remains centered on the musical skills required of our members. Many of us have not yet encountered anyone questioning the validity of the large ensemble or its prominent place in our curricula. Whether or not that day arrives, we should consider articulating what we feel is the importance of what we do in both the rehearsal and performance hall. Perhaps your ensemble syllabi have these skills, both musical and otherwise, clearly stated. As all of us face a culture where the value of a college degree is being examined, more evidence that what we do matters to our students’ futures could make all the difference.

AND, giving them three to four more hours a week off their cell phones is a bonus.

Dr. Emily A. Moss is Director of Instrumental Music Education for the Department of Music, Theatre and Dance at California State University, Los Angeles

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I have been placed in the uncomfortable situation of not being able to defend a teacher because of written communication they thought was private ending up in the wrong hands. Essentially, you should assume everything can be seen by anyone at anytime.

Be a shining star for your school. As music teachers, you are one of the most visible teachers in the district and community. A lot of the school’s image rests on public perception of you and your groups. Band programs present themselves on Friday nights to the masses that may never see a competition or concert. Choirs can visit the senior citizen’s centers, and you can personally invite important community members to your concerts. Get your good news into the local paper even if it means writing your own articles. Use school web sites and appropriate social media to get videos of your performances out there. And as trivial as it sounds, leave a fast food place in better shape than you and the kids found it. As a principal I have taken calls both positive and negative based on how our students behaved when that big yellow bus pulled up at a McDonald’s on a Friday night.

See your administrator as a person. Understand and believe that your administrators want you to succeed as a teacher, your program to grow and flourish, and your students to enjoy making music. What may seem like a major issue to you right now may be only one of 50 other major issues fighting for time and attention in the building at any given moment. The principal is human, and he or she is trying to make the best decision(s) possible with the information available. Too often, decisions will not (can not) please everyone. Just like with teaching, some days the principal leaves the office thinking it’s the hardest job ever and nothing went right today … but in the end, we wouldn’t trade it for the world.

Michael Wells is currently the Principal at Clinton Junior High in Clinton, Arkansas
All About Audiation: Some Suggestions for Choral Conductor-Teachers

Stuart Chapman Hill
Guest Article

You have heard the term before. You have used it in your teaching, perhaps, or furrowed your brow when Microsoft Word, wielding its scarlet squiggle, suggested that the word was a misspelling: audiation. But what does it really mean to “audiate,” and how might a deeper understanding of audiation influence your teaching? In a recent conference session about Edwin Gordon’s Music Learning Theory (MLT) and its application in the choral classroom, I emphasized the importance of designing rehearsal activities that build singers’ audiation skills—and, though that topic is too extensive to summarize in a brief journal article (or, indeed, a single conference session), here are a few ideas about how to make choral classrooms more “audiation-friendly.”

“Audiation” is a term Gordon coined to describe “the process of assimilating and comprehending (not simply rehearing) music momentarily heard performed, or performed sometime in the past.” Audiation is more than imitation, memorization, or the ability to “play back” a melody or pattern in one’s head; it is the ability to hold musical material in mind with deep comprehension of its tonal and rhythmic context. This core ability underlies singing, playing, composing, improvising – indeed, virtually all musical activities.

Many of our traditional practices in choral classrooms may not strengthen students’ audiation abilities as well as we imagine. Gordon’s theory anchors itself in the Pestalozzian notion of “sound before sight,” and I know that in teaching my own middle school classroom, my devotion to music literacy (read: ability to decode standard notation) pushed me to rush through the “sound” bit and straight to the “sight”—that is, right to teaching students to navigate notation. Gordon firmly reminds readers that notation itself is not music; it is simply a tool for recording musical ideas. As such, “music literacy” is much more than decoding notation. Before students can bring meaning to notation, they need to have developed sufficiently rich audiation vocabularies: internalized tonal and rhythm patterns.

Accordingly, one cornerstone of an MLT-informed classroom is the use of what Gordon called learning sequence activities (LSAs), or pattern instruction, and choral students could benefit greatly from their inclusion in and among rehearsal routines. In these brief teaching episodes (not longer than ten minutes), through singing and chanting back and forth both with the whole class and with individuals (which is key), teachers guide students through the tonal and rhythmic “building blocks” that underlie most Western music, helping them to hear, echo, name, recognize, distinguish between, and (eventually!) read in notation a sequence of patterns that contribute to a rich audiation vocabulary. Full discussion of LSAs is beyond the scope of this article, but books by Dr. Gordon as well as Dr. Eric Bluestine help explain the logic of the sequence, and curricular materials from the Jump Right In series “lay out” patterns to teach and how to teach them. Further, workshops offered by the Gordon Institute of Music Learning provide specific professional development for teachers wishing to incorporate these activities. Notably, teachers who explore the Jump Right In curriculum will discover that what is often called “sight reading” (or, in Gordon terms, “generalization–symbolic”) comes rather late in the skill learning sequence and associated LSAs. Teachers may find, in using LSAs, that they do not teach sight reading as early in the year or curriculum as they have before. Fear not: the time spent front-loading students’ audiation vocabularies is worth the investment, as it ensures that singers truly are ready to bring musical meaning to notation (rather than struggle to extract meaning from it) when the time comes.

In addition to incorporating a program of sequential pattern instruction like LSAs, there are a few simple strategies teachers can employ to help strengthen students’ audiation. Remember that audiation is all about comprehension of musical context—and yet, how often do we launch into rehearsal of a passage without calling students’ attention to its tonal and rhythmic contexts? Further, students’ ability to audiate depends on exposure to music in a wide variety of modes and meters—and yet, how often does the music in our classrooms venture very far outside the realms of major tonality or duple meter? Here are a few simple tweaks that might help us all improve on these points:
• Use warm-ups as an opportunity to teach rote songs in a variety of tonalities and meters. Before students can learn specific patterns via LSAs, they need rich exposure to them elsewhere. Spice up your normal repertoire of major-tonality warm-ups and throw in a song in Phrygian mode or in an asymmetric meter. Further—though it may frustrate your students at first—teach these songs without text, singing on a neutral syllable, since students’ ears will be drawn to lyrics, not tonal and rhythmic materials, if text is present.

• Always establish tonality and/or meter before rehearsing a passage. When the teacher chants or sings a pattern that establishes meter or tonality (examples can be found in the Reference Handbook for Using Learning Sequence Activities) before rehearsing a piece, students are led not just to “learn their notes” but also to relate them to the contexts that underlie them.

• Help students find the resting tone. Being able to identify a song’s tonal center (or “resting tone”) is a crucial skill that is built into LSAs, but can be reinforced with thoughtful rehearsal strategies. Try singing a passage from one of the pieces you are rehearsing and pausing at random times to ask students to sing the resting tone on a neutral syllable. While working with one section of the choir, have the other sections sing a tonic drone or ostinato.

• Use rhythmic ostinati to reinforce rhythmic understanding. Again, while rehearsing with one section of the choir, involve the rest of the choir in a rhythmic ostinato, such as chanting the eighth-note pulse on rhythm syllables. Pause every now and then, while rehearsing a passage, to ask a student to chant its underlying microbeats. Such strategies not only keep all students engaged when you need to focus on a small group, but also help students connect, again and again, with the underlying rhythmic/metric materials of the piece being rehearsed.

These are just a few preliminary suggestions, and teachers who devote themselves to close study of MLT will undoubtedly discover more ways its principles can be applied in choral classrooms. As Bluestine emphasized in The Ways Children Learn Music, MLT is “open-ended and incomplete,” and its further refinement depends on continued practice and research. Whether these ideas inspire a deeper, sustained curiosity about MLT or simply add a few useful tools to your kit, I hope they help you feel more equipped to ensure that your choral classroom, like Music Learning Theory (like music, for that matter!), is all about audiation.

Stuart Chapman Hill is Assistant Professor of Choral Music Education at Webster University in St. Louis, Missouri.

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Developing Musicianship via an Elemental Approach to the Instrumental Music Curriculum

Dominick Ferrara
Guest Article

Instrumental music teachers face numerous challenges both inside and outside of the classroom/rehearsal setting. Among the many challenges faced inside the rehearsal is achieving a balance between ensemble group development and individual skill development on one’s instrument. Much time is spent teaching students to play together and to prepare pieces for performances. These are certainly important and appropriate goals, but do they succeed in teaching each child to play his/her instrument at equal rates of development? Are we providing the same level of individual musical instruction and demand to our low woodwind and low brass players as we are to those instruments who get to play the melody more frequently, namely the upper winds and brasses? Do we shy away from programming particular pieces because these low wind and brass parts are “too difficult?” Should we shy away from these pieces? These questions have intrigued me for my entire career.

I have a rather simple to grasp, but difficult to master definition of what it means to play an instrument. Playing an instrument means to be able to get the instrument to do what you want it to do when you want it to do it. This is at once clear and concise, yet very difficult to achieve. Based upon that definition, I propose that in order to help our ensembles develop more evenly and consistently throughout their instrumentation, and therefore to be able to program and perform more challenging repertoire, that our focus needs to shift to individual musical and skill development throughout the ensemble. Toward this end, I propose a 3-tiered approach to developing musicianship via an elemental approach.

Throughout my years as a middle school, high school, and college band director, I have observed that a great percentage of students approach part preparation in a similar fashion regardless of their respective ability levels. They attend to technique, notes, and fingerings first; then to rhythm and meter; and finally to musicality. Despite repeated arguments by many in favor of the primacy of rhythm, this hierarchy of pitch first, then rhythm and musicality seems to remain prevalent. It is based upon these observations that I propose a 3-tiered approach to teaching the elements of pitch, rhythm, and musicality in an ever increasingly complex manner from the beginning. This “spiral curriculum” approach has its roots in the work of both Jerome Bruner and the Manhattanville Music Curriculum Project.

Incorporating ways to teach proper intonation, intonation, scales, arpeggios, and melodic interpretation is at the core of the pitch aspect of this approach. Rhythmically, addressing beat, pulse, groove, subdivisions, macro- and micro-beats, and rhythmic phrasing are essential for the development of student independence in performance. Additionally, understanding how to interpret and perform in different meters and navigating entrances and releases into and out of silence are also skills we must teach. As students are developing their respective technical and rhythmic abilities, concepts of musicality must also be taught.

I am fond of saying that all music should be played musically, and toward that end teachers must begin to show students how to use technique as a tool for artistic, musical expression right from the very beginning. Audiation and musical thought, shaping and shading of dynamics, concepts of style, the limitations of musical notation, and the expression of musical ideas all need to be introduced to students as technical and rhythmic concepts and skills are being introduced, reinforced, and mastered.

Synthesis and creation evolve from understanding and application of acquired knowledge and strategies.

... addressing beat, pulse, groove, subdivisions, macro and micro beats, and rhythmic phrasing are essential for the development of student independence in performance
So, while there is essentially nothing new here, the way it is packaged and implemented does present a slightly different way of viewing and approaching instrumental music instruction. This elemental approach to teaching instrumental music can be a vital tool for developing the performance skills of our students more uniformly throughout our ensembles.

Teachers consistently seek to incorporate both best practices and new strategies in the never-ending process of becoming at once both more effective and more efficient in our teaching. The works of Jerome Bruner, Edwin Gordon, Ed Lisk, W. Francis McBeth, Jerry Nowak, Gunther Schuller, Ed Sueta, and James Morgan Thurmond have all had a rather profound influence on both me and my development and ongoing revisions of this working model of instruction. We would do well to explore ways to apply the work of these and other extraordinary teachers in our daily teaching, developing individual performance skills that can then be applied to the rehearsal setting. We should focus our attention on teaching each of our students to play their instruments to the maximum capacity to which they are capable. We are not just band, orchestra, and ensemble directors, we are music educators whose primary job it is to teach students to express themselves individually and collectively via their performance on musical instruments. When we shift the focus to individual development, we not only get more student growth and higher levels of student performance, we actually get better ensembles.

The word ensemble, after all, means together in French, and rehearsal is a time to re-hear-all the parts together. As we teach our students to have greater mastery over their respective instruments, and as their technique and musicality continue to grow, the level of demand we can place on ensemble skills and growth will also grow. The key to great ensembles therefore is to develop the best musicians we can, and this starts with teaching students to play their instruments well. Teach the elements of music in performance and you will develop students who are technically and musically prepared to perform at greater levels then they ever imagined.

Dr. Dominick Ferrara is Conductor of the Berklee Symphonic Winds at the Berklee College of Music in Boston, MA.

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ArkMEA Capitol Concert – March 2017

by Bart Dooley
MIOSM Chairperson

The 20th Annual Capitol Concert was held on a beautiful Spring day, March 17th in the rotunda of the Arkansas State Capitol. Over 600 students from 12 schools from all corners of the state joined their voices in singing the music of the 2017 Concert for Music In Our Schools Month. This year’s musical selections included popular patriotic pieces, “The Star Spangled Banner”, “An American Song” by John Jacobson, “America”(My Country Tis of Thee), “This Land is Your Land”, “America the Beautiful”, “You’re a Grand Old Flag”, “Simple Gifts”, “God Bless America”, “God Bless the USA” and included a brand new song entitled “Power In Me”.

Before the concert portion of the program, schools were invited to perform individual selections. It is always nice to hear the choirs perform, but it was a real treat to have more instruments performing this year. The first group to perform was the Ida Burns Elementary 4th Grade Scat Cat Choir from Conway under the direction of Bart Dooley. They performed “A Brand New Song”. The Jonesboro Visual and Performing Arts Chorale and Strings under the direction of Mary Jackson performed “Bonse Abba” a traditional piece from Zambia, arr. Victor Johnson, and “Heart & Soul / Play that Song” by Hoagy Carmichael and Patrick Monahan, arr. Mary Jackson-Richardson. The Southside 3rd Grade Honor Choir from Batesville under the direction of Dawn Harris performed “In This World”. The CFIS Honor Choir and Ivory Honor Choir from Camden Fairview under the direction of Chelsea Ross performed “Kick it up a Notch” and “Yonder Come Day”. The Elmwood Middle School Choir from Rogers under the direction of Martha Holt performing “Music is Always There”. The Scrapper Singers from Nashville Elementary under the direction of Jaree Hall performed “American Tears”.

The Taylor and Gandy Singers from White Hall under the direction of Ann Tibbs performed “I’d Like to Teach the World to Sing”. The Lingle Middle School 6th Grade Choir from Rogers under the direction of Glenda McArdle performed and the Lingle Middle School Woodwind Ensemble from Rogers under the direction of Deborah Shaw performed “Military March”, “You’re A Grand Old Flag”, “America the Beautiful”, “Dona Nobis Pacem” and “Ode to Joy”. The Jim Stone Elementary 4th Grade Choir from Conway under the direction of Mandy McCoy performed the fun piece “Responsible”.

Bart Dooley welcomed the large crowd of onlookers including lots of parents from participating schools. Mrs. Amber Moss from Lakeside Jr. High School in Hot Springs who is the president of the Arkansas Music Educators Association gave a wonderful advocacy speech. Mrs. Moss also introduced Ms. Courtney DeVane, Miss Greater Hot Springs. Ms. DeVane spoke of the importance of her experiences in music education.

Mr. Dooley then introduced the other schools that were participating who didn’t sing a solo piece. Those schools included Elmwood Middle School in Rogers directed by Martha Holt, Noble/Allbritton Elementary in Hamburg directed by Darla Humes, and Peake Elementary from Arkadelphia directed by Laura Cornelius.

Our special guest speaker and performer was State Senator Jason Rapert from Conway. He spoke of his wonderful experiences learning to play instruments with his family. He challenged the students to pursue their interest in music for life-long enjoyment. Senator Rapert then played “The Arkansas Traveler” on his fiddle!

The concert this year was such a success and lots of musical memories were made in many young lives. We would love to welcome new schools to join us for MIOSM 2018 -- watch for those dates!
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ESSA Highlights

Last week, after years of stalled negotiations and Congressional stalemates, Congress put No Child Left Behind away for good and passed by an overwhelming majority a new version of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

This new bill, titled the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), is an enormous victory for music education advocates. We are truly on the verge of a new day for music education, with opportunities to use federal funding to increase access to music education for all students, especially the most vulnerable.

Among the most important provisions for music education in the bill:

- **A New and Clear Intent to Support Our Nation’s Schools through a Well-Rounded Education**: This is a huge departure from NCLB, which focused heavily on student academic success narrowly defined as reading and math.

- **Enumeration of Music as a Well-Rounded Subject**: Replacing the Core Academic Subject language from NCLB, this language clearly articulates that music should be a part of every child’s education, no matter their personal circumstances.

- **Requirements for Well-Rounded Education**: Schools will now be able to assess their ability to provide a well-rounded education, including music, and address any deficiencies using federal funds.

- **Flexibility of Title I Funds to Support a Well-Rounded Education**: All Title I programs, both schoolwide and targeted, are now available to provide supplemental funds for a well-rounded education, including music.

- **More Professional Development for Music Educators**: Funds from Title I, II, and IV of ESSA may support professional development for music educators as part of supporting a well-rounded education.

- **Flexible Accountability Systems**: States must now include multiple progress measures in assessing school performance, which can include such music-education-friendly measures as student engagement, parent engagement, and school culture/climate.

- **Protection from “Pullouts”**: The new ESSA discourages removing students from the classroom, including music and arts, for remedial instruction.

Passing this law with music listed as a stand-alone subject kicks open the door of opportunity to ensuring music’s place in every school — and leading in the decision-making for what that looks like.


Becoming a NAFME member is more important now than ever before. Learn more about membership at [jointoday.nafme.org/takeaction](http://jointoday.nafme.org/takeaction)
Vision and Darkness

At a conference last week, a speaker shared the story of an elementary school in a community with changing demographics and declining enrollment. The silver lining as revealed in the talk was that this resulted in an available classroom, and someone with a little vision proposed turning it into an artists studio. A local artist was given the space, and the kids were intimate, daily observers and participants in the artistic process. What a brilliant proposal - and fantastic outcome. That community and the shared experiences and stories will be part of those fortunate kids lives forever.

In a high school I taught at some years ago, we enjoyed the arranging and original works of a local young man who was a recent college graduate in performance and composition. He had a few years of bar bands and minor league entertainer experience under his belt, and was I think looking for a more professional encounter with a touch of legitimacy, and enjoyed getting to hear his pieces. When I heard the story of the empty classroom artist project, I made the connection to our casual resident composer, thought I'd not really thought of it or him that way before.

I'd also once heard a respected university band person very pointedly state that having a piece written for your ensemble was a "very big deal," perhaps one I and others have taken for granted. Indeed, having someone come in the door with a new score and parts, then demonstrate and share the processes of writing, and listening, and rewriting is an honest perspective on imperfection, mistakes, and realistic expectations, as well as the magic of hearing something come to life.

In the case of my own teaching and high school, most of the kids knew the composer and seemed to enjoy and appreciate the days he was with us in rehearsals. And even though I was happy to spend the time on these projects (and always grateful to have another adult around), I probably didn’t fully appreciate the unique, shared opportunity this presented at the time. I recall saying to them on the last day of school that it was the last time we’d ever all be in the same room together, and more than a few seemed to understand that our shared rituals, both silly and serious, were passing from our lives.

Full stop. Major change of direction. At this point in penning the gentle (at least by comparison) little essay above, an email arrived and I’ve been unable to think of much else since that moment. It was sent by the administration at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, and I would imagine similar notes have at some point out gone out across the state. It announces the acceptance of the need to comply with the “campus concealed carry” law that goes into effect soon, which unless like me you’ve been out of state or (again, like me) otherwise pretending that we don’t really live in upside down world, maybe you’re aware.

This isn’t the place to express an opinion on an explicitly political topic. So let me pose a professional question this way: Is the college music methods class, the piano or guitar class, a place for loaded, hidden handguns?

As almost everyone in ArkMEA shares a common professional background, let me suggest you think back to your college methods courses and ensemble experiences, etc. Now force yourself to think of the members of those classes (putting names and faces in place might help) having pistols in their trombone and saxophone cases … this isn’t a joke with a punch line about the wild west - it’s real, and it’s happening.

A little reading will confirm that since 2013, any public university in Arkansas has had the option to allow faculty to have concealed guns on their campuses. Not one - big or small, urban or rural, 2 year or 4 year, has done so. Not one. Common sense has prevailed. Until now.

Arguments and working out the grim details will continue… sporting events (where for safety reasons you haven’t been allowed to bring in an umbrella for years) are being squabbled over. Where do (not might, not maybe - but where DO) concerts fall on this obscene continuum?

We’re more or less socialized (taught) to not talk about political things — too sensitive, someone’s feelings might get bruised. It seems plenty clear where this has gotten us. It’s imperative to address some questions. Whatever our political leanings, do music classes and hidden guns go together?

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