

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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Contents

President's Note (Paige Rose)	4
Editor's Notes (Dale Misenhelter)	8
Using Research in Teaching: Sources (Kyle Chandler)	10
Reaching the Other 80% (Williams, Dammer)	12
But I Was Hired to Teach Music (Kathy Robison)	14
Music in Our Schools Month (Bart Dooley)	16
What Letter is Under Your Shirt? (Amber Moss)	18

Advertisers

University of Memphis	2
Yamaha	5, 9
University of Arkansas Fayetteville	5, 23
Alfred Sound Innovations	15
University of Arkansas Little Rock	7
Arkansas Tech	17
University of Mississippi	19
Ouachita University	19
Harding University	20
University of Central Arkansas	21
University of Arkansas Fort Smith	22
Quaver	24

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Southside Elementary (Batesville) students, Dawn Harris, Teacher

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President's Note

By Paige Rose



No winter lasts forever; no spring skips its turn. ~Hal Borland

For a while this year, we may have all thought that winter was here to stay. Some of our schools spent upwards of 20 days closed, which meant precious learning and rehearsal time literally covered by snow and ice. While the stressful weather compromised our peace and consistency, it did not compromise the wonderful teaching and musicianship that came of the winter months. Many a teacher and performer went on with the show, performed the program, and sang or played the contest pieces. I got to see many of these examples firsthand, and I was in awe of the students and their teachers. I heard several groups who played for judges without meeting their groups for several days prior. I heard parents rave about school programs, and teachers praise students for their quick learning and resiliency. The fact that so many music programs rose to their occasions is a testimony to the fine fundamental teaching that is present in our schools.

This preparation and resiliency was on display this winter at the Capitol Concerts in Little Rock. On March 4th, those schools that could make the trip gathered at the state capitol to celebrate music education. Bart Dooley did another outstanding job coordinating the event, arranging guests, and communicating with countless personnel about music...

and winter weather. Although the crowd was much smaller than usual, the message and the music were as big as ever. Special thanks goes to Trout Fishing in America for their special appearance!

Music in our Schools Month is a time to advocate for what music educators, parents, and students understand to be true all 12 months out of the year...that music education is vital to our schools and our lives. Every March, we are honored to share space in the Capitol rotunda so that we can share our songs and our stories that outline the importance of music education. Once again, we shared the research on music's link to academics, literacy, mental health, and physical well-being. I even shared that I once had a student tell me, "if it wasn't for music, I just wouldn't go to school." She's now a teacher...a math teacher!

Music educators certainly use the curriculum to shape students into musicians who will sing in choirs, play in community bands, listen to symphonies, and support the arts; however, they also help our students draw connections to other subjects as they count rhythms, read lyrics in multiple languages, navigate the science of tuning, and study history, culture, and geography through music. They put smiles on faces and confidence in young hearts. They inspire students...from those who never responded in other classes until they began to sing in music class...to the talented senior who has the chance to experience a music career doing what he loves.

We've saw firsthand examples of all of this at the ArkMEA sessions of All State in February. There, we had a great day of composition workshops that showcased the many ways that our students and us can create music...no matter what their grade or ability

level. Attendees saw Dr. Blake Tyson present a beautiful and poignant look at his compositional processes, from his days as a young student until the artist in present day. Participants saw Jaree Hall, Patty Oeste, and Kevin Croxton lead sessions on composition in classrooms...from using traditional instruments to iPads and video and audio recording. Kevin also shared the video of his students that garnered so much national attention and was featured by NAFME. We also heard Mike Echols detail the arrangement and interpretation of marches in a well-researched clinic.

Dr. Vicki Lind and Dr. Deborah Barber also announced plans for ArkMEA's second annual video composition contest, and we announced the first ever High School Festival of Music. The event will feature a festival percussion ensemble, guitar ensemble, and a cappella vocal ensemble. The day will be held on November 6th, in conjunction with the ArkMEA Fall Professional Development Conference, which is November 6th and 7th of this year. All of these projects build on the knowledge, skills, and critical thinking that music education and music teachers provide.

Both ArkMEA and the National Association for Music continue to advocate for these opportunities, and NAFME has been hard at work developing a new website and campaign, called broader minded™. The website at www.broaderminded.com challenges us all to "think beyond the bubbles" and presents the many benefits of music education. This website is also the perfect source for finding information on brain development and academic achievement that is seen "inside the bubbles" of high stakes testing. You will also find the ongoing "Share

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Your Story” campaign housed on this website. As we leave the winter, prepare for testing, and celebrate spring, I encourage you and your students to provide your own success story for music education.

Throughout the winter and spring, arts education leaders have been writing their own success stories. We are close to the finalized version of the National Core Arts Standards, which have now been reviewed by 6000 teachers, parents, administrators, artists, and volunteers. The standards revision happens to correspond with the seven year rotation for rewriting the Arkansas state arts frameworks. NAFME has also been hard at work during the winter and spring, monitoring proposed legislation that affects the arts, and on April 3rd, our leaders spoke at a Congressional briefing

promoting the broader minded movement.

This summer, NAFME and all of its state affiliate leaders will gather in Washington DC for Music Education Week. There, we will once again meet with the Arkansas members of Congress, and we will continue to celebrate and advocate music education. Our music programs, like our seasons, can sometimes go through a winter of discontent, but the music education never dies out with winter. In fact, like the spring, it seems to come back even more renewed and with more growth potential for the future. We have all “weathered” the hardships of winter, and there is so much excitement for the future of music education in Arkansas. No winter lasts forever; no spring skips its turn!

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Editors Notes Dale Misenhelter



In the beginning, there was listening.

In the lifetimes of our parents and their parents, people went from gathering around radios and attending concerts at the city park band-shell to a world of devices the size of your thumb that hold a thousand recorded pieces. In the span of our own lifetimes, among the many examples one could cite is how we've gone from considerable listening to and viewing of real time musical performances on "live broadcast" television to... well, almost none. What each of us decides regarding the authenticity of *Dancing with the Stars* and *American Idol* is perhaps best avoided in this brief consideration. But what does seem worth wondering about is whether (or not) folks that attended town band concerts together on a Sunday afternoon listened more carefully? If mom or granddad or big sister were part of the performance, did they listen – and more importantly, learn to listen – differently than the idiosyncratic headphone wearer of today? With the limitless personal listening kids can do today, is the teaching of listening "skills" more or less important?

It's argued that in much the same way we acquire the complex processes of language and simply learn to talk (initially with no knowledge of rules), we accumulate contextual listening abilities with music. Our language facility serves a utilitarian purpose, and of course we're situated in and among family members through

that learning process. While music usually serves in a more discretionary framework, our measures of what fits (as with language) common musical expectations and what doesn't is remarkably well developed, even as young children. Style recognition and preferences, and recognizing when things "aren't right" (don't fit expectations) seem to come naturally. But there's more, which is where our job as teachers enter the picture. Shared involvement in listening can be a powerful, teacher guided experience, especially if done often and systematically.

The formal and informal "rules" of music listening come to kids through critical listening as young players in the classroom. Making choices, picking instruments, solving problems ... these are active participatory processes that force kids to listen and reflect, recognize patterns, and to refine their emotional responses. Most of that accrues naturally and somewhat informally, although in educationally "formal" settings. As an aside on the term *formal*, we can (also) confuse presenting rigid notational knowledge with the elements of formal musical knowledge. That's something of an associative trap that leans in the general direction of teaching towards literacy, especially with our youngest students for whom notation isn't very meaningful. I believe that reflective, refined listening and responses can be nurtured and explored via engagement as little players through active imitative strategies. Indeed, learning to chant "ta's and ti-ti's" isn't contributing much with little ones, and is somewhat analogous to college sophomores hunting down secondary dominants in excerpts for which they haven't the slightest aural recognition or appreciation.

The experience of actively listening with others has been widely argued to be a direct musical experience as

part of "musicing" (Elliott) for at least twenty years. Connecting to others via shared listening experiences shapes identities and connects kids, which is a modestly distinct kind of "musiking" – yes, with a k (Small). Engaging in the classroom listening experience is a highly inclusive social phenomena that joins kids together in meaningful ways. Actually guiding their critical and emotional responses within social and cultural norms is one of the more meaningful lessons we'll ever offer them. They don't have to agree all the time, but knowing there's a need to listen reasonably carefully and focus their attention not only on what to listen to, but how to listen (what to listen *for*) will serve kids of all ages well for a lifetime.

Most parents, colleagues, etc., can agree that we should allow our schools to offer more opportunities developing the life of the mind. The call for higher expectations goes on, and listening to music is entirely consistent with that (before even considering the rich traditions of great literature, history, and culture connections to core curricula). We ought not shrink from the promotion of systematic, serious musical listening as intellectual in nature, and as the coalescence of the intellect and the emotional.

Listening is the first thing we do, and it will be our lasting engagement with music. If we really value it, then it deserves our full attention.

Elliott, D. (1995). *Music Matters*. Oxford University Press.

Small, C (1998). *The Meanings of Performing and Listening*. Wesleyan University Press.

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Kyle Chandler Research Chair

Using Research in our Teaching: Locating Sources

Have you ever been asked to provide evidence or justification for your teaching practices? Have you ever had a question about how to improve your teaching practices? If you answered yes to either one of these questions did you know how to locate sources to help address these items? If you did know how to locate (and assumingly utilize) these sources then you should skim through the rest of this article and feel good about the skills you have acquired (really, you should feel pleased – no sarcasm intended!). If you do not know where to go to find legitimate professional sources, read on, there may be some answers for you below!

In my previous article (May 2013) – *Using Research in our Teaching*, I outlined five areas where music educators can obtain information pertaining to the teaching-learning enterprise: (1) Tradition; (2) *Expert Opinion*; (3) Experience/Intuition; (4) Evidence-Based Research; and (5) Combinations of these four areas. The purpose of part 1 was to outline these areas with the aim of helping music educators evaluate the professional sources. If you need a refresher, see the Fall September 2013 Segue edition. Part 1, in summary, is to build a foundation of strong teaching practices based upon evidence-based research (#4) in combination (#5) with what we know works in our individual setting (#3) and what others have reported to work for them (#2 and #1).

The purpose of part 2 is to highlight the primary professional resources that

support the evidence-based foundation (#4) of strong teaching practices. Respectable music educators possess music content knowledge (CK), music skill knowledge (SK) to demonstrate and lead successful lessons/rehearsals, and utilize pedagogical knowledge (PK – i.e. how to teach) appropriate for the individual/group teaching context. The best music educators know how to blend PK, CK, and SK into Pedagogical Content Skill Knowledge (PCSK) for the most effective instruction whether that is teaching general music to a class of thirty fourth grade students or preparing the secondary performance ensemble for the next concert. Reading research and then applying what we have read and learned from others is an excellent way to continue the process of becoming a more effective music educator.

Resources – Professional Handbooks

The Handbook of Research on Music Teaching and Learning edited by Richard Colwell (1992) and *The New Handbook of Research on Music Teaching and Learning* edited by Richard Colwell and Carol Richardson (2002) are two main staples of music education research. These two companion handbooks contain the research and writings of our music teaching profession. At about 1000 pages each divided into parts (e.g. Musical Development and Learning) and chapters within those parts (e.g. Developmental Characteristics of Musical Learners or Creativity Research in Music, Visual Art, Theater, and Dance) they should be one of the first places we stop to “shop” when seeking information about the music teaching-learning venture. Unless you have a significant other who will buy these expensive but invaluable tools (my wife did for

me!), your best bet is to go to your local university/college and read them (yes, the old fashioned way where we physically move from one location to another). Some parts and/or chapters within those parts have been made available in smaller chunks (i.e. a book of 100-200 pages containing 5-6 related chapters), which might be an option. Either way, these are the gold standard for understanding music teaching and learning. Other textbooks (e.g. Lehmann, Sloboda, Woody (2007) and Parncutt & McPherson (2002)) covering significant parts of music education research exist, but do not contain the same depth and breadth as the two handbooks.

Periodical Databases

Valuable music education resources can be accessed electronically through Google Scholar, though, at the present time I am not certain this search engine is on par with one of three primary music education/music periodical databases; namely, *Music Index*, *Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale Abstracts* (RILM), and the *International Index to Music Periodicals* (IIMP). University/College libraries should carry a subscription to at least one of these search engines. Once in you can use their search features to access publications (highlighted below) pertaining to a topic of interest (e.g. music practice). One of the challenges of reading articles is to know which publications are objective and evidence-based and which are more subjective and opinion-based (that is part 3 in this series of articles).

Research Journals

Research journals are typically evidence-based and the authors attempt to remain objective when examining an issue, and when objectivity cannot be fully established,

they attempt to state how their orientation towards the topic may bias their report (i.e. they attempt to provide honest commentary). Some of the primary music education journals are:

- *British Journal of Music Education: BJME*
- *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education (CRME)*
- *Contributions to Music Education*
- *International Journal of Music Education*
- *Journal of Band Research*
- *The Journal of Historical Research in Music Education*
- *Journal of Music Teacher Education*
- *Journal of Research in Music Education (JRME)*
- *Music Perception*
- *Philosophy of Music Education Review*
- *Psychology of Music*
- *Research Studies in Music Education*
- *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*

Practitioner Publications

Many of us are familiar with practitioner publications as they are made available through our professional organizations (e.g. see NAfME note under the references). They exist in a great majority of professions, including music. Often the authors of these articles provide anecdotes based upon what has worked in their experiences and/or what has traditionally been done in the profession. Music is no different. Though the writers of these articles are likely more subjective rather than objective, the material they cover does provide one source from which music educators can learn how to teach. A few examples are:

- *Arts Education Policy Review*
- *American Choral Review*
- *American Music Teacher*
- *Choral Journal*
- *General Music Today*
- *Instrumentalist*
- *Music Educators Journal*
- *Teaching Music*

Conclusion

Striving to become a better music educator is a process in developing knowledge and skills in a variety of areas. Knowing where to go when seeking answers to questions to improve instruction is an important step in that process. The two handbooks first highlighted in the text above provide the greatest organized breadth and depth of music education research. The primary music education/music periodical databases (Music Index, RILM, IIMP) provide the conduit through which professional music education research journals and practitioner publications can be accessed by using search terms specific to your chosen

topic. Phillips (2008) provides a good overview of many of these publications. Once you know where to look the next step is learning how to read and comprehend the research, which is the focus of part three in this series.

NAfME Resources Access

For those who are NAfME members you can follow these steps to access their professional research journals and practitioner publications.

1. Go to www.nafme.org
2. Select the “for Music Educators” tab, at top of the page
3. Select “Resources” (top of page)
4. Select “Periodicals” (left sidebar)
5. Choose the publication in which you would like to search, and log in using your email address and NAfME membership number.

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If We Build It They Will Come: Using Music Technology to Reach The *Other* 80% in Secondary School Programs

We begin children's elementary music experience by encouraging everyone to join in music making through singing and performing on rhythm instruments, autoharps, recorders, flutophones, and more. Music making and music learning include one and all; everyone gets to participate. Music teachers use participatory music making as a way to introduce concepts of rhythm, pitch, melodic shape and harmonic changes, and form and style.

Then what happens? As our students matriculate through levels of schooling, music participation becomes more selective. We move from participatory music making as a model to the traditional performance model where perfection is a key goal: no wrong notes and fewer opportunities for creative music expression. Performance ensembles—band, orchestra, chorus, marching band and jazz band—dominate the secondary music curriculum with a general music class or advanced placement theory perhaps added to the curriculum.

For those students attracted to these ensembles the benefits of this training and experience is expansive and well documented. Some students go on to professional music careers; others carry their extra-musical and musical experiences with them into other careers and as an integral part of their personal lives. We are not advocating changing this component of our nation's music education tradition.

Dave Williams' review of several studies (Williams, 2012) has shown that on average across the country, by the time students advance through

middle school to high school, only 20 percent of students are involved in these traditional music classes (also see Elpus and Abril, 2011 and NJAEP, 2014). Many students who participated in music making in the lower grades have since distanced themselves from school music. These are what we call "The Other 80%," the students who no longer are active in the traditional secondary school music program. It is further insightful, that while nationally only 20 percent on average are involved in traditional secondary performance ensembles, a much greater percentage of students sing or play an instrument outside of school. The longitudinal series of studies, Monitoring the Future (Johnston et al., 2010), showed that over some 30 years, an average 57% of students in 8th, 10th, and 12th grades—not just those in music classes—reported that they play an instrument or sing outside of school at least once or twice a month if not daily. In terms of lifelong music making, the NAMM-commissioned Gallup survey (NAMM, 2003) showed that 54% of households have someone that plays a musical instrument and 48% play two or more (see Williams, 2012, for a full discussion of these data).

McAllester's predictions in the 1967 Tanglewood report were incredibly prescient. He stated some 60 years ago:

"We have a splendid beginning in the early grades, when children are sometimes lucky enough to get acquainted with rhythm and melody on all sorts of

simple and unconventional instruments. They have the thrill of exploring the delights of free creativity without a long apprenticeship in technique first.... We might entertain the idea that someone who never does develop skills on conventional instruments could become a gifted performer on unconventional ones.... Someone who never learned to read conventional notation might nonetheless become an outstanding composer in some medium where notation has yet to be invented, or may even be impossible to invent" (p. 97).

Field of Dreams. Change is on the horizon with new playing fields designed within our traditional music curriculum. Music teachers, innovative and self-motivated, are creating new environments for The-Other-80% to explore students' creative music potential. It is being done in many ways: song writing, guitar and ukulele ensembles, Mariachi bands, drumming circles, and various ethnic ensembles. All these activities help bridge music education in school with music in society and use these activities to nurture a greater knowledge and appreciation of the building blocks of music that encourage lifelong music making. They do so with the challenge, like Ray Kinsella dreaming of the return of Shoeless Joe Jackson to baseball, that "if we build it, they will come."

Technology at Bat. An ever-expanding group of teachers is using music technology as a strategy to reach these students. They are using laptops and tablets with software like GarageBand, Mixcraft, and Ableton Live, to engage these "non-traditional" students in ways that nurture creative performing and composing talents.

Reading traditional notation and performing on traditional instruments are not, as McAllester suggested, a prerequisite—students’ ears become their guide with the music teacher as their music creativity coach. We built the website <http://musiccreativity.org> several years ago as a way to collect the stories of music teachers who were building their own music technology field of dreams; an online forum to share success stories working with non-traditional music students. Like those teachers implementing guitar and ukulele ensembles, the students motivated to make music through technology were discovering ways to bridge school music training with the music they enjoyed in society: rock, hip-hop, DJ mixes, mash-ups, jazz and more.

Go the Distance! In Rick Dammers’ research (Dammers, 2012), he found that some 14 percent of high schools in the nation have some form of technology-based music classes. On our website (musiccreativity.org) you will find some 30 profiles of teachers who have been successful using technology to build programs for the non-traditional students. They often start with one class—perhaps even an after-school activity. As the program expands, the profiles show more advanced classes added in music technology, MIDI-based performance ensembles, studio recording and mixing, and even student-managed recording labels. As the voice to Kinsella encouraged, “go the distance,” the success of these programs develop their own kinetic energy. Students, some academically or behaviorally challenged, gain self-confidence, increased positive attitudes, and find intrinsic reward from creating and performing music in new and novel ways.

Take the Initiative and Build It? You may be asking, as Ray Kinsella did, “What’s in it for me?” Following the belief shared by most music teachers that if music is important, it is important for everyone, creating a

technology-based music class can be tremendously rewarding, both through successfully reaching the ‘other 80%’ student and through exploring the creative pedagogical possibilities offered by technology. Beyond these rewards, the expansion of the music program improves the program’s position within the school, since the more students that study music, the more important music will be to the school.

A perusal of the profiles on our website will show technology programs that have greatly expanded from the first class offering. These programs have grown large enough with expanded student interest that the school administration begins to view them as integral to overall curriculum and are more proactive in providing new funding and resources to ensure their continual success (e.g., profiles on our website from Greenwich H.S. in Connecticut, Brookfield H.S. in Georgia, and Lebanon H.S. in Ohio). In one high school, some 60 percent of students take at least one music technology class. Further, these teachers report that many students continue after graduation to college study in music performance, business, recording, and technology.

You may be surprised to find that your school administrator is more supportive of classes for the non-traditional music student than you think. Rick’s survey of secondary school administrators (Dammers, 2012) found that two-thirds of high school principals surveyed agree that music technology classes would be valuable in their schools and 56% who offer no music technology indicated that it would be feasible to offer such a class in their school.

Whether you use ukuleles or GarageBand, take the initiative and create an experience designed for the non-traditional music student. If you build it, not only the other 80% will come, but the sponsors will as well—the parents and administrators!

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Kathy Robison

Guest Opinion Article

But I was hired to teach music!

Many of you may have said these words in the last few years. You may now be teaching an intervention group outside of your subject area. You may be teaching music for four hours a day and teaching math or literacy for an hour or more each day. This can be a frustrating experience for you because you do not feel adequately prepared to teach a subject for which you have not had training. It is also frustrating because you know that there are so many things you could be doing with that time to help make your music program more successful. How can you make the best of this challenging teaching situation? I have a few suggestions to make the experience effective for you and the students involved.

1. Attitude makes the difference. If you are required to do tutoring or interventions, realize that this is considered part of your job. My teaching contract states that I am responsible for “student instruction and supervision.” It does not specify only “music”. We are all responsible for teaching the whole child. Consider this instruction time a special opportunity to work with students who really need your help. Choose to do your best to make this a successful experience for each child.

2. Spend some time researching effective teaching strategies and resources. If you do not feel competent teaching math or literacy, start searching for activities on the Internet that will help you. I am responsible for working with two groups of first grade students with

their math skills. I search frequently for worksheets, games and websites that will help these children to practice their math skills. Keep in contact with the classroom teacher. Ask the teachers what they need you to work on with the students. Make sure you know the Common Core Standards or state standards for the subject and grade level you are teaching. For the state of Arkansas, these standards can be found at www.arkansased.org

3. Take ownership of this teaching situation. You may or may not be responsible for making lesson plans for this tutoring or intervention group. If you are, make sure that your plans are complete and thorough. This will help you to keep the students on task and you will be more effective. If you are not making the lesson plans be sure that you understand what the classroom teachers’ expectations are for this group. I prefer to have my intervention groups in my own classroom. This helps to establish that I am the teacher responsible for this learning situation. I also make plans for the group each week and email them to the classroom teachers. I always ask the classroom teachers if there are any other skills that the students need to be practicing. At the end of the week I send the classroom teachers documentation of what we were able to accomplish that week. (I never complete the entire lesson plan, because I over plan!) It has been very effective for me to do the planning for the intervention group.

4. Be prepared for frustration. Be prepared for joy! This teaching assignment may breed frustration because the students you are working with are struggling learners. They are in an intervention group because they are having learning difficulties. They may learn the concepts that you are working on very slowly or perhaps not at all. You

may also be dealing with students who have behavior issues. A child may be attention deficient and this has caused them to get behind in their schoolwork. Sometimes the group of students may be very excitable and talkative. The frustrations are very real and they are daily. However, there may be true joy in working with these students. You have an opportunity to give the students successful experiences in a subject they are struggling with in school. You will also get to know these students on a more personal level than you would in a once a week music class.

5. Document, document and then be sure you have documentation! Interventions must be documented. You should document what you plan to do and what the students are able to accomplish. Your documentation may be needed to help determine if these students need to be receiving special education services. Documentation will also help you to see each student’s areas of weakness so that you may better address their needs.

6. Let your principal know when you need to focus on music. If you have a program coming up be sure to let your principal know that you may need time off from the interventions so that you can rehearse for performances. It is best to ask early and be very specific about your needs. Remind your principal that many parents will see your program and that it is important to showcase the students at their best.

7. Use music to motivate your intervention groups. The music room is a fun place to be. Give students a few minutes of free time with your classroom instruments if they complete all their intervention work. Use songs to review the concepts they need to study. This could include phonics songs, counting songs, etc. Let the students have a few minutes at

the end of your session for movement to an upbeat song. They will love your music class even more and this will reinforce that your room is a great place to be and to learn.

8. Remember it is not about YOU! In any school the number one client or customer is the student. We know that as music teachers we are valuable to our schools. We know how much our students need music, but the students in your intervention group need extra help academically. Consider it an honor and a privilege to work with these students.

9. Remember we teach children not just subjects (music, math, phonics, whatever.) Yes, your chosen subject matter is music. That's what you have spent your life preparing to do. But we are called to teach children, first. We teach children music. We teach children math. When I graduated from college thirty years ago I was well prepared to teach music to children. Thirty years later I am just beginning to learn how to teach children music!

10. Remember you are blessed! You get to teach music! Sometimes I wonder if it is even a job! We are blessed by beautiful music that touches our hearts and souls. We are also blessed to work with precious children who are our future. Because we are so blessed we can do a great job teaching math and literacy as well!

Kathy Robison serves on the Arkansas Music Educators board as the Northeast Region chairperson. She holds the B.A. and M.A.T. from Harding University, has completed Orff-Schulwerk Levels 1-3 at the University of Central Arkansas, and has taught elementary music in the Newport School District for 31 years. She is a National Board Certified Teacher in Early and Middle Childhood music.



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ArkMEA Capitol Concert MIOSM 2014

by Bart Dooley MIOSM Chair

The 17th Annual Capitol Concerts were held March 5th in the rotunda of the Arkansas State Capitol. Despite the icy weather which canceled the first day of concerts on March 4th, we still had a successful performance. Nearly 200 students from 7 schools joined their voices in singing the music of the 2014 Concert for Music In Our Schools Month.

Wilson Intermediate 6th Grade Choir from Malvern under the direction of Jennifer Lunsford kicked off the program with *Tue Tue*, a lively African piece. Immediately after, the Ruth Doyle Middle School Choir from Conway directed by Patty Oeste performed a dramatic *Adiemus* by Carl Jenkins, accompanied by percussion instruments. Continuing the concert was the Nashville Elementary Scrapper Singers under the direction of Jaree Hall singing the inspirational song *I Have A Dream* by John Jacobson. During the concert the Kirby High School Chorus directed by Bill Hathcote sang A Capella the beautiful *Now is the Month of Maying* by Thomas Morley.

Joining these students for the mass choir selections were Goza Middle School 6th Grade Choir directed by Laura Cornelius, Kirby Elementary 4th, 5th and 6th Grade Choir directed by Bill Hathcote and Monticello Intermediate School Treble Choir directed by Haley Greer.

Our special guest speakers for the concert were the entertaining *Trout Fishing In America*, a musical duo of

Ezra Idlet and Keith Grimwood who perform folk rock and children's music all over the world. Their presentation was very inspiring and entertaining. Special thanks to ArkMEA member Delynn West for arranging their appearance. For more information on this group, look at their website www.troutmusic.com. Also speaking was Dr. Paige Rose, ArkMEA President on advocacy for music education.

Because of the icy conditions around the state several schools prepared to perform, but could not attend (including my own choir). We would like to honor those choirs and their directors for their preparations: Jonesboro Visual and Performing Arts Chorale and Suzuki Strings directed by Elaine Bartee, Southside Elementary School 3rd and 4th Grade Honor Choir from Batesville directed by Dawn Harris, Ellen Smith Elementary Tiger Tones from Conway directed by Christina White, Beryl Henry Elementary 5th and 6th Grade Choir from Hope directed by Sandra Jones, and Ida Burns Elementary 4th Grade Choir from Conway, directed by Bart Dooley. I would like to encourage all of these schools to reapply for next year, and would also like to have many other schools join us for MIOSM 2015!

Bart Dooley teaches music at Ida Burns Elementary in Conway, AR.



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What's under your shirt?

I have a huge 'S' under mine, since I define myself as a "SuperMusician". We, as music educators, defy all odds, and are capable of juggling more than what should be humanly possible. While we are the Clark Kent of our profession, others just see the average teacher, having no idea what it takes to pull off Spring musicals, end of the year concerts, auditions for the upcoming school year, graduations, talent shows, grade-level programs, recruitment meetings, and award ceremonies. It seems no one understands, especially if you are the only music educator in your district. However, realize that as a music educator, you are a superhuman and are in good company when surrounded by other music educators.

Even with the extra curricular events you have going on in April and May, (and for the Northern part of the state, June), should your auto-pilot switch be turned on right now? Are you giving your students your best, and pushing yourself to think creatively and outside the box? I know what you're thinking, "I can't possibly give anymore than what I have already given, I'll just let John Jacobson teach my class today." "Animusic is a great educational film." "They can watch Frozen again (even though they've watched it 10 times in their other classes)." "Kids, it's a free day." "If I can just make it 3 more weeks (or if you had 20+ snow days-if I can make it 6 more weeks)." These are all very normal thoughts, and I myself have

Amber Moss Elementary Chair

been there frequently. My husband, who is a very talented band director, challenges me to give my students the best music education I possibly can, and I challenge him as well. So, how do we make sure we're giving our students great experiences at the end of the year when our strength is gone because of the "kryptonite" of our end of the year responsibilities?

Think outside the box! Here are some tried and true activities that have been successful in planning end of the year activities in my general music classrooms at the elementary and middle school level. These are just basic ideas, use your creativity to enhance and make each activity your own. Remember, you are a musician first and foremost! You know more than your students even if you're attempting to teach something new to you for the first time. Be bold, be brave, and take a flying leap!

For those teaching 40 minute music classes once a week: Creating centers for Kindergarten-2nd grade students is a life saver for the last 2-4 weeks of school! Have 5-6 different stations set up when your students come into the room. I used the following: books about music (for kindergarten you can use books that are on cd or tape), drumming, instrument memory game, writing/drawing about music, Orff instruments, Promethean (I had Groovy music pulled up for students to work through), and dancing. Divide your class into groups of 4-5 students per station and keep track of which station they ended on. Use 2 rotations per class period to extend to several weeks of station playing time. Have you ever had a coffee shop poetry slam in your classroom? My 4th grade students loved creating a poem based on a piece of orchestral music ("Rhapsody on a Theme..." by Rachmaninoff) then performing their poem on stage with dim lighting, Christmas lights from the ceiling, and a hand drum to enhance/accompany

their performance. This activity takes about 3-4 weeks, and their grade level teachers LOVED that I taught one of their standards in my class. For 1st grade students, you could have them compose 4 beat patterns using a combination of quarter notes, eighth notes, and quarter rests. Once each student has their own pattern, separate into groups of 4-5 and have those students put their patterns together to create a mini-song. Allow students to pick instruments to perform their compositions on. I always did a lottery drawing where I had different instruments written on paper and groups had to draw their instrument from the hat. Everyone in their group would play the same instrument. This activity takes about 3-4 weeks.

For those teaching 40-50 minute music classes daily (on a "wheel" rotation): My 6th graders enjoyed creating their own instruments from recycled items and then performing in a group for the class (2-3 week activity). My current 8th graders have enjoyed composing music using only symbols for items in a mystery box. Then, other groups in the class had to perform the compositions using only the symbols that were written (2-3 week activity). Improv is one of the hardest things to teach. Why not allow your students the chance to improvise using an actor's warm-up game (think Whose Line is it Anyways)? Have 3-4 students create a scene of your choice, and give them a letter to start on. Each student can only start their sentence with the next letter until they go through the entire alphabet back to the letter they started with. This activity has definitely proven itself to be one of my students' favorites.

I challenge you to muster up some creativity for the end of the year. Don't hide behind your Clark Kent glasses. Be the SuperMusician I know you are! Gather up your sidekicks and end your school year with a BANG!, POW!, BLAM!, or if you're like me and love The Big Bang Theory- BAZINGA!

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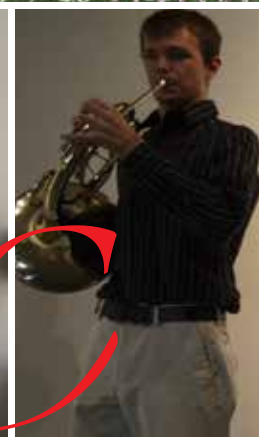
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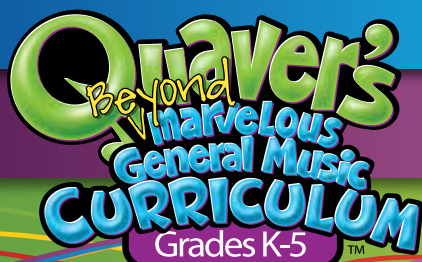
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