

ARKMEA

February 2022



PRESIDENT'S NOTE



Greetings fellow Arkansas Educators,

I hope this note finds you well, rejuvenated, and excited about the upcoming semester. As the spring semester gets underway, I always find myself looking forward to various professional conferences. For me, these conferences are filled with opportunities to learn new skills, listen to exemplary ensembles, and reconnect with friends.

This year is no different as we prepare for the upcoming Arkansas All-State Music Conference. For many of us, myself included, this is the first time to receive in-person professional development since the spring of 2020. ArkMEA is proud to be sponsoring four presentations at this year's Arkansas All-State Music Conference. Each of these feature innovative and inspirational Arkansas educators, and we hope you will make it a point to attend these sessions.

In addition, I want to encourage all of our members to take the time to reconnect with your colleagues, have a cup of coffee, and share your struggles and triumphs from the past 23 months. Strengthen relationships. Make new connections. Find ways to support your friends and colleagues. We have the ability to do all of these things when we gather together to celebrate our students and music.

Now, more than ever before, I look forward to these opportunities. I have no doubt that I will be inspired by the sessions and performances of the conference, and I cannot wait to have the chance to learn from friends from across our great state.

My very best to you as you begin the new semester. Please know that ArkMEA's State Board is enthusiastic about serving Arkansas educators in new and inventive ways. We would like to invite you to reach out to our board. Let us know how ArkMEA can best serve the educators in our state, share your ideas, and help us cultivate engaging opportunities for all music educators.

Looking forward,

Kevin

Kevin Coker
President
ArkMEA

ARKMEA

*The ArkMEA journal is the official publication
of the Arkansas Music Educators Association.*

BOARD MEMBERS

EXECUTIVE BOARD

President // Kevin Coker

President-Elect // CamRyn Stillman

Treasurer // Teddy Nguyen

Secretary // Kathy Robison

State Executive // Jaree Hall

JOURNAL EDITORIAL STAFF

Content Editor // Christa Kuebel

Marketing Coordinator // Sarah Gwatney

Layout Editor // Missy Husereau

DIVISION CHAIRS

Band // Nikki Cook

Choir // Tanner Oglesby

Elementary // Phylicia Butler

Mentorship // Delynn West

Collegiate // Jenn Hawkinson

Research Coordinator // Daniel Abrahams

Technology // Darla Corral

Innovations // James Maestri

Professional Development // Paul Mayhew

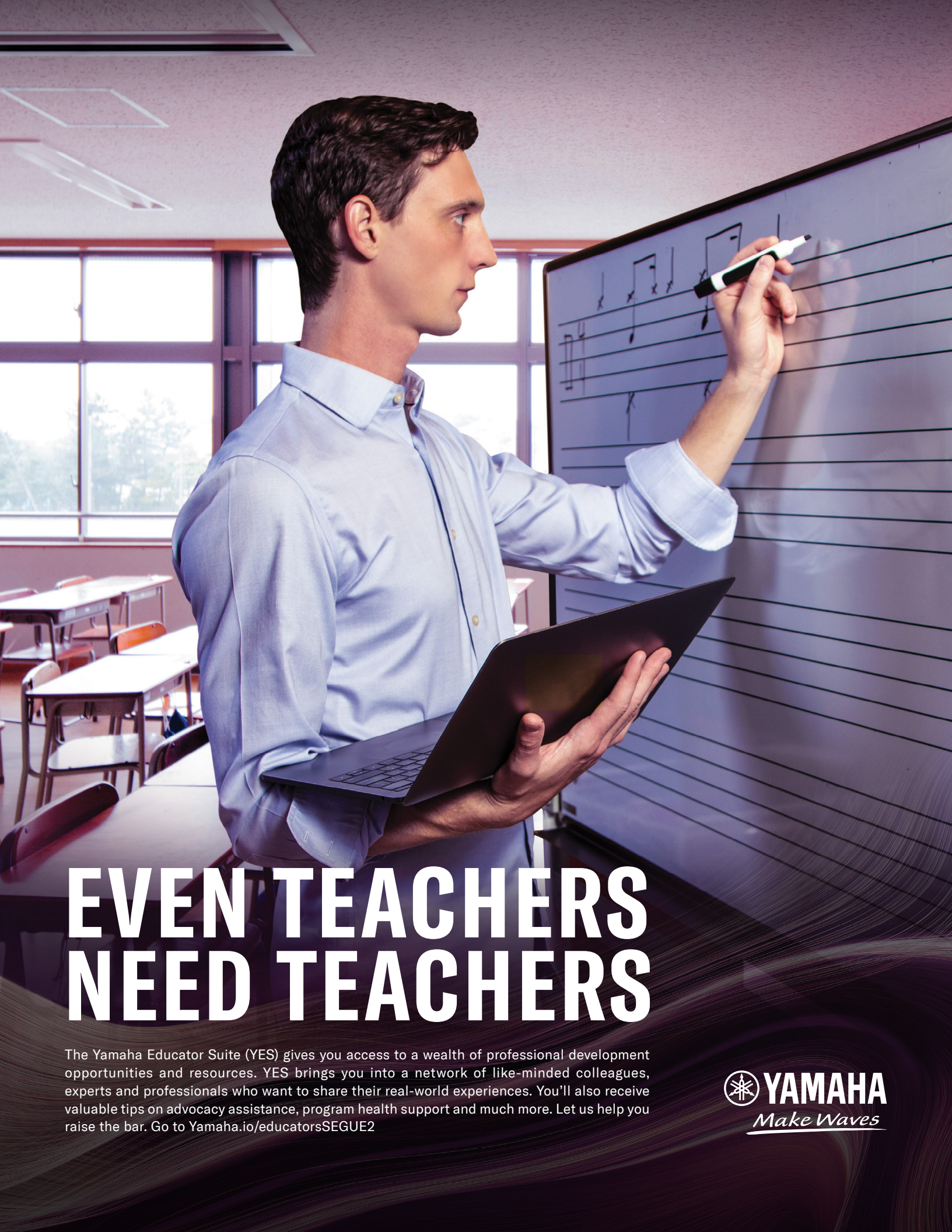
Music in Our Schools // Bart Dooley

Membership // Maya Johnson



CONTENTS

- 5** **Music in Our Schools Month**
- 6** **Tech Tip Tuesdays**
- 7** **7 Tips for Teachers To Get Today's Students to Practice More**
- 10** **What Do New Choral Singers *REALLY* Need to Know**
- 15** **Student-Centered Learning Through Game Creation**
- 18** **Let's Rock This Year! Integrating Modern Band Concepts to Improve Student Motivation**
- 24** **Introducing SYNC! Supporting Your Newest Colleagues**
- 25** **Using Research in Your Music Classrooms**
- 30** **Self-Care for Music Educators**



EVEN TEACHERS NEED TEACHERS

The Yamaha Educator Suite (YES) gives you access to a wealth of professional development opportunities and resources. YES brings you into a network of like-minded colleagues, experts and professionals who want to share their real-world experiences. You'll also receive valuable tips on advocacy assistance, program health support and much more. Let us help you raise the bar. Go to Yamaha.io/educatorsSEGUE2



MUSIC IN OUR SCHOOLS MONTH

Bart Dooley / ArkMEA MIOSM Chair

Music In Our Schools Month 2022 is fast approaching. Unfortunately, we are not able to hold our annual celebration at the State Capital this year as they are not hosting in-person musical performances. We are hoping we can celebrate together again in 2023! While we cannot be together, we are encouraging you to continue to celebrate this important month with your students. The theme “Music the Sound of my Heart” is being continued again this year, a very fitting theme for this time.

NAfME has several suggestions and ideas on their [website](#) to assist you

during MIOSM, including lesson plans for Kindergarten through 5th grade. Many of the lessons are based on folk songs and include the history behind the songs, movements, and listening guides

to accompany the lessons.

Most lessons do not have to be “locked” into a specific grade and can be taught and enjoyed across many classes.

Download the logo and change your profile picture on

social media during March. There are many other suggestions and activities on the website and more to come in early 2022. Make sure and revisit the website in February and March for updates!



MUSIC IN OUR SCHOOLS MONTH 



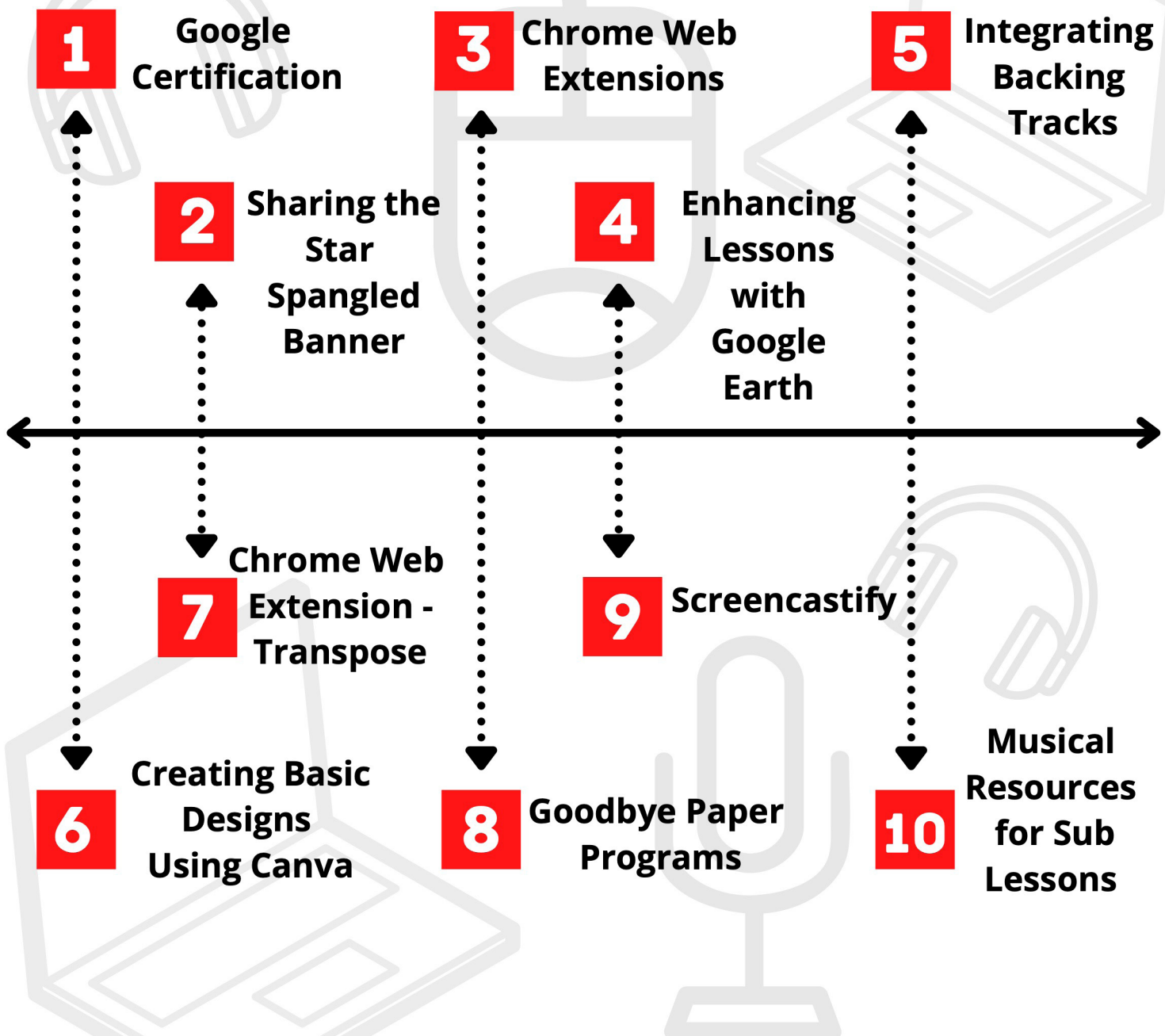
Bart Dooley is currently in his 22nd year as a public school music educator in Conway. Bart received three music degrees from the University of Central Arkansas. He has taught private piano and voice lessons through the University of Central Arkansas Community School of Music for 25 years. He has been an accompanist for the UCA Voices of Central Arkansas choir for 16 years. Bart has served on the ArkMEA board at MIOSM chair for 13 years and Fall Festival Choir chair for 3 years. He has also been a piano accompanist for the Arkansas Choral Connection Choir Camp since 2003. Bart is also on the CAFTA (Conway Alliance for the Arts) board. He is assistant music minister for Central Baptist Church in Conway.

TECH TIP TUESDAYS

Darla Corral (Technology Chair) and James Maestri (Innovations Chair) have started a weekly program to help music educators throughout Arkansas with music and regular classroom technology.



Below are the first 10 Tech Tips of Tech Tip Tuesday. Tips are posted weekly on the ArkMEA website. Click on the red box next to the title to view the tip. Reach out to us about general education or music technology that you need help with at www.arkmea.org.



7 TIPS FOR TEACHERS TO GET TODAY'S STUDENTS TO PRACTICE MORE

By **NAfME Member Donna Schwartz**

Original article on [Donna Schwartz: Where Music Matters](#)

Reprinted with permission from National Association for Music Education (NAfME).
The original article published on April 14, 2015 can be found [here](#)

A colleague of mine made a great point: she said that kids show up to sports practice or ballet and do the work there. They are usually not expected to go home and work more (unless they are going to be Olympic athletes). So there's this expectation that students will learn whatever they need during their music lesson and not need to put extra time in at home. This is reinforced at home because as music programs get taken out of schools, less people are exposed to performance programs, and do not know what is involved with creating music.



What can we do to get our students to practice more?

Here are some ideas that I have used or have heard other well-known teachers implement. Some of these ideas will take time, but are worth it in the long run...

1. **Get to know each of your students.** This is a tall order, but showing interest in your students' lives builds trust. When you bring the conversation outside of music, it shows you are interested in more than one aspect of who they are. It shows you care about them as people. This can be as simple as noticing and talking about a special sticker on a student's folder to complementing them on an accomplishment in another subject or sport.
2. A great tip I heard from a colleague (Mickey F.) was this: He tells his students making mistakes is fine, but **make NEW mistakes!** He doesn't want to hear the same OLD mistakes over and over. To reinforce this, he uses different colored pencils to show them that they made an old mistake and he doesn't

want to hear that mistake again.

3. If the student keeps coming up with the excuse that they don't have time, and they are of elementary school age, I wouldn't hesitate to **contact the parent** via email or phone to find out more about the situation. I would explain that their child is falling behind in their learning and try to come up with a practice plan with that parent.
4. When you get to the upper middle or high school level, contacting the parents will not be as effective. Using groups or teamwork for the upper grades can be helpful. Some teachers have had **"competitions" amongst the sections in their ensemble** to see who has been able to perform specific examples or pieces the most accurately or the quickest. Think of having prizes, possibly an end of the year party during a group's lesson time.
5. When I teach my beginners, I know the main reason they took an instrument was to learn to play songs. I use concepts from the well-researched Music Learning Theory to **teach students how to play songs by ear** while they are learning playing technique. I have seen some amazing results from this, and it is very rare when I have a student drop Band during this time. I keep it simple, and introduce small achievable steps in each lesson.
6. Many teachers use **external reward systems** with a lot of success, whether it's stickers, prizes or earning sheet music to popular songs for the student's particular instrument.
7. Lastly, **educate the parents**. As stated above, with each generation, less and less people are getting exposed to the joy of performing music, and do not understand the effort involved in mastering a piece of music.

Meet with parents on Open School Night, hold a special meeting for parents during Band/Orchestra Recruitment Time, or create a monthly newsletter that keeps parents up to date on the events in your program. (I use monthly newsletters to keep parents informed and to outline what pieces we are working on, exercises to be accomplished, and I place a practice log so students can write in their practice minutes.)

Do any of these ideas resonate with you? Do you have stories or techniques that you have used that have been effective?

Share your ideas and experiences on Amplify, the online community for music educators!



Donna Schwartz has been teaching band, jazz band, and general music in public schools for over 13 years, and private brass and saxophone lessons for over 26 years. She is known for coming up with solutions to common performance problems, in particular brass embouchure issues.

Schwartz has studied with Vince Penzarella, Laurie Frink, Ed Treutel, Mel Broiles, Lou Doboe and Jeff Lange. She has her own radio show, entitled "The Music Teacher's Resource Guide," on the BAM Radio Network. Contact her at DonnaSchwartzMusic.com.

NORTHEASTERN STATE UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT *of Music*

Tahlequah, Oklahoma campus

2022 Priority Audition Dates for Scholarship & Program Admission:

Feb. 12 / March 11 / by appointment

PROGRAMS OF STUDY:

Bachelor of Music Education (*Instrumental, Vocal*)

Bachelor of Arts in Music (*Professional*)

- » Jazz Studies & Commercial Music
- » Performance

Bachelor of Arts in Music (*Liberal Arts*)

- » Musical Arts
- » Music (Business)



NORTHEASTERN STATE UNIVERSITY
College of Liberal Arts
School of Visual and Performing Arts

NSUMusic.com
918.444.2700

@NSUMusic



WHAT DO NEW CHORAL SINGERS REALLY NEED TO KNOW

Dr. Matthew Bumbach

In my career, I have been blessed with the opportunity to teach at a small private school, a large public high school, a community college, two universities, and to direct community and church choirs. Some of these choirs were thriving when I came in and some needed rebuilding. No matter the age of the singers or the history of the institution, recruitment and retention were essential to the future of every choir. So, I forced myself to get good at it.

I read every article that I could find, talked to every trusted colleague, went to workshops, and imitated successful practices. No matter what I did, I still lost roughly 15% of all new singers after the first semester or season. I started to ask if our space wasn't welcoming. Was I not working hard enough to integrate those new singers? What was I doing wrong? So, I read more articles, talked to more colleagues, went to more workshops, and copied more practices. I still lost around the same percentage of new singers. There was no amount of community building, mentorship, or exciting performance that could convince those singers to stick with the choir.

Over time, I realized that those who had a background in music were more likely to stick with the choir after the first semester; singers with no prior experience in music usually

didn't stay. But something brought those new singers to the choir. There was clearly something about our community that they wanted to be a part of. One day a new singer with no prior musical experience came up to ask me a question about reading music and something clicked. I realized that singers weren't leaving because the community was unwelcoming, I was a weirdo, or they didn't enjoy making music. They left

because the experience of singing silly warm-ups, trying to interpret Western music notation, and the technical elements of the rehearsal process felt foreign to them. When they walked into the room, I didn't teach them about our choir's language and culture. Rather than showing new singers how Western music notation works, I said something like, "Sit next to Charlie. He's been in choir since the fourth grade. Do your best to follow along and ask Charlie if you have any questions." Then I would warm up the choir, lead them through sight-reading activities, and launch into some classical Western art music in

a foreign language. Most new singers would hang out for the semester or season because they made a commitment but, because they never learned the language and culture of the choir, they wouldn't re-enroll.

My twin daughters are just shy of two years old. They are in that exciting stage where

“
I realized that singers weren't leaving because the community was unwelcoming, I was a weirdo, or they didn't enjoy making music. They left because the experience of singing silly warm-ups, trying to interpret Western music notation, and the technical elements of the rehearsal process felt foreign to them.
”



they are picking up new words every day. And while they aren't yet able to communicate in sentences, they understand a lot of what we say. They aren't fluent in language yet. As a result, they are constantly frustrated by their inability to communicate and our inability to understand. I think new choral singers feel the same way. It would be silly to sit my daughters next to a four-year-old and say, "Sit next to Charlie. He's been talking for a few years now. Do your best to follow along and ask Charlie if you have any questions." They don't even have the tools to communicate what it is that they don't understand. We give toddlers simple instructions, demonstrations, repetition, and LOTS of patience because we know that their development requires it. But we sit our new singers down next to experienced singers and hope that they just "get it" by the third rehearsal. It just doesn't work!

So, how do we help new singers feel comfortable and experience success in choir? What do choral singers REALLY need to know?

There is a lot that brand-new singers need to learn but they don't need to know everything... not yet. It is probably ok to leave out the spelling and function of Italian, German, and French 6 chords. I don't think they will need to delve too deeply into harmony or counterpoint. But singers will need to know what is going on, what is happening in their score, and why choirs do the strange things that they do.

Here are some of the skills that every new singer needs to know... just the basics.

- Pitches and Rhythms
 - Musical Markings
 - How to Mark the Scores
 - Posture and Alignment
 - Breathing for Singers
 - How to Sing Vowels
 - What the Strange Equipment in the Choir Room is For
 - What Goes on During a Choral Rehearsal
 - How to Practice on Their Own
 - What a Director May Expect in an Audition
 - How to Prepare for a Concert
-



Pitches and Rhythms

Have you ever caught yourself telling a singer, “When the notes go up, your voice goes up”? I think we can all agree that it just isn’t that simple. There is much more to understanding Western music notation than up and down. Singers should understand measures, note durations and relationships, rests, pulse, meter, time signatures, flags, beams, and beats. After that, they will need to understand the staff, measures, clefs, pitch class, octave designations, accidentals, key signatures, and ledger lines. When they are familiar with the language of Western music they will feel more successful as they learn to read their scores.

Musical Markings

I try my best to explain to my singers what the musical markings found in the score mean. There are times, however, that I catch myself saying, “please observe the *ritardando* in measure 73” and just expect every singer to understand what a *ritardando* is. New singers need to be taught what

the Italian words and abbreviations in the score mean and how to execute those instructions. We need to teach them what musical symbols like breath marks, ties, and slurs mean. If we take the time to teach the most common musical markings, new singers will feel significantly more comfortable. Less common markings can be addressed as they appear in rehearsal.

How to Mark the Score

“Every good choral singer comes to rehearsal with a pencil.” I don’t believe there is anything wrong with that statement, except maybe implying that a singer without a pencil isn’t “good.” But the spirit of the statement is correct. There are countless musical decisions that must be added to the score because the average person cannot memorize every one of those musical decisions. So, we ask singers to write things in the score with a pencil. Marking breaths with a check mark or comma is easy enough. But do we really believe that a first-time choral singer

knows how to change the value of a note and add an appropriate rest when the director asks them to make this marking? Singers should be taught how to alter rhythms, number measures, add slurs, and even correct the occasional typo in the score. We must also teach our singers how to write a translation in the score and why it is so important.

Posture and Alignment

What is the difference between posture and alignment? What do we need to align and why? Perhaps even the seasoned directors among us don't fully understand the bones and muscles involved in good posture. But I'm sure that we all can look at a singer and make corrections to help them sing more freely. Singers need to know a bit more than "stand up straight." They should learn stretches that help to loosen up their muscles and a simple process to find their properly aligned singers' posture.

Breathing for Singing

We breathe without thinking most of the time, but singers must breathe with intention. Instructions like, "take a nice low breath" or "open up wide" may be meaningful to experienced singers, but new singers are unlikely to translate these phrases into anything useful. Phrases like, "breath from the diaphragm" can even be damaging because they don't mean anything. Singers should be taught how to plan their breaths and manage their air. We can teach these concepts through exercises that address the anatomy of breath and are simple enough for singers to practice on their own.

How to Sing Vowels

Like breathing, we use combinations of vowels and consonants every day and rarely have to think about them. Singing vowels, however, is tricky. An exhaustive lesson in IPA is probably overkill for brand-new singers and simply imitating their director's enunciation

is not enough. Singers should gain a basic understanding of how vowels are formed, how diphthongs and triphthongs are treated in singing, and how to make diction notations in their score.

What the Strange Equipment in the Choir Room is For

I have driven a car since the age of 16, but if I was asked to identify every part of an engine I would not succeed. Ask me what those parts do and I would fail spectacularly. Similarly, new choral singers may listen to music and even sing on their own, but they may have no idea why choirs use risers or why they need to have a pencil with them in every rehearsal. Explaining the function and purpose of our choral tools will help new singers feel more comfortable in the space.

What Goes on During a Choral Rehearsal

Why do we stretch before singing? Why am I singing silly songs that keep going up in pitch? Why are we buzzing our lips? Can't we just sing the song from beginning to end without stopping? New singers are probably thinking all those thoughts and, "Because it's good for you" is not an acceptable answer. Laying out the structure of a rehearsal for new singers and explaining the purposes of the activities can eliminate the surprise and embarrassment that is common in the first few rehearsals.

How to Practice On Their Own

Do we expect our singers to memorize their music? Is there movement with the song? How can they master those challenging melodic lines? With so much to learn, rehearsal time is not a luxury that most choirs have. Singers must practice some things on their own. New singers will probably not understand how to practice

music effectively. If we don't arm our singers with the tools that they need to be effective, their practice will quickly devolve into boredom and frustration. Sooner or later, they will give up on even trying to practice. Teaching our singers how to plan a short practice session, break down difficult passages, and slowly put the passage back together can help them to make good use of their practice time. Furthermore, by feeling successful they may even start to enjoy independent practice!

What a Director May Expect in an Audition

How do YOU run a choir audition? What about a solo audition? While every director may do things differently, every audition has common elements. By explaining how things will run, demonstrating the concepts, and letting singers practice the parts of the audition, we can eliminate some of the anxiety that singers carry into the audition room. Before long, we may even see an improvement in every singer's audition!

How to Prepare for a Concert

New singers might not understand the importance of a dress rehearsal. Perhaps it never occurred to them that their concert attire needs to be cleaned before the day of the concert. Or maybe they have no idea what or when they will eat that day. Taking time to prepare students for both the musical and non-musical parts of concert day is critically important. The preparation can help prevent forgotten socks, lack of hydration, or even the dreaded missing choir folder. Explaining concert day expectations is one of the most important ways to make new singers feel more comfortable and less anxious.

Singers join choirs because they want to be a part of a community that makes music together. Teaching them the language, rituals, and practices of our community makes new members feel welcome. And while fully embracing new members of our choir takes precious time, it can strengthen the entire community and ensure



its longevity. If we take the time to prepare new singers for the entirety of the choral experience, they are significantly more likely to integrate themselves and stick with our community. An ounce of retention, after all, is worth a pound of recruitment.



Dr. Matthew Bumbach is an assistant professor of music at University of the Ozarks in Clarksville, Arkansas. He is a sought-after conductor, composer, adjudicator, and clinician who has lectured and conducted throughout the United States. Dr. Bumbach earned his Doctor of Music Arts

degree from University of Miami's Frost School of Music. His research has been published by ACDA's *The Choral Journal*, NCCO's *The Choral Scholar*, *Chorus America's* Research Memorandum Series, and a number of state and regional journals.

STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING THROUGH GAME CREATION

By NAFME Member Tina A. Huynh *Reprinted with permission from National Association for Music Education (NAfME). The original article published on August 17, 2021 can be found [here](#)*

Tina Huynh presented on “Student-Centered Learning through Game Creation” during the NAFME 2021 PreK–12 Learning Collaborative in February 2021.

“Let’s play a game!” Children often use their imagination and creativity to make up their own games. As teachers, we can channel this creativity to enhance the classroom learning experience. Game creation can help students express their musical knowledge while the teacher acts as a facilitator. By allowing students to design and play their own musical games, they will display their knowledge in ways that can be fulfilling for all involved. Student-led game creation may be inclusive of multiple dimensions of learning, including but not limited to: project-based learning, interdisciplinary learning, assessment, and social emotional learning.



Game Creation

In a game creation project, small groups of students use their musical knowledge to create a game centered around a particular musical element or theme, which is to be played by their peers. There are many choices that can be left to the students: the kind of game they create, from a board game with physical parts

to a fully online-based game; the objectives and rules of their game; and the particular musical challenges they wish to include in their game, whether it require singing or rapping, playing an instrument, composing, improvising, or a combination of these. The goal for the games is for a team of peers to win the game using their

musical knowledge. A game creation unit can be completed over 4-5 class sessions. The teacher may apply goals for student learning, whether it be assessment of students' musical content knowledge and performance, reviewing specific musical content, having students practice responding to music making, integrating math and language with arts for an interdisciplinary approach to teaching, or integrating social and emotional learning experiences in the classroom.

"Put the ownership of learning into students' hands and let them show you the creative and innovative ways they can use their musical knowledge."

In order for the game creation project to be successful, students must feel challenged by the games yet feel that they can win. The teacher is a key part to this success. He/She/They can offer research-backed guidance on how to create a successful game. Drawing from two game experts who studied how and why we play games and what makes games so enticing, Roger Caillois (2006) and Jane McGonigal's (2011) respective works can help teachers guide students in creating challenging and fun games.

The Rules of the Game

The four main tenets that a game must have in order to be successful are (McGonigal, 2011):

- 1) a **goal**, a specific outcome that players want to achieve, that provides a sense of purpose
- 2) **rules**, which create limitations that foster strategic thinking and unleash creativity
- 3) a **feedback system**, which indicates progress

toward the goal, often in the form of points, levels, a score, or a progress bar. It can be the simple objective of "the game is over when..." Feedback reminds players that the goal is achievable and motivates players.

- 4) **voluntary participation**, meaning that all players accept the terms of the game (goal, rules, and feedback system), and have the freedom to enter or leave a game at will, ensuring that intentionally stressful and challenging work is experienced as safe and pleasurable



Benefits of Student-Centered, Student-Led Game Creation

By transforming the classroom environment from a teacher-directed space into a student-centered space, the types of conversation will change, the materials in your classroom will change, and the layout of the room will change. These changes will be reflective of the learning that is going on. There will be more creation, creativity, and innovation by the students and teacher. In the social emotional sphere, students will need to learn to solve problems together, work as a team,

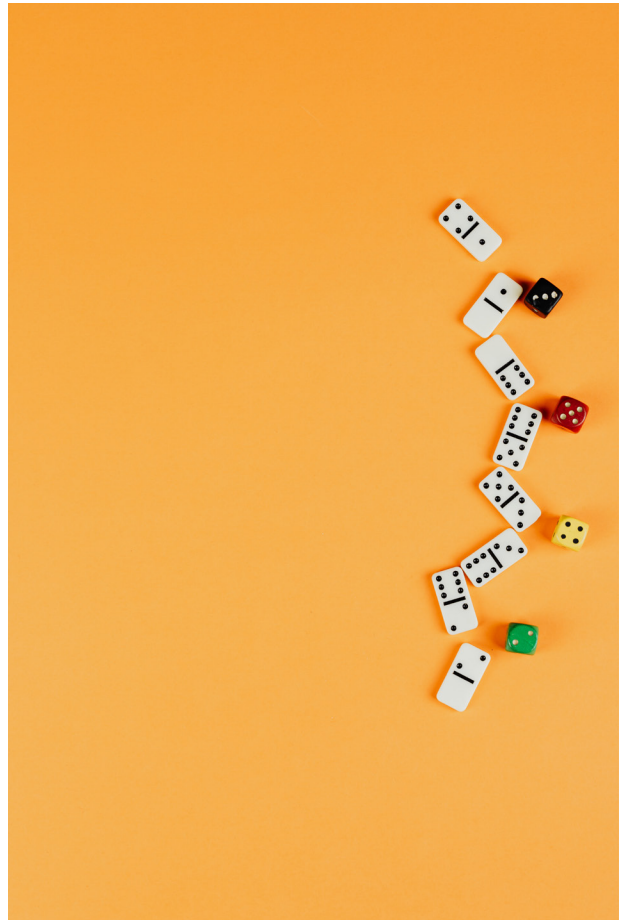
and resolve conflicts. The teacher can monitor student activity in each group and provide support, suggestions, materials, formative feedback, and guidance as needed. This kind of project-based learning gives students space and freedom to be creative. Game creation can also be a form of culturally responsive teaching. Letting students apply their background knowledge to their classroom experience bridges the cultures of the home and school. A classroom space for creativity with guidance provides benefits on academic, cultural, and social emotional levels.

Put the ownership of learning into students' hands and let them show you the creative and innovative ways they can use their musical knowledge.

Additional References

Caillois, R. (2006). The definition of play and the classification of games. In K. Salen, & E. Zimmerman (Eds.), *The game design reader: A rules of play anthology* (pp. 122–155). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press (Originally published in 1961 in R. Caillois (Ed.), *Man, play, and games*).

McGonigal, J. (2011). *Reality is broken: Why games make us better and how they can change the world*. New York, NY: Penguin Group.



NAfME member Tina A. Huynh is Assistant Professor of Music Education at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in elementary and secondary music education. Her interests lie at the intersection of music in early and middle childhood and cultural diversity. She has led workshops on the inclusion of Vietnamese children's music in the American classroom at state, regional, and national conferences. Her recent conferences at NAfME (2021) and the Association for Black Women Band Directors (2021) centered on student-led gamification in music education. She received her B.M. in Music Education and B.A. in French at California State University, Long Beach, and her M.M. and D.M.A. in Music Education at the University of Southern California.

Dr. Huynh is author of *The Vietnamese Children's Songbook* (unpublished), a compilation of ten popular Vietnamese children's songs and cultural practices. Her film, *Songs of Little Saigon* (2021) (songsofittlesaigon.com) (First Light Productions), about the resilience of eight Vietnamese American refugee musicians throughout Orange County, California, has won Exceptional Merit awards for documentary and first runner up for musical score at the Docs Without Borders Film Festival, semi-finalist for Film Score at the Burbank International Film Festival, and was an official selection for the Viet Film Fest 2021. She is the Project Scholar for the Tacoma Refugee Choir (www.refugeechoir.org), "a non-auditioned choir united by the plight of refugees and the conviction that everyone has a voice to contribute." Huynh is a Kodály and Smithsonian Folkways World Music Pedagogy certified educator.

LET'S ROCK THIS YEAR!

Integrating Modern Band Concepts to Improve Student Motivation

James Maestri / ArkMEA Innovations Chair



Last year was a daunting adventure for all educators; however, educators of music had an especially difficult time navigating all the constraints of the coronavirus pandemic. Of course, student safety was the central theme, but that did not make this past year any easier to grow and advance one's personal educational mission. As we try to heal and regain a sense of normalcy, we must also take this time to

reflect and find new opportunities to expand our programs for the benefit of all students.

Fear not, fellow music educator, because from crisis comes chances for positive change! If one such opportunity could be found, the pandemic seems to have accelerated a newly invigorated spirit of equity and inclusion. The Modern Band mindset may be the spark for which you are

looking to reignite your music program and to attract a more diverse audience into your classroom.

What is “Modern Band?” How can it increase inclusivity, student engagement, and promote self-discovery? In this article, I will explain how you can integrate the mindset of Modern Band into your established program. I will also provide tips for creating a separate class if you choose to traverse that route.

A Brief History of “Modern Band”

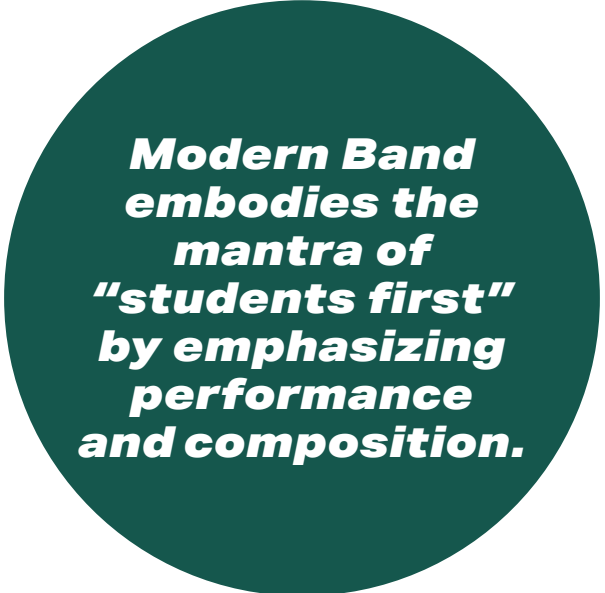
Modern Band has recently gained a great deal of momentum in music education. Frustrated by limited music options and irrelevant music curriculums, elementary educator David Wish envisioned the “Modern Band” classroom in 1996. His first Modern Band class started as an after-school guitar ensemble. Then, in 2002, Mr. Wish enlisted the help of Carlos Santana, Bonnie Raitt, and John Lee Hooker to create an organization called Little Kids Rock. Little Kids Rock now serves thousands of kids and teachers annually in hundreds of programs across the United States and several countries worldwide. The team at Little Kids Rock has created a curriculum that is free to use and readily adaptable for any music program K-12 at jamzone.littlekidsrock.org.

“Modern Band” is a Mindset

Modern Band is more about curriculum, pedagogy, and camaraderie than it is about teaching a certain type of ensemble with a certain type of instrumentation or genre of music. Modern Band embodies the mantra of “students first” by emphasizing performance and composition. This mindset encourages teachers to work alongside their students as they create an experience all their own. Any teacher can utilize the Modern Band mindset to increase student engagement and academic performance in their unique setting.

Celine Dion And Rachmaninov Can Work Together!

Modern Band allows all students to study music no matter their background. Through the power of choice, the modern band mindset allows students to connect with their teacher to personalize their experience. Why should educators create a cookie-cutter curriculum when no class period they teach throughout the day is the same as the next? Although you may be the teacher of record, this class is for them! On the first day of each class, I ask students in each class what songs they would like to study in order to build rapport and engage students.



**Modern Band
embodies the
mantra of
“students first”
by emphasizing
performance
and composition.**

Most students I have polled cite popular music as the songs they would like to study. The three most popular styles of music selected are Country, Rock, and Hip-Hop. One of my goals is to make my class as musically varied as possible. After building rapport through song selection, I supplement other genres of music by creating pathways for learning. Many times, I will have music playing from various genres of music as students enter the classroom. This normally invokes curiosity behind the song and leads to a short, in-depth discussion about its inspired history.

You can often find current “hit” songs that open gateways to other styles of music. One way to open gateways is to show students how the music they know and love oftentimes connects to pieces of classical music. It does not take long to find the pervasiveness of Pachelbel’s “Canon in D” in popular music. If you are using performance in your instruction, this can be an effective tool for students to study chord progressions and improvisation. Because chord progressions cannot be claimed for copyright infringement, students could remix this progression using a digital audio workstation (DAW) like Garageband, BandLab, Soundtrap, or even Quaver to create a song of their own.

Integrating Modern Band in Your Warm-Ups

Integrating the modern band mindset can be useful during the mundane warm-up or drill portions of your lessons. Some music educators have referred to making the warm-up process as enjoyable as possible as “hiding the vegetables.” I have seen success in all modes of musical groups by using this method. You can use this technique in visual warmups, scale drills, technique exercises, and even stylistic etudes. The opportunities are endless! You can build a school-appropriate playlist of your students’ favorite songs and use them as background tracks. If you build the playlist on YouTube, you can use the “Transpose” Google Chrome web browser extension to adjust the Key and Tempo to fit your exercise. I also like to find karaoke versions of songs so that the song lyrics are not competing with the exercise. For extended learning, students can create their own warm-up tracks in a DAW.

Integrating Modern Band in Your Existing Elementary Program

As we are starting to see, the modern band mindset can be incorporated in many different formats. We must expose students at this level to as many different styles of music as possible in the most engaging manner. All of this can

be done by incorporating songs they want to study into your already established curriculum. Remember that the modern band mindset emphasizes performance and composition. Consider the following example on how this can be done in the elementary music classroom. Try incorporating basic rhythm slides into your instruction. These slides can be used in conjunction with clapping, vocalizing, bucket drumming, Orff instruments, or any other instrument of your choosing. Then, add songs the students choose as a replacement to a metronome. Next, have students choose the sequence of rhythm slides and then perform them to their favorite songs. Finally, allow students space to create their own rhythms and invite them to share. You may include songs from different time periods, cultures, or genres in order to invite extended learning into your classroom.

Integrating Modern Band in Your Existing Secondary Program

Modern Band is so much more than adding popular music to your repertoire. The Modern Band mindset takes education in a more inclusive direction within your program. Envision a music program that promotes teachers working as partners with their students to create an experience that is uniquely and individually theirs. This is where the modern band mindset can maximize student engagement. Consider the following Modern Band examples that have proven to be successful in already established music programs.

You can create a personalized curriculum for those who are interested in studying a second instrument. This can increase engagement for those who seem disinterested or for those who need additional challenges. If resources allow, you can create a modern band ensemble using popular music instruments such as guitar, ukulele, drum set, and piano during your typical class time. This group could also be student-led much like any other independent ensemble you may have.

Experiment with adding non-traditional instruments to your specific music ensemble. Create a “remix” of your current music repertoire by having students write lyrics and the appropriate style of beat using your choice of DAW (GarageBand, Soundtrap, BandLab, etc.). Additionally, you can experiment with adding sound effects to your traditional instruments to add extra flair to your remixes! As a complete redefinition, allow students to modify synthesized sounds as either a supplement for or a replacement of traditional instruments.

Tips on Creating a Free-Standing Modern Band Program

Of course, you can take this mindset to the ultimate level and create a completely new ensemble involving instruments typically seen only in the Modern Band classroom. Many people have created a guitar class, a piano class, a music technology class, or a full-on modern band ensemble. The choice is yours to make as the only rule to making music is what sounds good to you, your students, and your community!



***We must meet
our students
where they are in
terms of social,
emotional, and
culturally relevant
education.***

If you are looking to add a class to your schedule, you must put in the work to advocate the need for such a program. As author Covey says, “begin

with the end in mind” and find a valid starting place. I recommend attending the Virtual Modern Band Summit or the Little Kids Rock Modern Band 101 training to further frame your vision. From there, try integrating the modern band mindset into your established program as a way to dip your toes into the water. The only limits to this group are the ones placed upon it. As you and your students become more familiar with modern band concepts, take strides to increase involvement through the purchase of additional instruments, study of a variety repertoire, and increase exposure in public performances. Try to feature your groups during concerts and at public festivals around your community. You can create a catchy name, social media page, and merchandise for your ensemble to increase its brand and value. Your ensemble’s brand will eventually speak for itself.

Modern Band Curriculum Resources

There are a few resources that you could use to help catapult your modern band mindset. As mentioned before, jamzone.littlekidsrock.org is an amazing, free website jam-packed with videos, lesson plans, and professional development that will help you along your way. They also sponsor the Virtual Modern Band Summit for a very nominal fee every summer. Additionally, the Hal Leonard corporation has created a series of method books for Modern Band in conjunction with Little Kids Rock.

Steve Giddings is another giant in the modern band movement. The Canadian music educator is the author of *Rock Coach* and *Creative Musicking*. These are two books that every music educator should own. *Rock Coach* is a comprehensive guide to building a modern band class from ground zero. *Creative Musicking* offers advice on how to build confidence in creativity and music composition within the confines of your current program. He also offers free lesson plans, music consultation services, and a free blog on his website www.stevesmusicroom.com.

Closing

We have a wonderful opportunity to attract students now more than ever to the world of music. We must meet our students where they are in terms of social, emotional, and culturally relevant education. Students are relying on us to notice them and help them find their voice. We can be those agents of self discovery.

The modern band mindset could be the method to help you reach your current music students and help reach out to potentially even more students within your school. To help you realize why I use the Modern Band curriculum, I leave you with the words of famous Arkansan Maya Angelou: “Life is not measured by the breaths you take but by the moments that take your breath away.” Let’s give our students a reason to have their breath taken away by the power of music.



James Maestri is the Music Teacher at East Hills Middle School in Greenwood, Arkansas. Mr. Maestri’s professional mission is to make the general music classroom a memorable experience for all students. He holds a Master’s in Educational Leadership from Arkansas State University, a Bachelor’s of Music Education from Arkansas Tech University, and currently serves as the Chair of Innovations for ArkMEA.



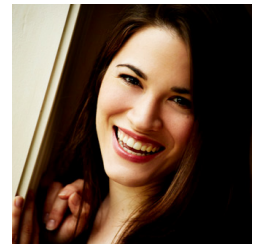
OUACHITA
BAPTIST UNIVERSITY



OUACHITA'S DIVISION OF MUSIC in the school of fine arts welcomes

KARA CLAYBROOK

Visiting Professor of Music,
Teaching Voice and Opera Workshop



SCHOLARSHIPS

Vocal, instrumental and keyboard scholarships available by audition. Band scholarships are also available to non-majors by audition.
Contact Dr. Gary Gerber, dean of the School of Fine Arts • 870.245.5128 • gerberg@obu.edu

For more information about the division of music visit: **obu.edu/music** • To apply to Ouachita: **obu.edu/apply**

BACHELOR OF MUSIC:

- Performance
- Musical Theatre
- Music Education,
Choral or Instrumental
- Worship Arts

BACHELOR OF ARTS:

- Music
- Music Industry

BACHELOR OF FINE ARTS:

- Musical Theatre

Accredited by the National Association
of Schools of Music since 1956

**FEATURING
ARKANSAS' ONLY B.A.
DEGREE IN MUSIC INDUSTRY**



Introducing SYNC!

Supporting Your Newest Colleagues

Delynne West / ArkMEA Mentorship Chair

SYNC (Supporting Your Newest Colleagues) is a new program starting in the 2022-2023 school year designed to encourage music educators across Arkansas. Arkansas Music Educators Association is inviting both novice and seasoned music educators to join the inaugural year of our program.

Why is a mentoring program needed?

- Music educators are often isolated from peers during their workday. Mentorship can help increase retention of both novice and experienced educators.
- Novice teachers are reluctant to ask for help for fear of appearing incompetent. Experienced teachers are reluctant to offer help for fear of interfering.
- Novice teachers develop coping strategies to help them survive the first year, and these strategies may prevent them from becoming effective educators.
- Both novice and experienced teachers benefit from sharing strategies in classroom management, motivation, scheduling, effective routines, student discipline, and balance between work and family.
- In those districts without Fine Arts supervisors, administrators are rarely versed in the intricacies of music instruction. Experienced educators provide effective feedback and resources for next steps.
- Novice teachers need to know what they are doing right!

What are the expectations?

- Connect with your mentor/mentee at least bi-weekly beginning in August 2022
- Demonstrate genuine care for the teaching profession
- Utilize suggested timeline for discussions about best practices
- Evaluate program at the end of the year



I know I would not have survived my first few years without two stellar music educators, Lequeta Endel and Mary Jack Landers. I was lucky enough to be within walking distance of them during the day.

Many other educators helped me define my philosophy and led me to training opportunities that built upon my undergraduate skills. Many novice educators in small school districts don't have this kind of access to quality mentors. Won't you consider giving your time and expertise to our newest colleagues?

If you are willing to be connected to a mentor or mentee, please fill out the [contact form](#) today! We will reach out to those who complete the form with more information in spring/summer 2022. Please contact dwest@bryantschools.org with any questions.

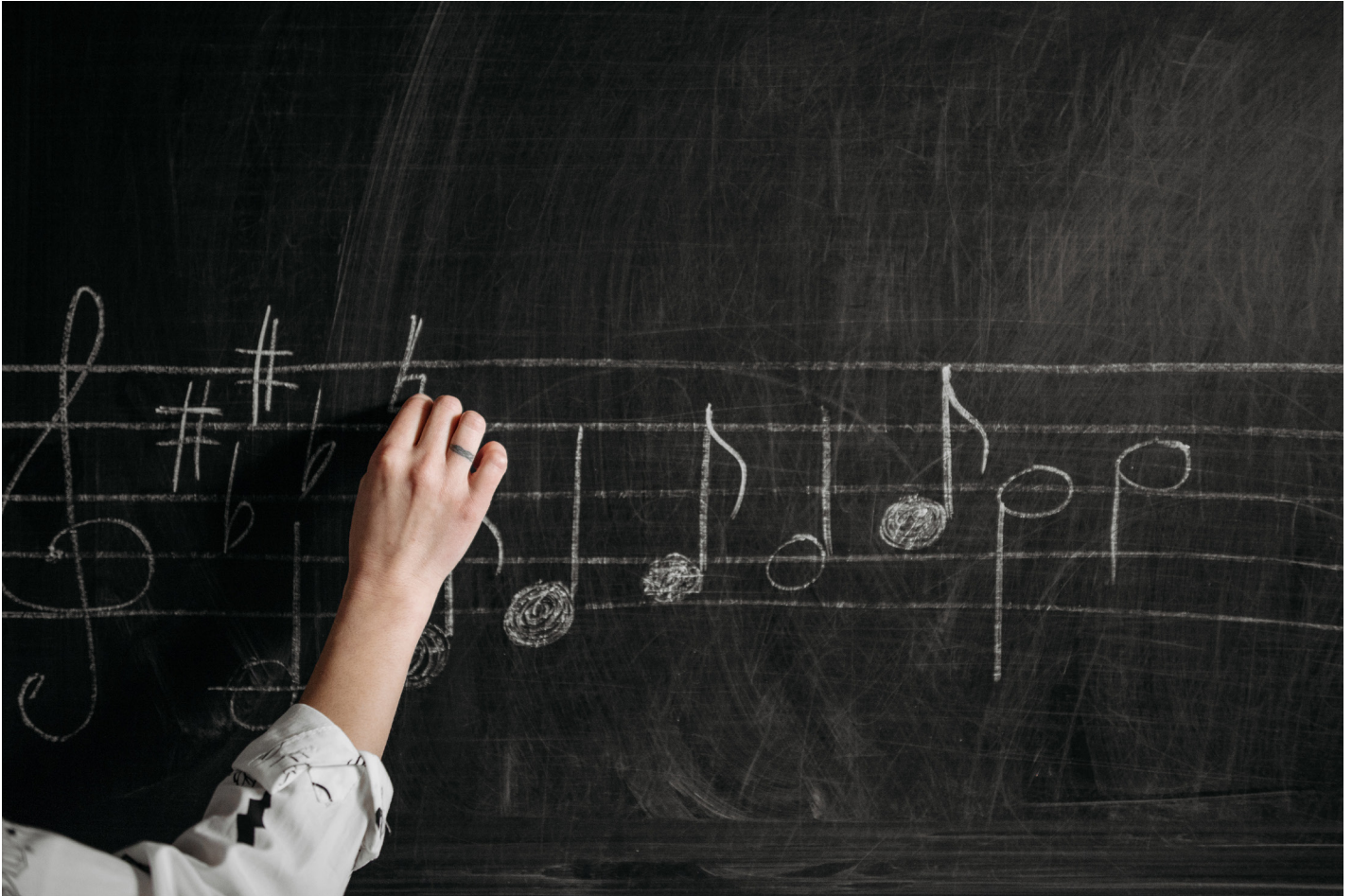
Sincerely appreciative of your service,
Delynne West, NBCT
ArkMEA Mentorship Chair



Delynne West has been an educator with Bryant Public Schools since 1992, including grades K-7. She achieved National Board Certification in 2005 and continues to mentor teachers through the process. As an adjunct instructor at Ouachita Baptist University she teaches Elementary Music Education and is a cooperating teacher for student interns. She received her BME from the University of Central Arkansas and has certifications in Orff (levels I, II, III, and Masterclass), World Music Drumming, First Steps, and Conversational Solfege. She is also an Apple Teacher and has Google Certification in Levels 1 and 2.

Using Research in Your Music Classrooms

Daniel Abrahams, Ph. D. / ARKMEA Research Chair



Educational research provides music teachers knowledge on topics related to teaching and learning, curriculum and assessment, student social-emotional needs, and many other factors considered important in improving our teaching and students' learning. In addition, stakeholders (teachers, administration, and community members) often rely on research to make informed decisions that affect the quality of what happens in schools and our classrooms. However, as Edwards (1992) suggested, "research is not viewed as being in the mainstream of

either music or music education" (p. 5). Music teachers seem to have little interest in what music researchers do and how they do it. According to Conway & Borst (2001), "even when music education research is presented in a practitioner-friendly way, problems arise" (p. 3). This disconnect might stem from the university community initiating most of the music education research.

Action research is one approach music teachers can employ to connect research and teaching practice. When applied to music

education, action research refers to music teaching and student learning studies designed and implemented by K-12 music teachers or in partnership with university professors. In addition, music teachers research their music classrooms and ensemble rehearsals to better understand their pedagogy and practice (Mills, 2003). Conway and Borst (2001) suggested, “practicing music teachers, therefore, can benefit from the results of action research” (p. 3).

———— “ ————

Action research serves as an extension of one’s daily practice of reflection and self-reflection.

———— ” ————

What is Action Research

Always to initiate change, action research has a long history. It is often associated with the work of Kurt Lewin (1946). He described action research as a collaborative process between teachers with their students (Stringer, 2004, 2007). Bogden and Biklen (2006) suggested action research is “the systematic collection of information that is designed to bring about social change” (p. 223). Reason and Bradbury (2001) extended this definition by suggesting action research as a process focusing on developing practical knowledge helpful to people in their everyday lives.

Bressler (1995) stated, “Action research aims at the direct improvement of teaching and curriculum within a particular classroom, gaining a more critical perspective from which the teacher/researcher can reflect and change” (p.15). Action research serves as an extension of one’s daily practice of reflection and self-reflection. Reflection sometimes falls by the wayside because of the demands placed on music educators. It is often only done for accommodation, modification, or formative assessment. Action research supports teachers in navigating the challenges of implementing innovations reflectively (Altrichter, Posch, & Somekh, 1993).

Zeichner and Noffke (2001) described teachers conducting research in their own classrooms as practitioner-researchers. Practitioner research seeks to empower music educators to conduct research examining what is happening in their classrooms and rehearsals.



In action research, the music teacher is viewed as a learner exploring and attempting to interpret the learning happening in their classrooms. They ask questions about their pedagogy’s psychological, sociological, and ideological effects. Thus, practitioner-researchers explore their own professional practice (Kincheloe, 2008). Kincheloe (2008) suggested, “In this context teacher researchers explore their unique situations to generate not a correct approach to practice but a dialogue about the teaching act” (p. 15).

Acting as a teacher-researcher (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Kincheloe, 2008; Stenhouse, 1975) affords the freedom for music teachers to reflect on one's practice, professional needs, and current understandings leading to possible improvement (Bresler & Stake, 2006). It provides a path to a more deliberate critical reflection as music teachers document, analyze, and implement new ideas to improve their practice and make classroom or ensemble rehearsal changes.

Implementing Action Research

Teachers interested in utilizing action research in their music classrooms or ensemble rehearsals should first identify a problem or develop a question about music teaching and learning. Suppose the intent of action research is to initiate change; in that case, one considers their engagement in fact-finding about their own teaching. Conway and Borst (2001) explained action research is not about teachers making generalizations outside their own classroom. Though, in many cases, results from one study might apply and relate to other contexts.

There are three phases to the process of conducting action research. The first phase is where the teacher-researcher builds a picture and gathers information. When evaluating a situation, we define and describe the problem to be investigated and its context. The teacher-researcher also describes what all the participants have been doing. After identifying a problem, the teacher-researcher begins gathering information and documenting related issues. There are several ways to collect valuable information. Some teachers keep a journal tracking daily events related to the research problem. Others gather information through video recording a class and transcribing the interactions between teacher and students and students with students. This provides observational data. Another way of collecting information is by gathering student grade reports, portfolios, concert programs, practice records, student-generated compositions, and



performance recordings. Lastly, it might be necessary to conduct interviews of students, parents, or other music teachers, depending on the nature of the research problem.

In the second phase, the teacher-researcher interprets and analyzes the situation. They reflect on what participants have been doing and look at success areas and any deficiencies, issues, or problems. In this phase, thoughts about the meaning of the information collected begin to emerge. The teacher-researcher reflects on information collected in journals, interviews, documents, and observations and develops categories to describe and organize patterns and themes.

The final phase is to act and resolve issues and problems. Conway and Borst (2001) explained this phase as teachers “making decisions

regarding teaching and learning based on the results of the study” (p. 4). Teacher-researchers judge their classroom or rehearsal activities’ worth, effectiveness, appropriateness, and outcomes. They then act to formulate solutions to any problems. Effective teachers make these types of decisions daily. Action research provides a framework for teachers to reflect on their pedagogy and, in the process, contribute to the knowledge base of teaching.

Action Research in Practice

According to Kincheloe (2008), teacher-researchers examine their teaching situations to generate dialogue about the act of teaching. Therefore, action research seemed the most appropriate design for me when exploring the effectiveness of my teaching strategies to develop students’ musicianship.

My first experience with action research was as a high school instrumental music teacher. I was curious about the application of reciprocal teaching (Palincsar & Brown, 1984), a process borrowed from the domain of language literacy consisting of five literacy comprehension strategies (predicting, questioning, clarifying, summarizing, and connecting) to bridge ways one makes meaning of language in literature to ways those meanings might foster music literacy. I investigated applying reciprocal teaching strategies in the high school instrumental music rehearsal in formal and informal school settings. Through examining observational data from video-recorded rehearsals, I realized reciprocal teaching strategies helped students make significant gains in comprehension and decoding skills. Reciprocal teaching also helped me focus on ideas rather than surface-level information. Those research studies were published in *Visions of Research in Music Education* (Abrahams, D. & Abrahams, F., 2010) and *Teaching Music in the Urban Classroom* (Abrahams, 2006).

I again turned to an action research design for my doctoral dissertation. I extended reciprocal teaching to the teaching of conducting. I wanted

———— “ ————
***The best
teachers are
those who
are lifelong
learners.***
———— ” ————

to answer concerns about how beginning instrumental conducting students make meaning of gesture, sound, and score to acquire learner agency within the conducting domain (Abrahams, 2013). I gathered information through student journals, a teacher-researcher journal, and video-recorded classes. Reflecting on the information gathered, I realized that students approached their beginning conducting course through their prior experiences as ensemble members. Students were also constantly engaged in self-assessment, evaluation, and goal setting that assisted them in becoming more confident in their skills and abilities as a conductor.

In teaching pre-service music teachers, I used an action research design to explore learner agency through the lens of service-learning. I investigated how university music education majors might connect theory to practice and, in the process, develop ownership of their own learning processes. Additionally, by working with elementary school-aged children in an after-school program, how might teaching music through technology foster a classroom environment of creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking. To answer my questions, I gathered information through student journals

and participant interviews. Analysis of the data revealed that university students found engaging in service-learning to be a positive experience in their development as teachers and assisted in students connecting theory to practice.

Action research offers a perspective that hopefully stimulates discourse and dialogue that might be helpful to others in similar teaching situations. You never know how many other teachers are in similar situations asking similar questions. Engaging in action research speaks to the value of what music teachers discover in their own classrooms and ensemble rehearsals. The best teachers are those who are lifelong learners. Action research provides space for music teachers to continue learning and think deeply about their pedagogy and practice. So, next time you decide to incorporate a new teaching technique or have questions about student learning, step into the role of teacher-researcher and develop a plan to positively impact your music classrooms and ensemble rehearsals.



Daniel Abrahams is Assistant Professor of Music Education at the University of Arkansas - Fayetteville. He holds a PhD in music education from Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan. Dr. Abrahams has presented research at state, national, and international conferences, as well as contributed several book chapters in edited publications.

Daniel's research interests include the acquisition of learner agency and the integration of music and STEM education through Minecraft.

References

- Abrahams, D. A. (2006). *Differentiating instruction in the choral rehearsal: Strategies for choral conductors in urban schools*. In *Teaching music in the urban classroom: A guide to survival, success, and reform* (pp. 109–116). Rowman and Littlefield.
- Abrahams, D. (2013). *Fostering musical and personal agency in beginning conductors*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Rochester, MI: Oakland University.
- Abrahams, F., & Abrahams, D. (2010). *Impact of reciprocal teaching on the development of musical understanding in high school student members of performing ensembles: An action research*. *Visions of Research on Music Education*, 15(1). retrieved from <http://www.usr.rider.edu-vrme/v15n1/visions>.
- Altrichter, H., Posch, P., & Somekh, B. (1993). *Teachers investigate their work: An introduction to the method of action research*. New York: Routledge.
- Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S.K. (2006). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods* (5th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Bressler, L. (1995). *Ethnography, phenomenology and action research in music education*. *Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning*, 6 (3), 4-16.
- Bresler, L., & Stake, R. E. (2006). *Qualitative research methodology in music education*. In R. Colwell (Ed.), *MENC handbook of research methodologies*. New York: Oxford.
- Carr, W., & Kemmis, S. (1986). *Becoming critical: Education, knowledge and action research*. New York: Taylor-Francis.
- Conway, C.M., & J. Borst (2001). *Action research in music education*. Update: *Applications of Research in Music Education*, 19 (2), 3-8.
- Edwards, R. H. (1992). *Research: Going from incredible to credible*. *The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning*, 3 (1), 5.
- Kincheloe, J. L. (2008). *Teachers as researchers: Qualitative inquiry as a path to empowerment*. New York: Routledge.
- Lewin, K. (1946). *Action research and minority problems*. *Journal of Social Issues*, 2, 43-46.
- Mills, G. E. (2003). *Action research: A guide for the teacher researcher* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Palincsar, A. S., & Brown, A.L. (1984). *Reciprocal teaching of comprehension-fostering and comprehension-monitoring activities*. *Cognition and Instruction*, 2, 117-175.
- Reason, P., & Bradbury, H. (2001). *Handbook of action research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stenhouse, L. (1975). *Introduction to curriculum research and development*. London: Heinemann.
- Stringer, E. (2004). *Action research in education*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Stringer, E. (2007). *Action research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Zeichner, K. M., & Noffke, S. (2001). *Practitioner research*. In V. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (pp. 298-333). Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.



Self-care for Music Educators

Christa Kuebel / ArkMEA Journal Editor

The holidays are over and the hustle of the end of the year is on the horizon. Take a few moments to check-in with yourself every day this week - this could become a healthy habit to relieve some stress to help you finish the year strong!

- 1. How do I feel at this moment?**
- 2. What brought me joy today?**
- 3. What did I learn today?**
- 4. What am I putting off and what do I need to get it started/done?**
- 5. What do I love about being a music educator?**

University of Arkansas FORT SMITH

Music

2021-22 AUDITION DATES*

December 10, 2021

April 1, 2022

January 14, 2022

April 29, 2022

February 11, 2022

ENSEMBLES

Athletic Band

Brass

Flute

Guitar

Jazz Band

Jazz Catz (vocal jazz)

Jazz Lab

Leonis Chamber Singers

Men's Chorus

Percussion

Opera and Musical Theatre Workshop

Wind Ensemble

Women's Chorus

Woodwind

DEGREES

Bachelor of Arts in Music

Bachelor of Music Education (Vocal, Instrumental)

Scholarships are available for music and non-music majors.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

*Auditions this year will be live on campus; however, should you need alternative methods, please contact the music office via the contact information below.

479-788-7530 • 479-788-7598

Email: music@uafs.edu

Visit our website: class.uafs.edu/music

The University of Arkansas - Fort Smith is an accredited institutional member of the National Association of Schools of Music.

 **UAFS**
MUSIC AND THEATRE