

ArkMEA



Arkansas Music Educators Association



Heroes in the Classroom

Managing the Behavior of Today's Student

MIOSM

The Mindful Musician

Clarinet Hand Position

**Lead a Legacy-
Dr. Vicki Lind**

Summer PD offering

May 2019

AMPLIFY 2019: OPENING DOORS FOR ALL STUDENTS

Conference attendees will receive 15 hours of professional development for attending an Amplify strand at the National Conference, and additional professional development hours if they choose to attend one of the pre-conference Forums.

EMERGING LEADERS FORUM November 6–7

This forum seeks to unite individuals interested in taking the step to serve as a leader within NAFME and its affiliate music education association structure. Young professionals, teachers returning to the field, and established teachers will all walk away feeling empowered to join the ranks of those who came before and those currently working to ensure a bright future in music education.

MUSIC PROGRAM LEADERS FORUM November 6–7

This forum will provide relevant professional development for music program leaders and district arts coordinators working in the K-12 school setting, aimed at establishing and growing networks of collegial support for those in the profession. This forum is geared for those in administrative roles, built with insights and models from your colleagues—music program leaders.

NAFME NATIONAL CONFERENCE NOVEMBER 6-10 ORLANDO

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Don't miss powerful sessions, rousing student performances, and the chance to connect with music educators from around the nation! Our 2019 theme, "Amplify the Future of Music: Opening Doors for All Students," features these five strands:

AMPLIFY: CREATIVITY

How do we create a learning environment that supports student voice, creativity, collaboration, and choice—whether via composition, improvisation, in current ensembles, or other pathways for creative musical endeavors?

AMPLIFY: STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

How do we engage all students daily within our classrooms and throughout our school as they create, perform, respond, and connect to music?

AMPLIFY: INSTRUCTION

How do we expand instructional practices to support student ownership, voice, choice, and assessment in a standards-based, high-quality music education?

AMPLIFY: ACCESS

How do we guarantee and expand access to music education for every student in our school sites and classrooms, which could involve parents, administration, and other outside connections?

AMPLIFY: COMMUNITY

How do we successfully create a musical community within in our schools and/or beyond the school walls in urban, rural, or suburban settings?

DAY-LONG LEARNING EXPERIENCES

In addition to the Amplify strands, attendees can register for a "day-long learning experience." Four of the experiences—ukulele, steel drum, hip hop, and gospel choir—will be offered on Friday, November 8. The five experiences offered on Saturday, November 9, will be: liberation world drumming, composition in the traditional ensembles, songwriting, digital and hybrid music, and social-emotional learning. Registration is required to participate in these sessions. However, attendees without prior registration are welcome to observe.

AMPLIFY INSPIRATION SHOWCASE

In addition to the Amplify themes, there will be a showcase of research and quality classroom practice in an informal, "poster session" format.

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Summer Professional
Development
July 11th 8:30-3:30

Cristi Cary Miller is a dynamic presenter and member of the Oklahoma Music Educators Hall of Fame and former President of the Oklahoma Music Educators Association. Her workshop "A Day of Play" will allow attendees to be engaged in a six-hour, hands-on workshop, participating in a number of creative music-making activities. All of the sessions will include different assessment strategies that can be used in evaluating student progress. Formative, observational, performance-based, peer and personal assessment strategy tips will help participants understand how to keep track of student learning and progress. This workshop will be live streamed to the educational service co-operatives. Registration for the live presentation at The Mosaic Templar's location can be found at arkmea.org



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Music in Our Schools Month

Speech given by ArkMEA president Haley Greer , at the MIOSM concert at the Capital

I am both grateful and proud to work and volunteer as a music educator in the great state of Arkansas! Valuing both the performing and visual arts, there are laws in place in Arkansas to ensure that music and art classes are available to all students. The laws also protect music educators; we should not take it for granted. I thank our lawmakers for their support of the arts.

At the 2019 "Music In Our Schools Month" Concert, I asked the students to raise their hand if it was their first trip to Little Rock, and many in the rotunda did. I then asked them to raise a hand if this was their first time being in the Capitol building, to see such a beautiful structure made purely out of stone. At least half of the children raised their hands to never having been to our Capitol building! I spoke to them about something I like to call the magic of music - visiting beautiful venues for singing and meeting interesting people along the way is part of that magic.

Researchers have performed many studies to determine how music affects animals, plants, and humans. One that stood out to me was an experiment done on a choir: as the people sang, the results showed their heartbeats all aligned and they all breathed at the same rate. If that's not magic, I don't know what is. Singing on a stage with a symphony orchestra for the first time was a moment I will never forget; I was in high school (thank you Bennie Carol). I'm still addicted! I go to choir every Monday night just so I can perform onstage with other singers and instrumentalists because it's transforming, like magic. I never want to live without it!

My message was to encourage the MIOSM singers to develop their musicianship, and starting when we're young is easier than as adults, but it's never too late. Beginning focused music studies now - whether they be in public school or with a private teacher, will make music such a natural part of their lives so that when they're adults, they won't remember life without it! It will be a part of who they are. Who we are.

I finish with two of my favorite quotes. The first by Ella Fitzgerald, the great jazz singer:

"the only thing better than singing is more singing."

The second comes from Kelly Pollock, the executive director of the center of creative arts in St. Louis:

"the true purpose of arts education is not necessarily to create more professional dancers or artists. It's to create more complete human beings who are critical thinkers, who have curious minds, who can leave productive lives."

So teachers, keep teaching music to children.
Keep having those after-school, before school, and lunch hour rehearsals.
Keep putting on playful programs, choral concerts, and instrumental performances.
Keep watching (painful) videos of budding recorder players.
Keep making practice recordings.
Keep caring and giving heart-to-heart pep talks.
Keep teaching music.



"Performing onstage with other singers and instrumentalists because it's transforming, like magic."



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Heroes in the Classroom

I am convinced that heroic actions play out in classrooms every day. No one knows when one person's seemingly small act of kindness prevents another individual from committing a harmful act, and unsuspecting teachers and students may never realize they have saved a life. These heroes in the classroom see a dejected student and offer words of encouragement. Heroes see a student who is bullied and they intercede. Heroes see a student who is angry and they do not respond in kind, but offer help instead. These teachers and students are not heralded in our newsfeeds, and yet their actions have the potential to change lives.

Every semester in my music education methods class, students write an essay about the "best teacher" they had during K-12. The teachers they write about represent every grade level and every subject matter, but because my students are music majors, often the teachers they choose to write about are music educators. My students frequently recount something the teachers said or did for them that stayed with them through the years.

One student wrote about his mother passing away when he was 9, and how his teacher walked him to the office and hugged him as they waited for his father to pick him up from school. This teacher attended the mother's visitation and memorial service, came by the house with his wife and brought food and then organized a tree planting ceremony at the elementary school in honor of his student's mother. My student wrote about sitting under that tree, now tall

and stately, during his breaks from school.

Another student wrote about his personal struggles in high school, and where he might have ended up if it had not been for his band director. A family man with a wife and children, this high school band director picked up his struggling student from home and drove him across town to all-county band rehearsals every Saturday because his single mother worked and was unable to take him. My student is certain it was the Saturday morning car conversations that helped shape him into the successful and substantial young man he is today.

The students' essays are a great source of personal inspiration. After writing a congratulatory cover letter for being identified as a "best teacher" and contributing to the education of our students, I mail these essays to the respective teachers. In the weeks that follow I often get calls or emails from the teachers. They frequently respond that they never knew at the time what

their actions or words of kindness meant to their students.

This reminds me of a young man featured in a reunion episode on the Today Show who admitted he was headed down a very dark path when a teacher in his junior high school pulled him aside and said, "You matter to me. You do, and I am afraid for you." He wanted to find that teacher, thank her and tell her how much those simple words had meant to him. He also told about her husband, a teacher at the high school, who wrote daily sayings on the blackboard. He felt as if one of those sayings was meant for him, so he wrote it down. He told how their son, a popular football player, sought him out in the school hallways to speak to him. An inspirational saying on a crumpled piece of paper and the kind words of a junior high teacher and her son had given him the strength to carry on, despite having few friends, experiencing difficulties at home and suffering from depression. Like so many other teachers, this couple

*Reprinted with permission from the Florida
Music Director, April 2018

and their son had no idea what their words and actions had meant to this young man when he was a struggling adolescent.

Classroom Heroes I Have Known

I am sure there are many other teachers and students who have acted in kindness, yet their students or classmates didn't have the words or the opportunity to let them know. One of my lectures in class is on the power of positive models. I recount the stories of Rod and Sheldon.

Rod was a doctoral student and a high school band director. Frank, a large young man with intellectual disabilities, was a student at Rod's high school. Because of his size and disability, Frank was also a popular target for bullying. Rod made Frank his band assistant. Frank rode with the band to games and parades, helped load instruments on the bus and put music away. Rod became a father figure to Frank, and his students became Frank's friends. One day, Frank confided he wanted to play in Street Gang Percussion, a drum line made up of at-risk students who had previously spent much of their time in in-school suspension, and many of whom had also been among Frank's tormentors. The newly minted percussionists, certain the popularity of their ensemble would be diminished if Frank joined their ranks, threatened to quit. Furthermore, they let Rod know they would take their leather jacket uniforms with them. At the end of a lengthy admonishment, Rod told the percussionists that they weren't really tough guys. If they were, they wouldn't care if Frank joined the group. In fact, they would defend Frank, even act as his bodyguards; that is, if they really were as tough as they seemed to think. The Street Gang Percussion members did, in fact, become Frank's personal bodyguards. They shielded him in the hallways and went after anyone who dared to bully him. Years after Frank left high

school, he came back to see Rod. Though the cuffs were now frayed and worn, he was still proudly wearing his black leather jacket with Street Gang Percussion stretched across the back.

Barbara, an attorney, was in love with Sheldon, also an attorney. It was clear her love was not returned. When pressed why she could not let Sheldon go, she replied, "Because of ninth grade PE." She told how all the students had completed a 600-yard run and were standing at the finish line, taunting the one student who, because of his size and disability, still had a lap to run. Suddenly, Sheldon turned to his peers and called them "disgusting." He charged across the PE field to run the last lap with his classmate, talking to him all the way. Barbara suspected he was offering words of encouragement to "keep going, and ignore those stupid kids." She said as Sheldon and his fellow runner passed the group at the finish line, he shot them all a "dirty look." Barbara confided she'd been in love with Sheldon since that day in ninth grade, and I must admit, after hearing her story, I fell in love with Sheldon, too.

These acts of kindness and courage were no small deeds, and no one will ever know their true impact.

"These acts of kindness and courage were no small deeds, and no one will ever know their true impact."

Students in Need of Classroom Heroes

We know that students who are targets of bullying are more likely to experience lower academic achievement, higher truancy rates, isolation, poor peer relationships, loneliness, anxiety and depression (Flynt & Morton, 2004; Ross, 2003). An estimated 20 percent of youth have reported being bullied in school, translating to millions of youth being impacted across the country each year (National Center on Educational Statistics, 2016). Research indicates that students with disabilities are at an increased risk of being bullied and that other factors such as physical vulnerability and social challenges may increase the risk (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Rose, Monda-Amaya, & Espelage, 2011). These students are in need of classroom heroes who will intercede.

There are resources to help. Students with disabilities often have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or Section 504 plans that can include approaches for preventing and responding to bullying, as well as identify additional support or counseling services that may be necessary. In addition, bullying behavior can become disability harassment, which is prohibited under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Teachers play a critical role in preventing and responding to bullying. McNamara's (2013) suggestions for teachers are summarized below:

- Maintain zero tolerance for bullying. Teachers and administrators must intervene.
- Encourage all students to report bullying. Praise students for their courage to report bullying. Protect anonymity of those who report bullying.
- Ask the victim of bullying what he or she needs to feel safe.

- Communicate with families, administrators and school counselors. Build a circle of support for the victimized student.
- Follow up with the student and be persistent in getting support for him or her.

If teachers have perpetrators of bullying in their classrooms, they have a responsibility to hold them accountable, to confront excuses that minimize their actions and to insist upon non-hostile consequences.

Students need a safe environment to talk about bullying. Music can be a useful medium for students to express their feelings about bullying and a potential tool for bringing students together. Most students consume music regularly and consider it to be an important part of their lives. Discussing song lyrics, such as *Mean* by Taylor Swift, is one way to open a discussion with students. Having students write their own songs is a powerful way for them to share their stories about bullying. These music videos address bullying:

- *To All You Guys* by Eric Barao
- *Dare to Be Different* by Rachael Lynn
- *Invisible* by Hunter Hayes

"The Glass Slipper Bullies" is a lesson that integrates the story of Cinderella with the music of Prokofiev. Students build the skills to recognize bullying behavior, come up with a plan for what to do about it and use the music to tell the new anti-bullying version of the story. Special school music programs or concerts with themes such as anti-bullying or tolerance can be more effective

statements regarding unity and mutual acceptance than speeches or lectures.

Bullying and Mental Health

"Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018a, p.1). Researchers have found that childhood bullying can affect the mental health of victims as well as bystanders who observe bullying. Copeland, Wolke, Angold, and Costello (2013) discovered that victims of childhood bullying have a higher risk of developing mental health problems later in life. Bullying can result in low self-esteem and can contribute to mental health issues such as depression and anxiety. Researchers, examining the impact of bullying on students who witness it, found that risks to observers' mental health were over and above that predicted for students directly involved in bullying behavior, as either perpetrators or victims (Rivers, Poteat, Noret, & Ashurst 2009).

Not all students who are victims, perpetrators or observers of bullying will develop mental health problems. Mental health is fragile, and circumstances that can adversely affect one's mental health are often unpredictable. Nevertheless, mental health disorders are one of the most common health issues faced by our nation's school-aged children. One in five students suffers from a mental

health disorder, with 80 percent of chronic mental disorders beginning in childhood (Child Mind Institute, 2016). Students struggling with mental health are at risk for poor outcomes in school and life. They have the worst graduation rate of all students with disabilities. Nationally, only 40 percent of students with emotional, behavioral and mental health disorders graduate from high school, compared to the national average of 76 percent (Dikel, 2014). These data, and the fact that many students are not getting the services they need, have led some experts to call mental health concerns a national crisis in our schools (Mahnken, 2017).

Less than 20 percent of children and adolescents with diagnosable mental health problems get treatment (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018b). The stigma of mental illness is the greatest deterrent to students seeking mental health care. Research suggests the majority of people hold negative attitudes and stereotypes toward individuals with mental illness. They are often called "crazy," "nut-job," "sick-o," "psycho" or "weirdo" (Corrigan & Watson, 2002). Experts suggest such language contributes to the stigma of mental illnesses. This stigma also results in a phenomenon known as social distancing, whereby individuals with mental health issues isolate themselves from others, which only makes their mental health more tenuous (Crisp, Gelder, Rix, Meltzer, & Rowlands, 2000). Because of the associated stigmatization and isolation, students with poor mental health are in need of classroom heroes.

Teachers are often unfamiliar with mental illnesses, their early signs or

"One in five students suffers from a mental health disorder, with 80 percent of chronic mental disorders beginning in childhood"

what they can do to assist students experiencing poor mental health. Like the topic of bullying, mental illnesses are generally not included in teacher preparation courses on disability. Yet these disabilities can result in grave consequences if left untreated. They also result in some of the poorest academic outcomes for students. Music educators, like all teachers, have the potential to recognize students with mental illnesses and to seek support for them. They can provide nonthreatening environments and safe havens for students who are marginalized. Music educators can seek and secure school-based mental health supports for students if they are familiar with the early warning signs.

Know the Early Warning Signs of Poor Mental Health

Poor mental health is not a sign of personal weakness. As is true for any illness, many factors contribute to mental health problems, including:

- Biological factors, such as genes or brain chemistry
- Life experiences, such as trauma or abuse
- Family history of mental health problems

Teachers can help by recognizing the following early signs of mental health conditions. One or more of the following feelings or behaviors can be an early warning sign of a problem:

- Eating or sleeping too much or too little
- Pulling away from people and usual activities
- Having low or no energy
- Feeling numb or like nothing matters
- Having unexplained aches and pains
- Feeling helpless or hopeless
- Smoking, drinking or using drugs more than usual
- Feeling unusually confused,

forgetful, on edge, angry, upset, worried or scared

- Yelling or fighting with family and friends
- Experiencing severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships
- Having persistent thoughts and memories that can't be dismissed
- Hearing voices or believing things that are untrue
- Thinking of harming oneself or others
- Inability to perform daily tasks like getting to school or work

What Music Educators Can Do to Help

If a student is showing signs of difficulty, below are ways to offer support:

- Express your concern and support
- Find out if the student is getting the care that he or she needs and wants—if not, connect him or her to help
- Remind your student that help is available and that mental health problems can be treated
- Ask questions, listen to ideas and be responsive when the topic of personal problems comes up
- Reassure the student that you care about him or her, and follow up on offers to help
- Include your student or his or her family members in your plans to help
- Educate other people so they understand the facts about mental health problems and take care not to discriminate or judge
- Treat people with mental health problems with respect, compassion and empathy

Beyond seeking school assistance for students with poor mental health, music educators can recommend that parents and teachers request music therapy services for students with severe behavioral or emotional problems. Music therapists have a long history in treating mental illnesses (Crowe & Colwell, 2007).

"You may never know the result of your actions, but you may save a life."

Skilled practitioners have used music listening to regulate the mood and emotions of at-risk adolescents and young adults (Dingle, Hodges, & Kunde, 2016). Music therapy interventions are particularly effective with adolescents, who are some of the most active consumers of music. If a school district doesn't offer music therapy services, they can still be acquired through a student's IEP as a related service. The process to receive music therapy as a related service is outlined in Music in Special Education (Adamek & Darrow, 2018).

Know the support options available in your school for students who are bullied or experiencing poor mental health. If supports are not available in your school, help create them and develop a process for accessing them. Be a hero in the classroom. Familiarize yourself with the warning signs of bullying and mental illness. Use the power of music to address the needs of students in distress by opening appropriate discussions and teaching tolerance. You may never know the result of your actions, but you may save a life.

Alice-Ann Darrow, PhD, is the Irvin Cooper professor of music education and music therapy at Florida State University. Her teaching and research interests include teaching music to special populations, inclusive practices for students with disabilities, particularly those with behavior disorders or who are deaf/hard-of-hearing, and the role of nonverbal communication in the music classroom. She is chairwoman of the FMEA Diverse Learners Committee.



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Dr. Matthew Farr
Choral Chair

Managing the Behavior of Today's Student

Classroom management is every teacher's sword and shield as they embark upon the journey of preparing new students for a year in their class. Without the proper preparation for the school year, situations may occur that you're not necessarily ready to deal with. Often times, young or novice teachers get overwhelmed due to the increasing behavior issues in the schools. This can deter teachers from returning to the profession and is one of the leading reasons teacher retention is at a low. In the college classroom, the textbook simply doesn't prepare you for every real-life situation; and based on your area of employment, it can be a complete difference from how you were trained to deal with behaviors in college.

My Personal Experience

While in college, I was taught to calmly diffuse situations and handle everything with care. I was taught to tell little "Johnny" to sit down twelve times and refrain from raising my voice regardless of how much little "Johnny" tested me. Most of that was out of the window after landing my first job. At first, I was slightly upset and thought I was not adequately trained to approach the 21st-century child, but I was! I just had to use the foundation and build the house! Classroom and behavior management skills taught in college are just a layout of how to approach things, we as the leader in the room/schools. We must add our flavor to the recipe and learn to reach students where they are and to establish rapport so they are willing to follow us. In my first setting, I cannot and will not tell little "Johnny" twelve times to sit down, if it doesn't happen the first time, then "Johnny" and I will have a meeting about how to conduct himself in my classroom. If this step does not work, parents will be contacted to help fix the situation. If the parent is not of help, I will attempt to have a face-to-face meeting with the parent, and if this does not work, "Johnny" will begin to receive his referrals and administration will become involved. Getting

Tips for Success

- Greet students at the door daily
- Be VISIBLE and TRANSPARENT
- Be Fair, Be Consistent, Be FIRM
- Be compassionate
- Establish rapport with PARENTS
- Learn your student's strengths and weaknesses
- Keep students BUSY!
- Find current trends that will help you connect with your students. (Dances, Phrases, Challenges, Hand Shakes, etc.)
- Everything does not have to be a verbal battle!
- It's 2019, Kids will use profanity in their general conversations. You are not going to change it. EDUCATE THEM!
- Learn what triggers certain behaviors for EACH student.
- When you ask a "why" question, you are asking for a debate
- Treat students like they were your own children
- Avoid getting into their personal space
- Know your limits with every student
- Be YOU with EVERY student!

administrators involved could be the best thing for you or the worse, but this is completely out of the control of a teacher.

On the other hand, I've seen teachers completely skip the student conference and go to the referral. You can't go from 0 to 100 that quick, you have to progress and get to know this kid:

- This kid might not be able to read so he distracts to take attention off of his learning disability.
- This kid might have seen a shooting on her block and didn't know how to completely handle it so she decided to accept it as something positive.
- This kid might not be going to a home tonight but rather sleeping in a car or a shelter.
- This kid might have just been a victim of some type of abuse at home and can't cope with the situation because proper counseling has yet to take place.
- This kid might be in a situation where he/she is raising themselves because both parents are absent from the home often.
- This kid might not be going home to a warm meal tonight. This kid might have low self-esteem issues.

There are so many adult-like situations that our students deal with today and if we just took half of the time to get to know them, our classrooms could be better managed. But I don't want to twist my words here, just because they are going through something does not mean we negate proper discipline. I tell my students all of the time, "your situation is not your destiny so don't bring me any excuses." Bottom line is that students want to be disciplined, but a kid WILL test your weakness. Say what you mean, and mean what you say because your bluff will be called and if you do not follow through, every student will know that you can be tested. They will always win.

My second classroom setting was in a more suburban area and I knew that a little less stress was on the horizon. So I thought...while my time in the suburbs was less stressful, it still exemplified the same challenges. Kids

are kids. Their nature will be similar regardless of where you teach. By taking the tools given to you in your studies, and adding your own spice to the mix, you will be able to handle any area. Regardless of where you are, it is still important to know how to establish rapport and learn who your students are rather than just writing referrals. In the suburban school, there was more of a sense of entitlement for some of my students. Very few students believed what they wanted, they could get, no matter how they got there. If they wanted to cuss an adult out, they would do it and believe there would be no consequence because in some households, there were none. That wasn't the case however for the majority. The majority of the students were also great kids, who got into typical "kid" trouble. When a parent was called, they showed up to fix the situation on the spot verses my previous setting, where I would be lucky to be able to leave a voicemail for a parent. Please know that these situations do not speak for every student and every family, but these are real life situations that novice teachers should be prepared to face.

If a new teacher believes that the textbook is the golden ticket to a peaceful road and a successful career with zero problems, you are mistaken. There is a reason there are courses on classroom and behavior management. Again, the text is used as a guide; it is a generalized idea of how to approach certain situations and should be followed. Given the nature of the student, we must also learn how to go further in reaching the students to avoid the same or future problems. In the best situation, there are supportive parents, a supportive community, and supportive administrators that truly assist you with behavior issues. Kids

do what adults allow them to do, so switch settings and hope its a better fit, or tough it out and be an influence in the lives of many students. When a student asks me "can I go see my Assistant Principal?" my response is NO! "You can sit here and look at me for the remainder of class." In 2019, in-school suspension, detention hall, and a trip to the principal's office is fun for some students. It is their easy way out of a tough situation. For my most challenging students, dealing with me is sometimes punishment enough. In the end, that is the main kid running to hug you, writing letters that they will miss you for the summer, sending coffee mugs and apples as gifts. Trust me, you ARE making an impact!

Remain positive in all situations; avoid negative thoughts and negative people. Be open to modifying how you approach students and certain situations daily. It is ok to step back sometimes, but ultimately, do not give up on your students. Students are great, even the worse behaved ones; we just have to learn how to pull that greatness out of them without first giving up on them. We have a unique way of doing that through music; many teachers cannot reach a kid how we as music educators reach them. What we do has the power to change lives. Once a student sees that you care and that they CAN be successful in something, they will begin to show improvement on their behavior. The question is, are YOU willing to take the time to truly get to know your students?

Music in Our Schools Month 2019

March 7th and 13th
The State Capital Rotunda
Little Rock, Arkansas



The 22nd Annual Music In Our Schools Month Capitol Concerts were held on two beautiful Spring days, Wednesday, March 7th and Thursday, March 13th in the rotunda of the Arkansas State Capitol. Over 1000 students from 18 schools from all corners of the state joined their voices in singing the music of the 2019 Concert for Music In Our Schools Month. This year's musical selections included "The Star Spangled Banner", "Enter With Singing" by Cristi Cary Miller, "Maliswe!" a traditional South African Song, "The Arkansas Traveler", "In This World Together", "Yonder Sails a Ship", "Una Sola Voz" and "Shady Grove" as the final song.

Before the concert portion of the program, schools were invited to perform individual selections. It is always nice to hear the choirs perform. On Thursday, March 7, Rivercrest Voices Performed "You Raise Me Up". Vann Voices performed "Give Us Hope". Elmwood 6th grade choir performed "You Could Be My Friend". Westside Vocal Union performed "Bring a Little Water Silvie" and "Follow the Drinking Gourd". Beryl Henry Elementary Choir performed "This is Why We Sing". On Wednesday, March 13th, Jonesboro Visual and Performing Arts Magnet Elementary performed "World in My Dream". Monticello Intermediate Treble Choir performed "Let Music Surround You". Angie Grant Elementary, Panther Choir performed "I Like to Sing (Scat)". Jim Stone Elementary Choir performed "Power In Me". Parkway Elementary School Choir performed "I Like Me". Nashville Elementary Scrapper Singers performed "A Brand New Song". Taylor Singers and Gandy Singers performed "Joyful, Joyful".

Bart Dooley welcomed the large crowd of onlookers including lots of parents from participating schools. This is the tenth year Mr. Dooley has chaired this event. On Thursday, March 7th, the first musical special guests were Dr. Steven Lance and his son Harry playing the violin, lap dulcimer and hammered dulcimer. Also on Thursday, Dr. Matthew Taylor from the University of Central Arkansas talked about the importance of music education in his life. He debuted an original Saxophone piece composed with the acoustic of the Captiol Rotunda in mind by Dr. Tyson also from UCA. On Wednesday, March 13th, Mrs. Haley Greer, the president of the Arkansas Music Educators Association gave a wonderful advocacy speech. Special musical guest for Wednesday's concert was Arkansas State Senator Jason Rapert. Senator Rapert shared with the audience his rich musical experiences and the importance music education was in his school years. He also shared that music brings people together, even if they are from different parties. Senator Rapert played a few fiddle tunes, which the audience enjoyed. This year's concerts were the largest and many said it was their favorite year yet! Please join us next year in mid-March! Dates and registration will be ready in the Fall.

Thursday, March 7th

Southside Elementary 3rd Grade Choir - Dawn Harris
Rivercrest Elementary "Rivercrest Voices" - Candace Hawkins
Beryl Henry Elementary Chorus - Sandra Jones
Johnson County Westside Jr. & Sr. High "Westside Schools Vocal Union" - Robin Milligan
Elmwood 6th Grade Choir - Marta Holt
Marguerite Vann Elementary "Vann Voices" - Bart Dooley



Wednesday, March 13th

Jim Stone Elementary Choir - Mandy McCoy
Ivory Primary School Choir & the Camden Fairview Intermediate School Honor Choir - Lisa Hollis
Noble/Allbritton Singers - Peyton Adcock
Angie Grant Elementary, "Panther Choir" - Jennifer Lunsford
Jonesboro Visual & Performing Arts Magnet Choir - Mary Jackson
Peake New Addition Choir - Laura Cornelius
Taylor & Gandy Elementary Singers- Ann Tibbs
Monticello Intermediate Treble Choir- Haley Greer
Nashville Elementary "Scrappier Singers" - Jaree Hall
Greer Lingle Middle School - Nephtali Cantu
Parkway Elementary School Choir - Darla Humes







Music in our Schools Month

Speech given by Dr. Matthew Taylor at the MIOSM concert at the Capital

My earliest memory has music in it. I can close my eyes and hear my dad playing piano, with both my parents singing. My parents are not professional musicians, but our house was filled with music. When I was old enough to join the band, I chose the saxophone. I would love to tell you that I chose it for some artistic reason, but the truth is, my favorite character on Sesame Street, Hoot the Owl, played saxophone! I was in the sixth grade, and that year brought about real change in our family.

My dad worked for the postal service, and his career began to take off. For him to continue to advance, we had to be willing to move to a new city. We had a family meeting, and we decided to make our first big move to a new state and school. Leaving behind a small country school in a tiny, little town in Alabama, we moved to Dallas, Texas. My new school seemed massive and terrifying to me. There were hundreds and hundreds more students at this new school, but music came to my rescue. Thanks to band, I was able to make a lot of friends very quickly. Being the new kid, it felt good to belong. Music gave me a way to connect with other people. For the first time in my life, I had a real identity outside of just being "Matt." Now, I was "Matt the sax player."

Time went on, and Dad was great at his job, which meant we continued to move. By the time I graduated high school, I had been to 13 different schools all over the country. When you are the new kid, especially when you move to a new school in the middle of the year, it's complicated. In some classes, you are way ahead, and you feel like genius. In some, you are way behind, and you feel ignorant.

As years passed, I began to think of music as my hometown. No matter where I was, no matter how lonely or overwhelmed I was, when I got to the band room, the concert B-flat scale was always the same. A quarter note got one beat. Forte was loud, and piano, soft. And with my classmates, we made music. I got to be part of something bigger than myself. I think, with my family's love and support, music saved my life and made me feel normal.

I believe that music, like life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, is an inalienable right. From birthdays, to weddings, to graduations, to inaugurations, we decorate the important moments of our lives with music. Music is there for our first dance, our first kiss. And it even turns up to help out after our first break up! I used songs to learn my multiplication tables, and to this day when I have to think of 7 times 9, I have to sing a little song.

Today, you all have filled this rotunda with song. If you all were not here, today would be just another Thursday. But because you are, we have a rare and special opportunity to connect, to create, and enjoy something beautiful... something bigger than ourselves.

*Dr. Matthew Taylor performed *Breaking*. A piece for saxophone, written by Dr. Blake Tyson, specifically to be performed in the Capital's rotunda



Dr. Matthew Taylor
Assistant Professor of Saxophone
University of Central Arkansas



Dr. Blake Tyson
Professor of Percussion
University of Central Arkansas

UAMusic



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NURTURE excellence

CONNECT with communities
CREATE diverse paths

7:1

student-to-faculty ratio



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ENSEMBLES

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WIND ENSEMBLE, WIND SYMPHONY, SYMPHONIC BAND,
CONCERT BAND, UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA,
JAZZ LAB ENSEMBLE, LATIN AMERICAN ENSEMBLE, SOUL BAND,
OPERA THEATRE, SCHOLA CANTORUM, INSPIRATIONAL CHORALE,
WOMEN'S CHORUS, MEN'S CHORUS, CHAMBER CHOIR, WORLD MUSIC ENSEMBLE,
NEW MUSIC ENSEMBLE, PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE, CHAMBER MUSIC, SINGER SONGWRITER

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The Mindful Musician

By: Jenny Hainen

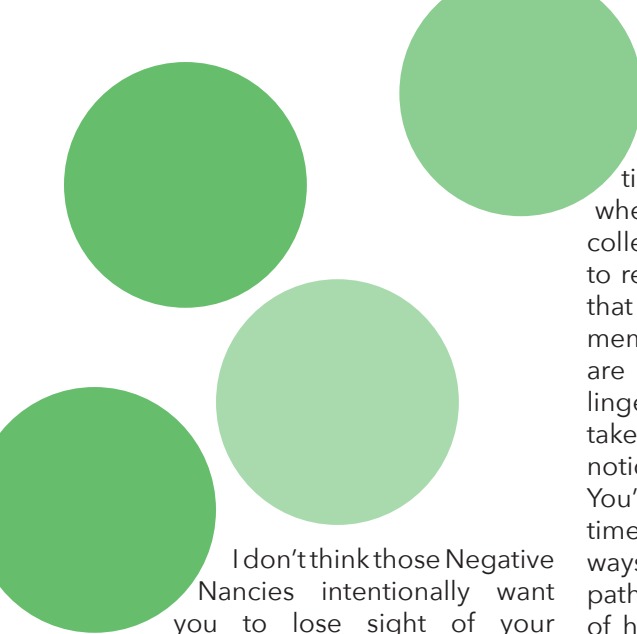
Another year in the books! BOOM! As happens every year, for a while it drags itself out and then magically, you lose the whole month of March. Then comes the light at the end of the tunnel....May! May is a teacher's time to get ready to decompress, refresh, and renew. In my mind I can see mountains, beaches, full cups of coffee, people I get to choose to be around... I smell sunblock, gas for upcoming road trips, and freedom. Ahhh... beautiful. When all of the sudden, I remember next year is coming. Then, the dreaded stockpiling of futuristic possible happenings and terrible, negative feelings wash over me like a tidal wave of despair- I remember I'm moving classrooms, getting a new principal, my best friend is changing schools, my babysitter quit, camps start in a week and a half, and how expensive dance costumes are going to be for my own kids in just a couple months... oh yeah, and all that extra PD. Geez. In 2 seconds time, all the happy thoughts of my approaching summer drain out of me. I start to dread the planning, the disorderly students that will foil all my musical, thought-laden plans, and quite frankly... I'm bitter. Bitter that I have to go through this! ME! A person who chooses to get paid basically in hugs for a living! And then I'm spent. I'm tired. I'm cranky. And, the worst part, I instantly lose sight of all the goodness that surrounds me and awaits me for a new summer and a new school year. I must say, I know this is the life of most teachers in May.

"Energy flows where attention goes." I come back to this quote time and time again when I find my brain wandering down a dark hole. We can stop all of that negativity, by the way. It takes time, effort, and patience, but we are resilient. We are musicians for crying out loud! We can learn to stop the downward spiral and it can be done by learning how to carry a little more mindfulness around with us at all times. Yes, I said learning; because much like everything else in life, it takes time to be mindful. It takes time to retrain your brain after years of negative thinking. It is hard, and I have no

doubt we can do hard things.

Mindfulness is like weightlifting and you should know, much like being a director, there are usually never two great days in a row. Abraham Lincoln is famously quoted as saying "If you look for the bad in man expecting to find it, you surely will." The same can be said for the way we talk about ourselves and our future. I'm not sure he meant for this quote to be a key for retraining yourself to be more mindful, but it absolutely could be! I want you to walk away from this knowing that you get what you constantly look for. Expect great things so you can see them when they come your way. Put your attention on what you actually want for your summer and your

school year so your energy can find its way there! Have you ever noticed how easily Negative-Nancies can take you off course? Have you ever offered a positive, light-shining insight to them and a struggling situation and they freeze-up for a second, like a deer in the highlights- just long enough for them to come up with something negative that attempts to discount your positive offering? Do not be that person. Faith and fear both require you to believe in something you can't see. You get to choose for yourself. Choose faith! Faith that next year will be the best year of your career. So now, not only do you have your eyes on your goal, now your energy is going there as well. You, energy, goals. Triple treat!



discover far more victories and fewer pitfalls if we would take the time to see the power that comes when we lean into others and our collected strengths. We could choose to remember and gratefully embrace that the fact sometimes the most memorable students we will ever have are the ones that make us develop lingering bald spots. This summer, take moments to breathe. (Did you notice you took a breath right then? You're welcome.) Let's spend a little time this summer thinking of all the ways we can be grateful for our career path and the lives we get the privilege of having in our presence every day during a school year.

I don't think those Negative Nancies intentionally want you to lose sight of your goal. They simply lack mindfulness themselves. And here's where your job gets extra hard when you're trying to become mindful: We will always a duty to share and the best and most mindful way can share the goodness found in The Arts and in life with someone is to be the example; Be the example of positive self-talk, the example of what a people-driven community and culture can look like, and be the example of what you want to see more of in education and life. Be grateful and remember how music has changed you and makes you. Instead of beating your head against the wall, trying to figure out the future negative, manifest what you want for today! And here's a gold nugget: do it for yourself. Be the example of group unity that brings hundreds of people together to play a piece, in the moment, no recordings, no youtube, no iphones.... just us. The example of failure meets persistence. Musicians build their entire careers around being able to "pick yourself up, dust yourself off, start all over again", because we know it's not about the fall; it's never about the fall... It's about the rise. Who helped you rise? Isn't that the best part, that we never rise alone? There is always a community with music. Even when we feel alone at times, something or someone inspired us to be where we are. If you would look at the big picture of your own greatness and accomplishment, I think you'd be happily surprised at the people who helped you get there. (Shout out to my dad!) We could

enough, negative Nancies out there that seem to sour every barrel.

Want a few ways to help you become a little more mindful and grateful this summer?

1- Anytime is a good time to remind yourself of the beautiful and simple fact, "I am here!" Knowing this and more importantly, recognizing this instantly changes your perception! You are here! Be grateful for what's around you! What do you see? What do you smell? Who or what are you around? FIND reasons to enjoy you, right where you are!

2- Do not add but to your sentences... instead try AND. This also goes for your self-talk. Example, "It's summer, but I have so much to do before next year." No no no.... Try this! "It's summer, and I'm going to enjoy myself as much as possible before sharing my gifts next year."

"Be grateful and remember how music has changed you and makes you"

No, I'm not high. I just know we must spend more time becoming and surrounding ourselves with the goodness we hope to see more of in our classrooms and in the world and less time concentrating on the judgmental, nothing's ever good

3- Develop your own theme song for summer! When something or someone gets you down, tell that negative voice where to stick it while busting out into song! Maybe it is just playing in your head, but let us not forget Nietzsche and his famous quote "and those that were seen dancing were thought insane by those that couldn't hear the music." (If your heart didn't explode in your chest reading that, this editorial-ish letter probably isn't for you. Sorry.... not sorry.) Mine shall be Queen's "Don't Stop Me Now!" or something Dave Matthews like "Lie in Our Graves"... (Yup! Still a fan!). Maybe you prefer a lil' Chopin Scherzo No.2 Op 31 In B flat minor... epic badass music. Maybe Black Violin's "Dreamer" or "Stereotypes"... "The Circle of Life" from The Lion King, "Don't Rain on my Parade" from Funny Girl, "For Forever" from Dear Evan Hansen, "Come Alive" from the Greatest Showman, Pink's "I am Here"... "Master of Puppets"-

Metallica, Wicked's amazing "Defying Gravity" or Gente di Zona's "La Gozadera"... I'm not going to pretend I know what all the words are, and I'm okay with that. Have a theme song ready to go and don't wait to find it only when you need it... feel empowered by finding it way before you ever really need it! Enjoy your summer! Did you make it this far? Post your summer positivity-showstopper song in the ArkMEA Facebook group so we can help cheer you on! Let's support each other while we're building our community!



Jenny Hainen
Elementary Chair

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Five Tips to a Better Hand Position

Striving to have the best hand position possible is important in developing healthy methods of playing the clarinet. Proper hand position allows for players to easily develop their technical skills and avoid repetitive motion injuries. With more than half the clarinet keys unused in the early stages of playing, it is easy for small or inexperienced players to build poor habits. Poor habits can create an awkward and incorrect hand position or other playing ailments that severely hinder technical growth. Instilling good habits can set students up for success to properly learn and advance their technique. Following the five guidelines outlined below will allow students of all ages, sizes, and ability level to properly hold and play clarinet, it will also set them on the path to success in other technical areas of playing.

Insist on a Natural Hand Position

Have the student drop their dominant hand down to their side and loosely shake it out releasing any tension. Tell the student that they should remain tension-free in every joint allowing their fingers to follow their natural curve. Immediately have them hold their arm up with the palm down. At this point, the fingers should hold their natural curve and their wrist should be slack. I call this "limp hand" position, and should allow you to see your students natural hand and finger shape. (See photo 1)

Remember that all hand and finger shapes are different and that a relaxed shape takes the natural curve and angle of the individual's hand anatomy. This is similar yet different for everyone. I had a music education student model for all of these photos and you can see in the images that she has smaller hands with shorter, stocky fingers. You can also see from the image that she is slightly double-jointed because of the mild curvature of her thumb tilting away from the center of the hand. It is easiest to indicate any finger issues in this position without the weight of the clarinet. Things you may be able to visually identify while your student is in "limp hand" position include: previous finger/hand injuries, incorrectly healed injuries, rheumatoid arthritis, an unnatural curve

of the fingers, double-jointedness, or even a student who does not understand what releasing tension means.

Once the "limp hand" position has been assessed, have the student pretend as though they are holding an empty can of soda. At this time, they should automatically curve their fingers and hand into a C-shape. Their fingertips and thumb should line up and the wrist should go from slack into a straight line. (See photo 2) At this point students should be able to add their clarinet. Once the clarinet is added, it is critical that the hand position remains tension free. If the student seems to struggle with holding the clarinet and maintaining a proper hand position at this point then you will want to recommend some accommodations for the student. Accommodations are listed in the last chapter of this section.

Once students are holding their instrument they should go to playing position and look down, or use their peripheral vision to check if they see their hand in the same shape as when they imagined holding the can of soda. When they look down, the C-shape should be clear on their right and left side. If their hand is changing from that natural position then the student likely is having some finger placement issues or

Photo 1



Photo 2



can't support the full weight of the instrument. Try waiting several days and then occasionally ask them to look down and see if they still are maintaining that natural hand position.

There are several types of accommodations that can be made for students who struggle to hold the full weight of the instrument. For students who are tall enough, they can rest the clarinet on the outer edge of their knees. The clarinet should not exceed a 30-degree angle. Be honest about this position's shortcomings and let them know that if they get lazy and allow the bell of the clarinet to fall in between their legs rather than resting it on top they will suffer serious intonation and tone problems. Obviously, this accommodation only works while sitting. Another suggestion is introducing these same players to the idea of using a neck strap. Clarinet neck straps have advanced significantly over the last few years and many now come with a partial elastic cord, this allows the player the ability to move around and have a bit of suspension while connected to the neck strap.

Proper Right Hand Thumb and Thumb-Rest Placement

Perhaps the most awkward part about playing the clarinet is how the instrument is held with all of the weight of the instrument balancing on the highest joint of the thumb. (See Photo 3) If the player holds the instrument farther inward on the thumb their hand position will become contorted. This is because once the instrument is moved to a higher position on the thumb (at the middle joint ranging up to the knuckle) then the pads of the fingers no longer naturally line up with the right hand finger holes. If you look back at Photo 2 you can see how the pads of the fingers naturally line up with the tip of the thumb. Students with small hands will often hold their clarinet farther in on their thumb trying to make their own accommodation without realizing the detriment that it can have on the entire hand position. As the instructor it is important to encourage students to always position their clarinets on the proper part of their thumb. If they need to support part of the weight of the instrument elsewhere to remain tension free then they should try the accommodations listed in step-one and try using a neck strap or resting the instrument on the outer

Photo 3



Photo 4



edge of their knees.

If a student complains about the right hand thumb placement being uncomfortable make sure that the thumb-rest has a cushion and the thumb-rest itself is located in the correct spot on the instrument. (See Photo 3) The thumb-rest should typically fall somewhere between where your first and second finger keys are located. Newer model instruments have adjustable thumb-rests and make a small accommodation easier. It also makes playing with the thumb rest in the wrong place a real possibility. Make sure that students understand why it is located there so they are less likely to move it when they are practicing alone. People tend to ignore the actual placement of the thumb-rest on the instrument, and if it is set incorrectly the player's entire natural hand position will be in jeopardy creating long-lasting tension.

Be sure that your students have some sort of cushion or pad on the thumb-rest as well. Most clarinets come with a tiny piece of cork, which usually falls off or gets worn down quickly. The oldest and cheapest trick in the book for this is to buy a container of foam or gel pencil grips and cut them in half. This method tends to work with the older skinny thumb-rests and the new wider more curvy thumb-rests. You can also spring for a nicer individual thumb-rest cover which can range from \$3-10 each. Believe it or not, there has become a competitive market for people making the best most marketable thumb-rest cushion. If we make the instrument comfortable to hold then keeping a natural hand position is that much easier! I put a pencil gripper thumb-rest on the clarinet before taking the photos so you can see it works on the larger versions.

Pinkies

Pinkies should, in general, follow a more "home-based" and less "nomadic" method of positioning. When you look at a clarinet players pinkies they should generally rest over the upper-register left-hand B and the upper-register right-hand C. (See Photo 4) More advanced players tend to create what they consider a "home-base" for their pinkies around the key of the music. The example above is perfect if playing in the key of C or G, because the pinkies would be waiting above the correct keys ready to play. If playing in the key of A in the upper-register, the left hand could stay above the B-key, but the right hand would shift to

stay above the C#-key. This of course only works for students who know both the right and the left handed fingerings for the pinky-key notes. Students who aren't comfortable using all of the pinky keys tend to look like they have confused pinky fingers that seem to move chaotically and seem to search for the notes.

There are two main things that should never happen with a player's pinky fingers. First, a player should never support the weight of the instrument on their pinkies. Do not let players "rest" their pinky fingers under the instrument or under the keys. This is easy to catch for instructors because the second you start adding notes that require the pinkies these students can't play and have to adjust. This is typically a habit of young students because they tend to be smaller and need a little bit of help supporting the weight of the instrument. Secondly, the pinky should never fully straighten or hyperextend the top joint of the pinky. Some very short or small students may need to slightly straighten their pinky finger to reach all of the keys until they grow, but they should still use the joints as a spring. This is really the only exception to the rule. Even though the student used to model the hand position has short fingers you can see that her pinky remains slightly curved and hasn't straightened in any of the joints.

Finger Motion

If the student has made it to the point where they can maintain a natural hand position while picking up the instrument then they are ready



Photo 5

to play! With a few small exceptions the fingers are only supposed to move from the third joint. It is a very simple movement that requires little movement or tension. Let the student practice the motion without the instrument to see how easy the motion is without worrying about having to seal the holes. (See Photo 5) If you have ever had a hand injury and gone through physical therapy you have probably had to complete some similar exercises. Have the student set their hand on a flat surface keeping it in the relaxed and natural hand position. Remind them of holding the can of soda to create a similar arch. Using one finger at a time, have them raise and lower the finger using the third joint only. Make sure that the student is using the pads of their fingers as light cushions in this exercise. Once they have practiced all of the fingers independently then they can begin moving the fingers in pairs and even following some of the clarinet fingering patterns. Even students who have been playing for an extended period of time can benefit from the activity. (See Photo 6)

Once the student adds the clarinet back into the equation it is important that they understand not to squeeze the instrument too firmly when playing. Playing with a tight grip ruins the natural hand position that the player is striving to achieve and puts them at risk of developing repetitive motion injuries. Typically, if the instrument is in good playing condition, and all of the keys and pads are sealing, then the player should only require a light grip for the instrument to speak. If the instrument is in good playing condition and the student still feels the need to squeeze or grip the instrument tightly, they are typically experiencing issues because of a weak air speed or using an improper embouchure.

I like to use an analogy to remind all students of proper hand motion, which I tend to bring out when I notice that they are excessively or erratically moving their fingers when they play. I compare the movement of fingers leaving the keys to that of an airplane and a helicopter. Ask the student to demonstrate using their hand to show how a plane takes off and then how a helicopter takes off. The fingers should act as a helicopter lifting straight off of the key. The key being the helicopter landing pad and the finger being the helicopter. This will get the student to keep their fingers close to the instrument without flailing them around or lifting them too far away from the instrument. When students get used to moving fingers only from the third joint and

lifting them straight off the key they will begin to trust that when they lift them up, all they have to do is put them straight back down and they will never have to search key again. There are several exceptions to this including the pinky keys, trill keys and the left-handed throat A and A-flat keys.

Once students begin playing, it is easy for them to lose the concept of only moving from the third joint particularly if they are double jointed or have hypermobility. Students with these issues need to be constantly reminded and should be personally checking in with their hand position often. These students will tend to collapse the first and third joint of some or all of the fingers. They should still be able to control their motions to maintain the natural arch of their hand. I am double jointed and can keep all of my fingers, including my pinky, in the natural position. This includes holding the instrument at the proper point on the right-hand thumb and not collapsing any of the joints in the pinkies.

The easiest way for the student to reinforce all of these practices and know they are correctly executing them is to have them stand in front of a mirror while they practice. If the student is consciously thinking about fixing the issue and can see what is happening then they can self-assess and stop the undesired motion sooner. Making the correct motion should become the new normal with enough diligent practice and attention.

Including Musical Style in Finger Motion

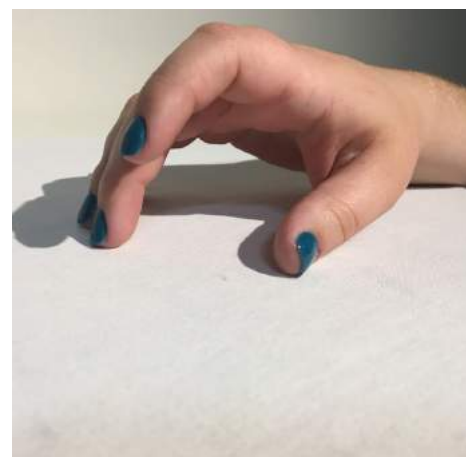


Photo 6

In the clarinet community there have been several key pedagogues who have discussed finger movement dependent on musical style. I typically do not share the information in this section with players until they reach the upper intermediate or early advanced levels of playing. The great Robert Marcellus and Daniel Bonade, would openly discuss the differences in finger motion and height when accounting for musical style. In fast technical passages, students should play with their fingers as close to the instrument as possible following an almost identical hand position as discussed above. Marcellus's hand position was a bit more rounded. He would have used the example of holding a tennis ball instead of a can to create the natural hand position. When students are first taught this concept they may realize that they previously played with too high of a hand position. In a lesson, I will often take a piece of paper, a folder or just my hand and hold it a couple of inches above the student's fingers while they are playing a technical passage. This forces them to focus on keeping the fingers close, as their main goal will be trying not to hit the paper. In sectionals, you can have students try doing this to their stand partner or neighbor and have them take turns being the person who plays.

In legato passages, students should allow their fingers to naturally rise higher off of the instrument. Marcellus called this "legato" finger playing, and Bonade called it "squeezing" finger style. The term "legato" fingers is what people more regularly use today, but the two terms mean essentially the same thing. Many players interpret this as a way of imitating the musical phrase or gesture and extending the music from the instrument to the body. In this style of playing, students should be moving their fingers farther away from the keys then when they are playing a technical passage. The fingers should never extend straight when playing a legato passage and should still primarily move from the third joint. It is also important to never allow the thumb to come out from the back of the instrument as this allows the entire hand "fly away" from the instrument. If a student is struggling to achieve this concept and their fingers appear to be moving correctly then they are likely playing with a weak air stream.

Students are typically ready to try and tackle this concept when they are able to play the Rosé études. When playing a slow etude, students can focus on the "legato" finger style and when working on a fast technical etude they can work on keeping their fingers close to the instrument. Practicing in front of a mirror will again reinforce this concept. Students who struggle to play and

simultaneously watch themselves in the mirror should try videotaping their playing using a smart phone or other device. Referring immediately back to the recording as a reference is critical in the recording process.

Photo 1: Limp Hand Position

Photo 2: Holding an Imaginary Can

Photo 3: Right-Hand Thumb Position

Photo 4: Front View of Hand Position

Photo 5: Natural Hand Position

Photo 6: Finger Lifting Exercise



Natalie Szabo is a Chicago native. Before moving to Little Rock, she was a regular member of The Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra, The DuPage Symphony Orchestra, The Lynchburg Symphony, The Charlottesville Symphony and Tomorrow Music Orchestra. Prior to coming to The University of Arkansas at Little Rock she worked at Sweet Briar College which is a small all-women liberal arts school at the base of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Before receiving her doctorate she worked as an adjunct faculty member at Elgin Community College teaching clarinet and saxophone lessons. Szabo also served as the music conservatory coordinator. Simultaneously, she was she full-time orchestra director at Carl Schurz High School in the Chicago Public School System and acted as a CPS district arts liaison. Her current position is as a Visiting Assistant Professor at The University of Arkansas at Little Rock where she teaches clarinet lessons, music education courses and music theory.

Student Hand Model:

Emily Gaines, Senior Music Education Major at University of Arkansas at Little Rock

End Notes

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Lead a Legacy

Dr. Vicki Lind

Interviewer: Thank you for your willingness to share your career experiences with our readers. Could you tell us a little about your background as a music teacher?

Dr. Lind: Currently, I'm the Interim Department Chair for the Music Department at UA Little Rock. Prior to my appointment as Interim Chair, I was a Professor of Music Education. I've taught every grade level and almost every type of music class offered. Before coming to UA Little Rock, I was on the faculty at UCLA and UC Boulder. As a music education professor at the collegiate level, I've taught a variety of courses including music methods courses, vocal pedagogy, conducting, and music for elementary teachers. Prior to entering the world of collegiate music education, I taught in southern California. I taught junior high choir and band for five years and moved up to the high school for two years. My first teaching job was at a K-8 school where I taught general music.

Interviewer: You've held so many positions in Music Education, what is a favorite memory for you?

Dr. Lind: I have so many wonderful memories, it's impossible to name just one. As I'm answering this question, I'm looking at a picture I keep on my desk of my first high school choir. That was an amazing experience for me. When I agreed to move from the junior high school to help open the new high school in town, I didn't anticipate the challenges we would face. For the first few weeks, the choir room wasn't finished so we met in a classroom without a piano and without chairs. Classrooms weren't finished, supplies hadn't come in, and there were many more students walking through the doors than had "pre-registered". The school was located in an area known for gang activity, and there was some jostling among competing gangs for the new territory. To say we had a rough few weeks would be an understatement. Fortunately, I worked with a wonderful group of administrators and colleagues who worked tirelessly to find a way to make the school work, and it didn't just work - it thrived. The administration worked with faculty to design two days devoted to listening to and working with the students. Every class period was extended, and teachers in every classroom spent time working with students to form a vision for the new high school. At the end of the two days, we held a rally on the athletic field where most students and faculty attended. At the end, the students circled the field holding hands and sang together. It was a turning point for the school, and two years later we had a 96% graduation rate.

Interviewer: In education we frequently discuss success, what would you say your greatest success has been as a music educator?

Dr. Lind: What would you say your greatest success has been as a music educator?

I am not sure how to define success. I'm most proud of my students who have gone on to be successful in their own ways. I love it when my students go into teaching, but I am most proud of the ones who are good people. I can't take any credit for that, but I love being a part of the experience.

Interviewer: To have a career as exciting as your career, who have been some of your biggest supporters and mentors? Who are your biggest influences/mentors?

Dr. Lind: I have three people that I consider my mentors. The first is Anna Rodriguez. Anna was the principal at the high school I mentioned earlier. She had high expectations for her faculty, but she combined those high expectations with the ability to express sincere gratitude for a job well done. She was strong and decisive, she didn't tolerate incompetence, and she brought out the best in those around her. She valued people, all people. She knew every student, not just their names but their interests, their family ties, their struggles, and their successes. She was a brilliant administrator.

The second mentor was Dr. John Fitch. Dr. Fitch was my advisor at the University of Arizona where I completed my PhD. John was an excellent example of a faculty member who put students' needs above his own. He didn't strive for recognition or reward, rather he worked every day to make sure all of the students got what we needed. His door was always open, and he always had the right advice for every situation. After I graduated, I visited him often. I fondly remember the last time I had the chance to hear his words of wisdom. He visited me when I was living in Colorado. We hiked to a beautiful peak close to my mountain home and spent the afternoon talking about music, academia, and life. He was a brilliant person with a big heart who always cared about his students' lives.

My third mentor was James Austin at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Jim was a senior faculty member when I was hired. Jim was instrumental in helping me maneuver the world of higher education. His mentorship was invaluable as I learned how to balance the demands of higher education. He had high expectations for students and faculty, but he held himself to the highest of standards. Jim set the example for me of what it means to contribute to our profession in meaningful ways through our teaching, research, and service.

Interviewer: You are completing your 39th year as a music educator, what do you think contributed to the longevity of your career?

Dr. Lind: I feel so grateful that I have a career that I truly love. Being around people who are passionate about music and learning, it's amazing. I enjoy the rich conversations that take place in and out of the classroom. I thrive on learning new things, and I learn every day from my students and fellow teachers. I contribute my longevity to making a great choice when I decided to into music education.

Interviewer: Finally, what advice do you have for young and developing music educators?

Dr. Lind: Follow your passion and work hard. Becoming an accomplished musician and teacher is hard work, but as a teacher, I believe our students deserve our best. If you are willing to commit, it's a great career. If you don't like to practice, or if you don't want to read and think about what good teaching looks like, this career is not for you. I think the most important advice I can give is to take time to reflect. Reflect on who you are and who you want to become. While this field is extremely rewarding, it is not for everyone. If a developing music educator makes the commitment to this choice, then my advice is to find excellent examples of good teachers and study them. Listen to what they say and how they say it. Observe, watch the details. Be open to change, and strive for growth.



*Photos provided by Dr. Vicki Lind



Editor's Note

Ken Goff

"We forget the journey can be more fun than the actual end result."

I'm writing this while on a bus... I am traveling with a university group that will be performing 7 hours away from campus. I'll admit it; I hate bus rides. Could it be the noise level from the excited students? (Yes, even college students get super excited on trips.) Maybe I don't like the smell of diesel exhaust on a fine spring morning. It could be the Disney songs that are forever etched in my head from the running video of Frozen. Maybe it is the rocking motion of the bus that is making me feel a little green. I feel every bump in the road and I could've sworn I just saw the second hand on my watch move backwards. I'm grumpy. I really dislike trips. Regardless of my opinions, the students seem to enjoy the ride more than I do. I forget that; I forget that just because I have become numb to bus trips, it doesn't mean my students have. They love the journey and fast food stops. At times, the students even seem to enjoy the journey more than arriving at the destination.

I think this is also true in our classrooms and ensembles - we frequently become so product-driven that we forget the journey can be more fun than the actual end result. While we may have taught the same concept hundreds of times in our career, we must remember that our students are understanding it for the first time. The excitement in our exchanges created through the realization that we may be the only ones providing our students access to music education should empower us. We should be empowered to not only look forward to the journey but also to enjoy it. I love arriving "there" but the journey itself provides countless amounts of teaching moments. Someone much wiser than me once said, "Appreciate those insignificant moments in your life that might change the trajectory of someone else's". Teaching a dotted quarter note may seem insignificant to your life but that interaction could be life-changing for one of your students. I know it was for me! I will strive to provide the best journey for my music education students and ensembles. I will also make it a point to enjoy the rest of my bus ride. Oh good... the Lion King is now on...

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