

Andrew's SS2



3 MUSICAL MOMENTS THAT HAVE SHAPED ME AS AN EDUCATOR

- 1) POP MUSIC IS A TOOL THAT I NEED TO USE**
- 2) MAKE A “CHOICE”**
- 3) GET BY WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS**

Pop Music Is A Tool That I Need To Use



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- Piece 1:
- On my music practicum in York Region, I found out that my faculty liaison was coming in on the final Wednesday of my week 4 February practicum block, and I had her coming in to see me lead the 9-12 vocal class that I had been working with. I decided that adapting Jeff Newbury's Mumford lesson, and trying it out with the 25 students, was a great idea, as it promoted many of the skills we had been working on in our short time, and it forced the vocal "I'm a singer, not an instrumentalist" types into playing creative instruments.

Pop Music Is A Tool That I Need To Use



- Piece 1 Continued:
- 2 trips to Home Depot and Dollarama later, and I had a homemade set of claves, shakers, sonotube drums, and more. I also stopped in on my friend's Kindergarten class, and borrowed some other instruments.
- The day of the class, I was prepped and ready to go, yet I was a little bit nervous due to the fact that I wasn't sure if my students were going to be able to carry the instrumental parts. Regardless, once the bell rang, it was time to go

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- Piece 1 Continued:
- I created a sort of Coles notes version for the students to learn the vocal lines, and led the group with my guitar. After singing through the difficult parts, I broke the class into two groups, purposely splitting the 4 students who were proficient piano and guitar players into both groups.
- We had a limited amount of time to work on the tunes (about 30 minutes), and there was quite a difference in each groups preparation. One group had made it all the way until the second chorus, and was really grooving, while the other group had barely made it to the chorus with 5 minutes left.

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- Piece 1 Analysis:
- To my surprise, the "more prepared" group went first, and pretty much flopped, and the "unprepared" group went up, and just killed it. Some members of the first group gave a standing ovation. This experience taught me that things don't always go the way that you think they're going to go (especially in the arts), and to have faith in the creativity of students.

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- Piece 1 Analysis Continued:
- I ended the lesson by creating a mind map on the board of the things we all liked (like Jeff's lesson), and we performed one final loud and passionate version of the tune, and it went fantastic. My liaison loved the lesson, and my review was great.

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- Piece 1 Teaching Implications:
- This lesson showed me that personal creativity and pop music have a place in the formal music classroom. It's something that I'm going to continue trying to do, as I believe it is entirely important to student success, and my effectiveness (and sanity) as a musician and educator.

Pop Music Is A Tool That I Need To Use



- Piece 1 Course Connections:
- Find a creative way to get students to take ownership of the material that I teach. Blur the lines between personal popular music and formal elements that are usually instructed in class.
- “How do you invite students to play with the music - inventing their own variations and contributing their own ideas in an ongoing way? How is student understanding of musical processes and concepts being developed through guided manipulation of the music?” (Countryman and Rose 40).
- “How do you help students make connections between school music and their personal musicking? How is the curriculum relevant to their personal lives?” (Countryman and Rose 40).

Make a “Choice”



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- Piece 2:
- In High School, I was involved in a little bit of everything when it came to extra curricular activities. I played numerous varsity sports, was on student council, acted in dramatic productions, and participated in a variety of musical ensembles. Balancing all of these commitments was difficult for a 14-18 year old, but I found that my personal happiness was dependant on staying involved in a variety of activities.

Make a “Choice”



- Piece 2 Continued:
- On one specific occasion, my grade 10 music teacher confronted me about how my athletic commitments were interfering with rehearsals for music. Although I tried my best to go split time between rehearsals and games, my absence from music class had been noticed, and this was being addressed. My teacher told me that he thought it was time that I make a choice between sports and the arts. This comment perplexed me, but it has a lot of implications for my future teaching.

Make a “Choice”



- Piece 2 Analysis:
- Coming into this B. Ed year, I knew that this was not the type of teacher that I want to be. I believe that students should get involved in as many facets of the high school experience as possible, as getting involved leads to relationships and development beyond the classroom. My practicum experience however, taught me a lot about how the arts and athletics need to get along, in order to make “choices” like my difficult high school experience, unnecessary.

Make a “Choice”



- Piece 2 Teaching Implications:
- On practicum, I volunteered with the girl's basketball team, and track and field, in conjunction with my co-curricular music involvement. This opened a dialogue with the Physical Education department that is necessary when discussing scheduling conflicts between sports and the arts.
- By becoming actively involved in other school activities, you show your students that there is value in other activities, but there is also a need for balance to be truly successful. As an educator, I'd like my experience to be cross curricular, to incite students to follow my lead, and ultimately get involved.

Make a “Choice”



- Piece 2 Course Connections:
- While no article this term specifically dealt with balance between the arts and other departments, I felt that Haley’s article about the Nevada guitar program was relevant to this piece. Haley describes a school district-wide musical effort to get more students in the classroom. By becoming more involved in other elements of school life, I will show my students the need for balance in their lives, and ideally draw other non-music students into the department.
- “It was important for us to expand course offerings in our Secondary Music Education Program so that we could involve more students and offer a more comprehensive music curriculum” (Haley 49).

PP1&2: Get By With A Little Help From My *Friends*



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- Piece 3:
- Coming into my PP1, I had very little formal conducting training and it was a daunting task for me. I decided to choose a piece that I was familiar with (Pachelbel's Canon), and put my own spin on it using the Beatles to add a popular element.
- My first round through conducting the piece in front of the class was a nerve wracking experience. I was not confident in my conducting, and I was concerned about looking silly in front of my classmates. I felt that I got through the process fine, but I had a lot to work on.

PP1&2: Get By With A Little Help From My *Friends*



- Piece 3 Continued:
- With practicum conducting experience in hand, I approached my PP2 with a new found confidence in my ability to conduct, and also make decisions on the fly. My second conducting experience in class was entirely different and positive. Soon after, we had our final band performance on student street which represented the culmination of all the hard work we put into the project as a group.

PP1&2: Get By With A Little Help From My *Friends*



- Piece 3 Analysis:
- This event captured the emotion of “concert night” in a lot of ways, and it was my first time conducting in front of an audience. The event went so well, and I was overwhelmed with the progression of the group and myself personally.

PP1&2: Get By With A Little Help From My *Friends*



- Piece 3 Teaching Implications:
- The feeling of “not wanting to look silly” in front of my peers is something entirely related to a classroom environment. Students do not want to get up in front of their fellow peers and do something that may make them look vulnerable.
- By letting students pick their own pieces, you can provide them with a sense of creative ownership over the work that they are putting into their studies.
- Through this exercise, I learned the importance of scaffolding, and providing the skills necessary to make a classroom a safe environment to create in.

PP1&2: Get By With A Little Help From My *Friends*



- Piece 3 Course Connections:
- I strive to create a safe learning environment where effort (instead of the often used term talent) is celebrated, and hard work is acknowledged on a daily basis.
- “Children praised for effort, on the other hand, do not fear failure; they recognize it as an inevitable aspect of their effort, and something they have the tools to overcome” (Bolden 2).
- Despite our different skill levels, we all grew as a group through this process. This relates to keeping students functioning in the zone of proximal development. I need to emulate this in my future teaching.

Works Cited



- Bolden, Benjamin. (2010). Talent. *Canadian Music Educator*, 51(4), 4-6.
- Countryman, J. & Stewart-Rose, L. (2009). Instructional strategies that challenge dominant pedagogy. *Canadian Music Educator*, 50(3), 40-42.
- Haley, Randy. (2009). Build it and they will come. *Canadian Music Educator*, 50(4), 49-50.