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Revised Philosophy of Music Education  
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The purpose of an education, regardless of what the content matter may be, is to teach people to be involved, tolerant citizens, and to promote the general happiness and well being of all students. Children should finish school with an idea of how to be a successful citizen in a democratic society, as well as how to embrace the differences in the individual cultures of all students. This cannot be achieved without the inclusion of music education in our country's schools. The mission of the Music Educators National Conference (MENC), as stated on their website, is "...to advance music education by encouraging the study and making of music by all" (2008). As a certified instrumental and general music teacher, I intend to fulfill the mission statement of MENC in my own classroom by providing a thorough and comprehensive music curriculum. This includes singing, playing instruments, composing music, improvising, and learning how music relates to Western and Non-Western history and other arts. My students will also be able to listen to performances of themselves and others and talk about its style and their feelings about the performance. This will not only give students a thorough and comprehensive musical education, it will also satisfy the mission statement of MENC and its nine music education standards. With the knowledge that the students have gained through my classroom, the students will be able to understand and appreciate all of the music that the world has to offer.

The methods by which I accomplish my goals will be age appropriate and content specific. Whether a student is enrolled in my band class or my general music class, students will walk away with a basic sense of how music works. According to the

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) website, good teachers “know the subject they are teaching, know how children grow, understand that children learn differently, know how to teach, know how to manage a classroom, communicate well, are able to plan different kinds of lessons, know how to test for student progress, are able to evaluate themselves, and are connected with other teachers and the community” (2008). I plan to achieve these standards by use of the eclectic approach, which uses elements of the Orff, Kodaly, Dalcroze, and Gordon approaches of teaching music to children. These methods not only will enhance my ability to achieve the nine MENC music education standards, but will help me to fulfill the ten Wisconsin DPI teacher standards.

As well as setting up a comprehensive music curriculum, it is vital that a good music education for students involves the incorporation of exceptional learners into the classroom. As a music teacher, it is my personal goal to differentiate for all students, so that everyone in my classroom can reach his or her maximum potential. According to Kimberly Accord and Emily Watts, “[m]aking the curriculum flexible and accommodating a variety of learning styles produces better results and eliminates the need to customize adaptations for specific students with disabilities” (Accord, et. al, 4). I will, however, work creatively with cooperating specialists when necessary to ensure that all students’ needs are being met. Whenever possible, I will participate in the creation of a student’s IEP, so that I can assist in the specialized instruction of a student in my classroom. Mainstreaming is an important element in modern education, and it is my personal mission to accommodate all students in my music classroom.

Another vital element to the comprehensive music classroom is assessment. In my music classroom, I believe that the incorporation not only of periodic formal

assessment, but the use of daily informal assessment, as Mel Pontious suggests in his assessment article when he writes, "...[teachers] have succeeded in focusing the students on mastery of musical understandings instead of grades by involving them actively in the 'getting there' (Pontious, 127). This means that students should be assessed as they learn concepts, in order to reinforce the material learned. Assessment is essential not only to ensure that the students understand the material taught, but also to prove to the school administration that the curriculum taught in the music classroom is intrinsically valuable and necessary for a student's well-rounded education. Assessment also fulfills several of the Wisconsin DPI teacher standards. It is my personal belief that assessment is vital to the success of a music program, and I will strive to create comprehensive assessments for my students.

Through the comprehensive music program that I will present to my students, they will leave my classroom with a sense of the basics of music and they will be ready to be lifelong consumers of music. Through learning music, the students will gain insight into the democratic society in which they live, as well as the cultures of those around them. By participating in my instrumental or general music program, the students will also be able to pursue a lifelong hobby and therefore, gain happiness and fulfillment in their lives.

## WORKS CITED

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