

Philosophy of General Music Education

My philosophy of general music education has been developing for a few years now. There are many things to think about when it comes to the why, what, and how of teaching, as well as specific aspects of teaching general music that must not be ignored. Music education requires a passion to teach. That passion also must stay with the teacher while they hold that title. General music is on the right track, but more needs to be done. Fortunately the upcoming generations are being given the right tools to do so. General music needs to be more than just notes on a page. We have had the National Standards in place for some time, and here and now is when they need to be put to use. Too many general music educators have been able to teach the notes on the page, but the students deserve to be guided to see what else is out there. Specific aspects of general music which are very crucial to success are the inclusion of students with special needs, proper and appropriate assessment, and multiculturalism in the classroom.

I have a passion for general music education. This passion started to develop as an elementary student. It continued to grow due to the amazing musical experiences I had. As a general music educator, I hope to personally keep that passion which developed in me in the early years. I want to share my life passion with all age groups. To be able to bring the love of music to others as they go down their educational path is what I hope to continue to do through out my career. Music helped to shape my life, and I would love to do what I can as an educator to provide experiences to my students in order to help shape their lives. Without a strong passion driving us to be teachers, there will be no way to do all we set out to do. If the passion is lost, we will be doing a disservice to our students and our future, and no shaping will take place.

I believe general music education is slowly going in the right direction. I feel there will always need to be more and more advocacy, but I have faith that our programs will last. Programs

may be in jeopardy already, but I feel that if we continue to look at what we are doing right and improve where necessary, those programs will survive. I see amazing potential in my peers, and I see change happening in schools already. I am very excited to be a part of the most recent activity in general music education, and I am predicting a major come back.

Students with special needs are and should be welcomed into the music classroom. It is important to give every student the opportunity to learn and grow through musical experiences. It is also important to encourage students to learn from each other. According to law, it is also the duty of a general music teacher, or any teacher, to allow students with special needs in their classrooms. “Free appropriate public education designates that each child with a disability is entitled to a no-cost program of regular and special education services that are appropriate for his or her specific needs” (Colwell). Music is for everyone; not just some.

Assessment is another crucial part of general music. Assessment is especially important when establishing a musical foundation in the early grades. If the students have a poor foundation to build off of, they will eventually have trouble in the future. There are three main areas within assessment that must be addressed. According to research, “Today, issues relating to accurate, authentic, and efficient assessment are being discussed...” (MENC). As teachers, we have to be flexible enough in our teaching to make sure there are many forms of assessment occurring over the course of the school year. We also have to make sure they are practical and efficient to what we are trying to accomplish and what the students really need.

I have been fortunate enough to have had a variety of general music educators in my life. They all had an influence on me in one way or another, a few of which have shown different styles of teaching that I hope to adapt into my own teaching style. There were also others who gave me a clear view of the kind of teacher I do not wish to become. I am grateful for having had the

opportunity to learn under many different instructors. This has given me the chance to compare notes and decide what kind of a teacher I want to be. One example of a similarity that each of my instructors shared was that they all stuck to the notes on the page. There were only a few occasions where we learned about the composer or an interesting aspect of the piece. To me this is not good enough. It was not until college that I realized there was so much more to music. I want to make sure my students are aware that behind every piece of music there could be an interesting person, culture, history, purpose, layout, and much more. I want to give them the opportunity to create and discover new music as well as music of the past. I also would love for my students to see their general music class as more than just another class they have in a seven period day. Instead, I hope they are able to connect music to their daily lives, their culture, and other classes. I really believe that having a well rounded music program will help to keep Music Education as a whole alive. I believe adding more substance by using the National Music Standards to guide the program, an educator will be able to get more advocacy and interest as well as develop well-rounded musicians.

In the end, students are the ones who will either gain or suffer from our choices in teaching. I have such a passion for teaching music that I can only hope I never find a limit to what I can give my students. Music is much more than black dots on a page. Music is what you make it. I hope to give my students all the tools they need to make music something important to them.

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