

Preface

One of the most bracing realizations many teachers have when entering the profession is that being a good musician does not automatically make one a good teacher. It's a prerequisite, to be sure, but ultimately the finest virtuoso in the world will fail in front of a large group of students if he doesn't know how to translate his expertise into effective teaching. For many teachers, even when they feel prepared—after they have studied child psychology, learned how to conduct, given recitals on their primary instrument, and learned how to play every other instrument—their first job rarely mirrors their expectations.

There is an irony to this, for once you combine the significant demands of a music degree with education classes and the training needed to teach multiple instruments, you create a music education degree bursting at the seams with requirements. We mean this not as an indictment of teacher preparation programs, but rather as a recognition that music teaching (any teaching, for that matter) is a complex discipline. Not only is there much to learn, but there is a classic tension between theory and practice. After absorbing as much as we can as students, many of us enter the “real world” and find that some of the techniques and philosophies we practiced in school fit awkwardly into the realities of our new job.

Our intent in *Instrumental Music Education* has been to strike a balance among pedagogy and “in the trenches” practicality. Our approach is to show future educators what research and theory says they should do, and then provide the tools for how to do it. In some cases we present more than one perspective on the same issue, a way to recognize the hubris in insisting there is only one way to succeed, or that one viewpoint is inherently superior to another. Teaching the arts can only thrive with open-mindedness and introspection.

Our Teaching Philosophy

In many of the pedagogical sections of *Instrumental Music Education*, we emphasize the commonalities between music and spoken language. One of our impetuses for this was the gradual realization, through our own teaching, that the process of learning language reflects how students naturally learn music. Research shows compelling parallels between music and language¹—not only neural and cognitive ones, but also in conceptual and pedagogical ways. Put simply, the most effective way to learn music is the same way one learns to speak one's native tongue.

What are the implications of this conclusion for teaching music in schools? With spoken language, children achieve fluency in speaking and understanding before they even enroll in school. Formal

schooling then builds upon their fluency. It develops the ability to express oneself, increases their vocabulary, provides the structure of grammar and rules, and teaches reading and writing. In contrast, the conventional approach to instrumental music education teaches the same topics, but in reverse order. Most notably, reading (notation) and theory are taught first; everything else then follows, sometimes immediately, sometimes far behind.

By this process one teaches the symbol before one teaches what the symbol represents. As a broad example, we must avoid telling our students, “A quarter note looks like this” before we know they can perform and understand a basic melody. It would be akin to teaching a toddler how to recognize and recite the alphabet before she has spoken her first word. In writing this book we were interested in a linguistic-influenced approach—a band/orchestra pedagogy that emphasized “speaking” and understanding music before “spelling” and notating it. Sound (and its meaning) is taught first, followed later by the symbol that represents the sound: sound-to-symbol. Much of the pedagogy we present is an adaptation and hybridization of educational theorists such as Suzuki, Kodály, and Gordon, among others. Beyond the recognition of music’s relationship with spoken language, their crucial insight was how to extract the tenets and mechanism of learning language, and then simulate and accelerate the process in the music classroom.

Features

Instrumental Music Education’s twenty-five chapters cover a wide variety of topics, beginning with the issues raised by Sound-to-Symbol philosophies. These pedagogical topics include:

- a discussion of the connection between music and language, with an eye toward showing how this affects the teaching of music fundamentals
- an introduction to some of the pioneers of Sound-to-Symbol, including Kodály, Suzuki, Dalcroze, and Gordon
- a template for teaching rhythm, tonality, and reading with comprehension to beginning instrumental students
- suggestions for applying these ideas to a traditional method book
- strategies for teaching improvisation and composition in the instrumental classroom

We also include a section on classroom management, one of the most difficult subjects to master for any teacher, not least because experienced master teachers often make it look effortless. Yet though experience may be the best teacher, having a plan accelerates the learning process. One of our goals in writing this text was to provide teachers the concrete theory and tools with which to prepare themselves, especially since it’s difficult to simulate a public school scenario in a college classroom or during student teaching and other in-the-field internships. We discuss a variety of philosophies and techniques, and we encourage every teacher to be thoughtful in their approach to disciplining and managing students in the same way they would be choosing repertoire and teaching musicianship.

Of course, being a music teacher involves much more than just teaching music and managing a classroom. Students must be recruited, programs advocated for, funds raised, budgets balanced, concerts managed, repertoire chosen, scores learned, parents communicated to, new jobs sought, and new skills attained. Often these skills are learned on-the-job, and indeed our text cannot replace years of first-hand experience. Still, we have tried to provide detailed primers for some of these crucial activities.

Organization

Instrumental Music Education is divided into three units:

Unit 1: The Process of Teaching Instrumental Music—includes: An Introduction to Sound-to-Symbol, Teaching Rhythm and Rhythm Reading, Tonality, Melody, and Singing, Teaching Improvisation and Composition, The History of Instrumental Music Education and Philosophy, and Two Models of Instructional Design.

Unit 2: Directing Bands and Orchestras—includes: Classroom Management, Curriculum, Assessment and Grading, Repertoire, Score Study, Large Ensemble Set-Up, Rehearsals (in three parts), Intonation, Directing Other Ensembles, and Motivation.

Unit 3: Administrative Issues—includes: Recruiting, Organizing, and Starting the Band and Orchestra, Planning and Managing a Concert/Concert Etiquette, Promotion and Advocacy, Communication, The Music Budget, Copyrights, Managing Sound Levels, Leadership, Mentors, and Professional Development.

A set of questions serve as the bookends for the beginning and end of each chapter. The introductory “To Guide Your Reading” questions quickly preview the goals of the chapter. The “Activities/Assignments for Further Exploration” offer suggestions for class assignments, discussion, and individual projects.

Multimedia Features



Instrumental Music Education provides robust multimedia materials, which include numerous teaching and learning tools for instructor and student. The enclosed CD contains over 50 tracks of acoustically pure drones and demonstration exercises for use in rehearsals, sectionals and lessons. Look out for the CD icon as these exercises are discussed.

The Companion Website, www.routledge.com/textbooks/9780415992107 has several special features:

- Instructional videos filmed with high school, college, and community concert bands. The instructional videos were born from our frustration with the inevitable disconnect between reading about a technique and trying to imagine how it would work in real-life. Having a description in a prose is important, but we knew we could write at great length and still never achieve the clarity of a four-minute video on the same subject. We have provided various methods for addressing musical issues that arise in rehearsal, though we also feel it is important to develop variations, extensions, and additions of these methods:
- Over 100 pedagogy videos for instruments, performed by professional players and teachers
- More than 220 rhythm flashcards, plus letters and forms discussed in the text
- “Tartini,” intonation training software, courtesy of its primary author, Philip McCleod, which tracks the pitch of multiple tones in real time, charts vibrato, and illustrates the complete overtone series of any sounding pitch.
- Additional topics on *The Job Search and Interview Process* and *The Rehearsal Toolkit*, which includes “How to Practice,” presented by Dr. Lynn Hileman (West Virginia University) and “Rhythmic Alteration and Practice Planning,” presented by Matthew McClure (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)



- Look for the Companion Website icon throughout the text.

The process of writing this text has been an incredibly rewarding experience. As we worked to refine our ideas and philosophies we were enriched by the incredible wealth of experience and wisdom from our colleagues and from our profession. We hope you enjoy reading it, and we look forward to continuing the discovery process.

Best wishes, musically and otherwise,

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