

## SMTE Symposium

### **TITLE—Learning to Plan/Planning to Learn: Webbed Planning Strategies for Score Study and Ensemble Rehearsal**

Presentation for the “Best Practices” category of the “Preparing Music Teacher Educators/Supporting Current Music Teacher Educators” Area for Strategic Planning and Action (ASPA).

#### Abstract

This session presented an approach to score study and lesson preparation based on the notion of teaching as improvisation; improvisation grounded in a thorough knowledge of the music, the learners and the context in which musical teaching and learning takes place. This approach considers each musical score as an organic work, demanding its own unique method and array of teaching strategies. The *webbed* or “bubble plan” format that forms the core of this approach requires novice music teachers to analyze the score using their knowledge of musical form, rhythm, style, instrumental/vocal technique, text and history, and then transfer this rich, procedural and supervisory knowledge to the development of pedagogical strategies that remain authentically musical.

The session presenters demonstrated the following principles:

- score study; score marking strategies (color-coding, thematic markings, text considerations, “barline” analysis, metrical analysis)
- “bubble planning”; determining salient features of the musical score, brainstorming strategies for pedagogical analysis
- rehearsal planning; discussion of conductor “commonplaces” (conductor as director, conductor as controller, conductor as facilitator); rehearsal “triage” strategies; development of non-verbal teaching strategies (singing, chanting, clapping, using solfege/rhythm syllables, body movement/kinesthetics)

The two undergraduate student presenters taught a musical score to the audience, making explicit their knowledge of the score and the preparatory choices involved in the process. These students demonstrated a technique called “tag team teaching,” in which each novice music teacher rehearsed the audience in their performance of the score, drawing upon their knowledge of the work, and demonstrating the cognitive thinking in musical action they are developing as pre-service music teachers.

We hope that the audience members came away from this session with an enhanced understanding of this approach to score study and performance/rehearsal preparation for pre-service music teachers, its implications for our practice as music teacher educators and directions for future research. Also included below are copies of an assignment used by one of the presenters in his methods classes to introduce and reinforce the planning approach advocated in this session, and a rubric for use in assessing student work in this arena.

## References

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Michigan State University  
College of Music  
Music Education Area

MUS455: Teaching Instrumental Music

**Pedagogical Analysis Project**

1. Familiarize yourself with the score to Frank Erickson's *Air for Band*. Provide a general harmonic/structural analysis of the piece. Use the chart below to identify the major formal sections of the composition; the first analytical decision is provided for you below. Please also mark the score, identifying and/or labeling other compositional "markers," such as transitions, cadences and phrase groupings.

Measure #	Section (A, B, etc.)	Tonal Area
Ex: mm. 1-8	A	Cm

Using a tape recorder, record yourself singing the following sections (in concert pitch, in a comfortable octave) from the score. Sing each excerpt in the correct tempo and with appropriate style, observing all expressive markings and indications provided on the score (articulation and phrasing marks).

- a) mm. 1-8: clarinet 1
- b) mm. 1-8: baritone
- c) mm. 9-16: French horn 1
- d) mm. 17-25: clarinet 1, switch to trumpet 1 @ mm. 26-27
- e) mm. 28-31 (beat 3): clarinet 1, switch to flute @ pickup to mm. 32-35
- f) mm. 36-39: start w/ flute, follow line to clar. 2 (m. 36), follow line back to flute (m. 37), follow line to clar. 2 (m. 37), follow line to flute (mm. 38-41)

3. Draft a webbed organizational structure for *Air for Band* that addresses the most salient musical issues embodied in the work. Consider the following guiding questions:

1. What is the piece about?
    - a. Information about piece, composer, arranger, period (historical frame).
  2. What are the musical “building blocks” of the composition?
    - a. Information about form, harmony, voice leading, contour/line (theoretical frame).
  3. How does the music sound and feel?
    - a. Information about text meaning (if applicable), mood created, phrasing (style frame).
  4. What skills or knowledge do we need to make it sound “good”?
    - a. Information about pitch and intonation, breath control, idiomatic needs of particular instruments, diction (technical frame).
- Other teaching or pedagogical considerations. . .

5. What is musically unique or interesting about the work?
    - a. Information about the tonal areas, overall tonality, form.
  6. What musical concept or concepts could you teach using this composition?
    - a. Information about repetition, contrast, variation, timbre (tone color), articulation, transitions, dynamics, etc.
  7. What or where are the potential “trouble spots” in this piece, and what strategies can you think of for addressing these problems?
    - a. Information about technical difficulties, awkward fingering patterns, range problems, bad notes for specific instruments in exposed places, solo passages, intonation problems, phrasing or expressive choices, transitions in tempo, texture, or style, etc.
  8. What National Standard(s) could you teach to using this composition?
4. After developing your web, use the grid on p. 3 to generate a set of teaching strategies for each “bubble” on your webbed plan. Try to create teaching strategies that are primarily musical (i.e., not talking) in nature—singing, modeling on an instrument, clapping rhythm patterns, using tonal and/or rhythmic solfege, “hissing” melodic rhythms, “air band”, etc.

**Non-Verbal Teaching Strategies**

#1	#2
#3	#4
#5	Other . . .

**MUS455: Teaching Instrumental Music  
Pedagogical Assessment Project Assessment Rubric**

Categories	Performance Continuum (circle the appropriate box in each row)			
	1	2	3	4
<b>1. Singing of Excerpts</b>  <b>Consider: Singing of required excerpts.</b>	The teacher's singing was limited and/or demonstrated inaccuracies which may potentially limit his/her students' opportunities to develop musical skill(s) and/or learning of music concept(s).	The teacher's singing was generally accurate, and might facilitate students' skill development and music knowledge.	The teacher's singing was accurate and demonstrated elements of style and phrasing, and could facilitate skill development and students' learning of music knowledge and concept(s).	The teacher's singing was accurate and artistic, and would promote skill development, learning of musical knowledge and concepts, which enhance student musicianship.
<b>2. Webbed Organizational Structure</b>  <b>Consider: Addresses salient musical issues embodied in the work and shows clear and insightful analytical skills.</b>	The teacher's web was limited in terms of scope and sequence, providing little meaningful information about the analyzed piece.	The teacher's web was adequate in scope and sequence, and provides some meaningful information about the analyzed piece.	The teacher's web was more than adequate in terms of scope and sequence, addressing some musical issues that demonstrate evidence of clear analysis of the piece.	The teacher's web addressed a multitude of salient musical issues that demonstrate both evidence of clear analysis and pedagogical insight into the piece analyzed.
<b>3. Teaching Strategies</b>  <b>Consider: Demonstrates fluency of teaching strategies, with more emphasis placed on non-verbal approaches and techniques.</b>	The teacher's repertoire of teaching strategies was limited and/or contained inappropriate techniques, and emphasized a preponderance of verbal techniques or instructions.	The teacher's repertoire of teaching strategies was adequate and appropriate, and included both verbal and non-verbal techniques.	The teacher's repertoire of teaching strategies showed some fluency in 1 or 2 areas, and included a balance of verbal and non-verbal techniques.	The teacher's repertoire of teaching strategies was rich and demonstrated fluency in multiple areas, and emphasized a preponderance of non-verbal techniques or activities.