It’s A Balancing Act:
Music Integration for Elementary Education Majors

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Abstract

Elementary education majors may be the single most frequently studied group of collegiate students, perhaps simply because of their availability. Virtually every music education unit teaches at least one or sometimes many sections of music for elementary education majors. At our institution, as is probably true of many schools, those courses are taught by doctoral students who are experienced public school teachers and are under the guidance of a faculty mentor. Can one class possibly give future elementary teachers everything they need, or will most not teach music anyway? In our particular state, an estimated 70% of music classes are taught by music specialists, leaving 30% to be taught by the elementary education majors who populate our non-major classes. So that all-too-often solitary music class is of great importance.

What should be the content of these non-major music classes? How much music literacy is necessary? Should the class focus on each student’s individual musical skills or on how to teach music? What is the relationship between performance skill development and the ability to use music as a tool integrated within the total curriculum? Should these non-majors learn to be musicians? Or should they learn to use music to teach social studies, language arts, culture and other classroom studies? If 70% will not actually be teaching music, what musical dispositions should be emphasized? Should they learn about the musical characteristics of children? Is it important that non-majors develop a respect for what music specialists can contribute? Clearly it is a delicate balancing act, and these questions must be answered within the context of a single “Music for Elementary Education Majors” course.

Doctoral students with 6 semesters of teaching such courses and their faculty mentor will describe their own journey in developing curriculum to address these questions. They will discuss the issues, explain their experiences, and include materials and examples of their particular balancing act. None of the presenters believes they have achieved the answers to these questions, but would like to explore possibilities as they address the important question of how best to balance theory and practice for elementary education majors.
It’s a Balancing Act

Practice

Integrating Music
Teaching Creatively

Theory

Singing
Playing Instruments
Reading Music

Reading
Playing
Instruments
Singing
Teaching Creatively
Integrating Music
The Balancing Act

We are limiting our discussion to:

- Developing Community
- Building Music Literacy and Expansion
- Practicing and Applying-Music Integration
This class DOES NOT... 

..........prepare students to be music teachers
This class **DOES**...

Empower classroom teachers to take not just songs, but “music elements” and help them be proactive in the integration of those elements in their everyday teaching.
Developing Community

The need to create a cohesive unit to allow for an open learning environment
Initial Community

HIGH Anxiety

LOW Self Efficacy
Varied Music Experience Levels of the Community of Our Classes
Variety of Age and Life Experience of the Music Class Community

- Freshmen
- Upper Class/Graduating
- 2nd Career/Mature Adults
Exercises to Foster a Productive Music Learning Community

- “New Best Friend” Introduction
  - Introduce each other in pairs in front of the class. Group teaching.

- Scar Stories
  - Students share an injury story with the class. Gets students in front of class by themselves. Solo teaching.

- Personal Surveys

- Known Children’s Songs
  - List all the songs you know. Do not edit. Emphasizes knowledge without musical skills.....students do know something about music.

- Collecting CDs of Students’ Music
  - Allows students to share part of their “music life” and possibly apply it to the classroom. Informs instructors of their students’ preferences.
After Community Exercises

Increased Efficacy

Lower Anxiety
The Desired Community

- Trusts members of the class in order to better explore abilities and application of music
- Has open lines of communication for shared learning
- Is able to think beyond preconceived musical ideas
- Is a cohesive unit of learners
- Has begun to function on a common groundwork of musical understanding
Example:
Collecting Sounds Activity

- Builds community
- Draws on current student knowledge
- Allows students to make a connection into music literacy
Collecting the Sounds of our Environment!

- Discovery of the sounds in our everyday world
- Create a visual representation of sound (notation)
- Discovery of need for representation of sound and its relation to time (rhythm)
Music Literacy and Expansion

The need for teachers to identify and select appropriate materials and activities beyond their preconceived notions.
Connection to Music Literacy...
and leveling the playing field!

Pitch - Music alphabet in relation to treble clef, and contour of melody

Music - the organization of collected sounds

Rhythm – Basic relationship of whole, half, quarter, and eighth notes (mainly in common time, but highlight meter relationship).
Expansion of the definition of music!

Anything with

• Semi-organized sounds

• Rhythmic patterns

• Sound representations

• Movement
Practicing and Applying-Music Integration

The need to provide structured teaching opportunities and assessments for teacher growth and empowerment.
Reinforcement through Teaching Episodes

Four Peer Teaching Episodes

# Music (assessment)
# Reading
# Social Studies
# Math/Science

(All levels K-6 guided by state curriculum.)
Main question: Was the use of music or musical element an effective tool to meet the objective of the subject at hand?
SELECTED RESEARCH & MATERIALS RELATED TO MUSIC FOR ELEMENTARY EDUCATION MAJORS

MATERIALS

Music Course Content for Elementary Education Majors

Integrating the Arts with Other Elementary Classroom Subjects

Selected Textbooks for Music Courses for Elementary Education Majors

Websites Related to Music for the Classroom Teacher

TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS

Attitudes & Dispositions of Elementary Education Majors

Musical & Instructional Skill Development of Elementary Education Majors

Inspiration for the Classroom Teacher
Music Course Content for Elementary Education Majors


Integrating the Arts with Other Elementary Classroom Subjects


Selected Textbooks for Music Courses for Elementary Education Majors


**Websites Related to Music for the Classroom Teacher**

(In most cases: enter the website and search for “music”)


[http://music4education.com/](http://music4education.com/)


http://www.hotchalk.com/
http://www.eduref.org/  (The educator’s reference desk)
http://freelessonplans.com/
http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/
http://www.lessonplanet.com/
http://lessoncorner.com/
TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS

Attitudes & Dispositions of Elementary Education Majors


Musical & Instructional Skill Development of Elementary Education Majors


Inspiration for the Classroom Teacher

It’s A Balancing Act!

Practice
- Integrating Music
- Teaching Creatively
- Assessing Materials

Theory
- Reading Music
- Singing
Further Information

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