

A FEW FUNDAMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS



As a result of the trials and errors of our experiences with the course using various developing versions of the text, we have come away with a handful of strategies that we think contribute to the effectiveness and positive atmosphere of the class. These recommendations should not be confused with course content, but can be applied as you present the material and guide the students through the text. Because these strategies, alone and together, have been incorporated across many years, we now think of them as fundamental components of a class based on *C & S*. If the text is being used in an integrated arts course, many of these recommendations still will be applicable although likely with a bit of modification.

You might already be incorporating some of these strategies into your classes. Certainly, they're not all new ideas and neither should they be considered essential for the success of your class. However, if you decide to include them, do not feel compelled to try them all at once. Just as the number of strategies used in our classes increased across many semesters, you might try one or two at a time and add as you are comfortable. In any case, we offer the following ten recommendations with the hope that they will be as beneficial to you and your students as they have been for us in our classes.

1. One of the primary tenets of *C & S* is that the students should develop the content in the way that they should teach. They will learn through two sources: what you do and what they learn from the text. Although participatory learning activities permeate the text, your demonstrations are crucial to the students. They will learn as much from what you do as what you say or they read in a text. They will follow your model not only to develop the essential music concepts and skills but to learn procedures. Therefore, we recommend that you model skills and teaching strategies during experiences in "The Bare Necessities," before bringing them to the students' cognition in "Doing a Lot with a Little." We have found that if the students consistently participated according to our model, when they experienced Section II of the text, in many cases they "remembered" or "became aware" of what they already had learned through osmosis.
2. We recommend that you become familiar with most of Section II before teaching Section I. For instance, you might begin by reading "Preparatory Skills for Students and Teachers" as well as the "Using Music in

Non-Lesson Settings” segment found near the end of “Planning and Presenting Music Lessons.” Familiarity with portions of “Strategies for Performance Skill Development” and “Preventing Chaos in Music Class” also will be helpful. In these portions of Section II, you will find practices and procedures that we have found advantageous to incorporate into Section I classes so that the students experience them regularly before focusing on them. We also recommend that you peruse the “Appendix” and that you read about curricular integration and in-class programs.

3. We recommend that listening examples permeate the course as entrance and exit music. As the first class begins, from “Non-Lesson Settings,” have music playing. Choose something rhythmic and from a genre familiar to the students so that they will enjoy the music. Immediately, they will realize that this class is different. They enter to music and they might exit to the same music. Do this every class period. Select pieces that will represent differences in time, place, genre and performance medium. Perhaps you’ll play the same piece or genre for several class periods. Mention it and its origin, but don’t turn it into a lecture. Your students will need to hear each piece or style several times before it becomes familiar, so about 15 - 20 pieces should be adequate for a semester. That’s not many, so you’ll want to choose them carefully. At the end of the course, you might give them a list of the pieces you presented so that they can play them in their classrooms when they teach.
4. We highly recommend that you begin the first class with some of the “Preparatory Skills for Students” in Chapter 11. Right off the bat! No introduction. No syllabus. Dive right in: “Listen!” Lead some activities from each of the three skill areas: (1) listening, (2) moving and (3) singing and vocalizing. Your students probably will think it’s a bit crazy but that’s OK; it will add to the students’ realization that this course will be truly unique. It’s much better than being bored. Many of our students have commented on their enjoyment of the first class and how they looked forward to the next class.

Remember that they are beginners and therefore need these preparatory experiences as much as young children. Although they hear lots of music and sounds, they seldom focus and concentrate to listen. They need not only to learn to discriminate between sounds, but to control the movements they will use in music performance. Our students have derived great enjoyment from the preparatory skills in moving. After a few moments of reticence, they enjoy both the movement and the sounds and take as much pride in their control as children do.

Also, these beginners need experiences in vocal manipulation before they sing. To most of the future teachers, singing is a really scary experience. Some might have been teased by family and friends who

called their singing attempts “squawking” or worse. Perhaps music teachers commented negatively and/or excluded them from performance groups. Most have seen singing competitions on TV and know that they don’t sound at all like the winners or even the finalists. Any of these experiences can lead them to conclude that they “can’t sing.” Yes, some will say that they don’t mind singing with children, but are afraid to participate with adults and therefore hesitate to sing in class. We have found that the vocal preparatory experiences leading to the child song have a positive effect on their attitude and on their participation in classroom singing. They lose themselves in the experiences. Before they know it, they’re part of a singing group and they soon take singing for granted as part of every class. Of course, we consistently encourage them and never isolate individuals in an attempt to “help” them. Silence and avoidance will not improve singing or confidence; singing will, particularly when it’s preceded by vocalizations and inflected speech experiences.

The students enjoy all of the preparatory experiences and have been known to smile and even giggle at times. So, we encourage you to begin with some listening, moving and singing/vocalizing skill building. A joyful first class meeting will set their attitude and expectation for future ones.

We suggest that after their participation in some prep skills, you cover the “Introduction for Future Elementary School Teachers” with them. These few pages plus the entry music and the prep skills will set the tone for the course: practical, realistic, participatory and enjoyable. Yes, you’ll probably want to cover the syllabus during the first class, but we suggest that you do it last, not first. Depending on time, you also might want to lead them in singing some of the familiar songs they’ll be using in Section I. If you do, be sure to introduce the lifted body posture presented with diagrams in the beginning of Section I and then to maintain its use throughout the course whenever they sing. It will become the norm that they will carry to their students.

5. We recommend that you lead songs by using the same procedure every time. Song leading is an aspect of “Preparatory Skills for Teachers.” You could use this procedure that we have found effective. If you prefer a different procedure, that’s fine, but use it consistently. In that way, they’ll have seen the procedure over and over before analyzing the steps involved and doing it themselves. The same is true of leading other performances such as playing instruments. In Section II, they can analyze the steps you have been using and then see them listed in the text. The procedure(s) will seem familiar, comfortable and obviously effective.
6. We recommend that you sequence and consistently implement procedures described in the “Playing Instruments” and “Moving” segments of “Strategies for Performance Skill Development” and referenced in

“Preventing Chaos in Music Class.” For instance, when students learn to play classroom instruments, follow the steps in the “Procuring/Returning Procedures.” After they get to the fourth step and use it consistently across many classes, they will see it as the norm. The same is true for stationary and locomotor movement. The critical point is that they will see you doing things the same way lesson after lesson, unknowingly absorbing the processes. They will not avoid these activities in their classrooms if they know how to keep order by implementing sequential procedures.

7. Time always is an issue in this course, so consider efficiency as you select exemplary songs to supplement the text. In Section I, a few common American folk songs are used as examples to introduce each of the components. We realize that in some cases, other song examples will be necessary for students to develop the concepts to independence necessary for teaching. A statement such as “Your instructor might want you to. . .” is common throughout the text, providing the opportunity for you to adjust to the needs of the classroom, sometimes by providing additional exemplary songs.

We recommend a “core repertoire” of approximately six to eight songs that are (1) exemplary of several components rather than just one or two, (2) appropriate for children of different ages and (3) effectively taught using different song-teaching methods. Most likely, you have a repertoire of classroom songs that will fit the criteria. However, you also might refer to the “Appendix” for help in identifying songs for the core repertoire. From each of the grade-appropriate “Appendix” sections, you could choose a few songs that are exemplary of several components. That will not only save time in teaching songs, but will provide preparation for discussing characteristics of songs appropriate for children of different ages. For song teaching, you could use methods described in the “Teaching a Song” section of Chapter 11 or use your own. As always, the crucial factor is your modeling in all aspects of leading and teaching songs.

8. The students not only enjoy the “Expanding Your Perceptions” portions of the chapters in Section I, but they gain awareness of the effect of music on their feelings. These are the primary places in the text where they come to value music as an art, an expression of human feeling. Therefore, we highly recommend that you not skim through or rush these segments, but rather take the time necessary for the students to have the perceptual experiences and the reactions that accompany them. Only if the students value music will they want to take it into their classrooms. We urge you to give them time to perceive their reactions so that value can grow.
9. We recommend that as you cover the Section II chapters, you relate experiences to a topic of a curricular integration unit that you and/or your students have selected for an in-class project. Most students realize the potential of integrating music and/or other arts with various

curricular areas. Even if they staunchly refuse to admit that they might have to teach music, they usually are open to ways of integrating it with other subjects. If they're going to do it, they must know how. Although a chapter on the subject is included, participation can effectively precede cognition. That is, you could use materials and teach activities appropriate for integrating music and/or other arts with a specific subject before informing the students of your intent. The students need guidance and a model to learn the process of combining any art with other curricular subjects. Many in-class experiences related to the selected topic and spread across several weeks provide them with a step-by-step model. You might even plan ahead to include several topic-appropriate songs in your core repertoire. Through these teacher-guided efforts, the students realize that they are competent to include music and/or other arts experiences in the study of many curricular topics when they teach. Information provided in Chapter 3 on participation and assignments and Chapter 4 on approaches for using C & S might be helpful for your planning.

10. The time when the whole course "comes home" to the pre-service teachers is the presentation of a classroom program based on their in-class curricular integration project. It is the culminating experience where they apply all they have learned during the semester. (Later in this guide, we'll give you more detailed information on how to do this.) Yes, we very strongly recommend that your class work together on a project based on a possible unit of integrated study and then present a program for their friends as well as faculty who you invite. Faculty members from the education department are quite appreciative of these efforts. The guests make it "real" for the future teachers.

We hope that these recommendations will be as helpful to you as the strategies have been for us. Some explanations will be expanded in Chapter 3 where we'll give you suggestions for participation and assignments based on what we've learned about making the experiences successful. Because we have found all ten strategies beneficial in achieving a positive student outcome, we hope that you will give them serious consideration as you prepare to teach the course.