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CHAPTER

AN EXPLANATORY OVERVIEW OF “DOING A LOT WITH A LITTLE”

You are ready to begin! In any subject, you must have attained the knowledge and developed the skills that you are to teach your students. For instance, you are expected to be able to read before teaching reading. In music, you needed to develop some concepts and skills in music itself prior to learning to teach the subject. Upon the successful completion of Section I, you should now have demonstrated your content competency. You probably learned songs and added to your listening repertoire. That’s wonderful. That also was a major intent.

Certainly, the experiences provided in this text have not transformed you into a “musician.” In fact, considering the totality of musical behaviors and competencies, you know and can do relatively little. Much of teaching, though, does not involve quantity, but quality. What you do with your abilities can be more important than the amount of knowledge you have. We’ve all met people with great expertise who were less than effective teachers.

On the other hand, teachers who plan and present interesting lessons focused on even small bits of information have been considered outstanding. So, learning to use the competencies you have acquired is the next area of deliberation. All of your experiences to this point were a preparation for the main purpose: guiding your students’ musical experiences. Now it’s time to apply your knowledge and skills. It’s time for you to learn how to do a lot with the limited but adequate competency that you have. It’s time for you to begin thinking like a teacher.

The process for teaching any subject is basically the same. In reality, teaching music is not very different from teaching math, reading, science, social studies or any other subject. Yes, the content knowledge of each is unique as are the specific materials and some of the strategies, but the procedure, the overall method, is the same. For any subject, teachers must:

1. determine the specific aspect of the subject that is appropriate for the age, ability and previous experiences of their students,
2. select materials for their own use and for their students to use,
3. select and/or develop a variety of strategies so that students with different learning modalities will be successful,
4. sequence the student experiences from simple to complex so that they will be successful at every step of the learning process as they progress from being dependent on the teacher to becoming independent of him/her,
5. plan a series of lessons on each topic,
6. effectively present the lessons to students.

Although most school systems provide materials and support for all segments of the process, individual teachers still are responsible for making many choices.

Teachers are decision makers. Within the educational structure of their school system, they determine what to teach and when to teach it. To some degree, teachers determine the content of curricular subjects and the sequence in which that content will be presented. In music, the content consists of concepts and skills. As a teacher, you will have

to decide which concepts and skills are appropriate for your specific class of students. The information and criteria you will need to make these decisions is found in Chapter 9, "The Content of Elementary Musical Experiences: Concepts and Skills." In this chapter, you will match your learnings from "The Bare Necessities" with a typical elementary school music curriculum to discover that you have learned the necessary content. You then will focus on sequence, another aspect that needs only your awareness and cognizance because sequence also was built into "The Bare Necessities." Within the chapter, you will find guidelines for selecting and sequencing concepts and skills in order for your students to be successful and to enjoy the experiences. By the conclusion of that chapter, you will be prepared to look at an elementary school music curriculum and make decisions regarding music content.

Teachers make decisions regarding the materials that will be used in their classrooms. In music, although occasionally the materials could be stories, poems, or chants, usually materials are pieces of music. These pieces of music primarily are songs, but also include recorded pieces performed by instrumental groups, choral groups, or musicians from cultures around the world. So, selecting the music for the experience is a major decision that you will make. Therefore, Chapter 10, "Materials for Guiding Your Students' Musical Experiences," will be valuable to you.

The first step in preparing to make these decisions is to be aware of the resources that are available to you. The vast majority of schools have some music teaching materials available. You will learn about the basic books and how to use them for yourself and your students. From your online experiences in Section I, you know that the internet can provide historical music and current music from a variety of genres performed around the world. You'll also find music teaching and learning sites online. Libraries can be very helpful, too. Information on all these sources is in this chapter.

The second step is to select songs that are appropriate for your students as well as songs and other materials that are exemplary of the concept being developed. The chapter specifies factors to consider when selecting songs for children of different ages along with characteristics of songs that will serve as outstanding examples for the various concepts. By the end of Chapter 10, you will know where to find materials to use to present the content to your students and how to choose clear examples.

Teachers make decisions regarding their students' participatory activities. Teachers of elementary school students know that children need to be actively participating in the learning process. Therefore, you, as a teacher, must be aware of the types of participatory activities used in music and be able to decide which activity is appropriate for a specific lesson. Some of the activities focus on skill development while others are aimed at conceptual development. Chapters 11, 12 and 13 are devoted to teaching strategies.

Chapter 11 is "Preparatory Skills for Students and Teachers." Here you will find beginning-of-the-year readiness activities for your future students. In the Sample Skills Curriculum, they are denoted by an asterisk. The chapter contains a variety of games through which students will develop fundamental skills in listening, moving and singing/vocalizing necessary for music performance and learning. Teachers, too, need to develop a few skills in preparation for guiding their students' experiences in music. So, their skills are included here.

Continuing with some of the skills included in the Sample Skills Curriculum, Chapter 12, "Strategies for Performance Skill Development," focuses on skill development in singing, playing instruments and moving. You will learn strategies for your students' skill acquisition from the simple aspects to complex ones. At each stage, students will develop control of their skills in order to express their feelings through music performance. Also, their improving skill(s) will aid their ability to perform in order to develop concepts.

In Chapter 13, "Strategies for Conceptual Development," attention is focused on the Sample Conceptual Curriculum. In this chapter will find the means through which you learned turned into the strategies you will use to teach. The participatory activities used in elementary school musical experiences are: moving, singing/vocalizing, playing instruments, listening, exploring and creating. All focus students' attention on specific components so that concepts can be developed. In the chapter, the first three, moving, singing/vocalizing and playing instruments, are grouped into performance activities. Separate portions of the chapter are devoted to "Listening" and to "Exploring and Creating."

In summary, by the end of Chapter 13, you will have been prepared to make the decisions regarding (1) content, (2) materials and (3) strategies that will enable you to plan your students' musical experiences. You will be ready to begin the year with preparatory experiences. After that, you can guide students in the development of their performance skills and/or select from a variety of strategies for actively involving them in conceptual formation.

Teachers make decisions regarding the behavior of the students in their classes. Because music class is filled with sound and activity, the potential for chaos exists. In order for you to be aware of conditions that may lead to chaos, Chapter 14, "Preventing Chaos in Music Class," is included. In the chapter, you will find a list of five prevention factors, aspects of which will be applied to specific music activities. By being aware of the factors and alert to the prevention of specific disruptive conditions, you will be prepared to conduct active, fun-filled, orderly music classes.

Teachers make decisions for single experiences, sometimes called little lessons, and full music periods. In music, a little lesson combines a skill/concept, one piece of music and one or perhaps two strategies. A full lesson is comprised of a series of experiences. In Chapter 15, "Planning Your Students' Musical Experiences," you first will learn how to plan a little lesson. Next you will learn how to chain the little lessons into a lesson for a full music period. The chapter provides guidelines for determining an appropriate length of music lessons for your students and the number of activities to include. The result will be balanced, interesting, and enjoyable lessons for your students. You will be ready to make lesson planning decisions across weeks or even months.

Teachers might make decisions regarding curricular integration. Teachers sometimes select the curricular subjects to integrate as well as the themes, topics or projects for the children's study. When the state and/or school system in which you teach adopts all the provisions of ESSA, curricular integration that includes music as well as other arts will become the norm. Some subjects, however, are more conducive to curricular integration than others. For instance, social studies topics particularly lend themselves to the inclusion of the arts. Music, like all arts, is the expression of the people involved. Music will bring an aspect of reality and humanity to the study. Because music is essential to the study of human beings and their interactions with their surroundings, a chapter on the topic is included. In Chapter 16, "Music in Curricular Integration," you will find processes and guidelines for selecting materials and developing activities that will contribute to children's learning and positive attitude by integrating music with other subjects in the curriculum.

Teachers in elementary schools make decisions regarding programs for parents, friends and community members. Many schools have school-wide evening programs that are directed by a music teacher. In other instances, guests are invited to see a single class, or perhaps a combination of classes from one grade level, present a program for the culmination of an integrated unit of study. In this case, the students present a demonstration of their learning. Because you might be involved in some aspect of the programs, Chapter 17, "Planning and Presenting Programs," is included in this text. In this chapter you will learn fundamentals of successful in-class programs from selection of materials, to rehearsing and presenting the program to guests.

Chapter 18, "The End of the Beginning," is a summary of the content and strategy learning you have gained. Through it, you will understand that having completed "Doing a Lot with a Little," you again will be ready to begin. This time, however, you will be ready to begin sharing your experiences with your future students. You will be ready to select appropriate concepts and skills for your class, choose exemplary materials, develop strategies that include a variety of participatory activities and plan enjoyable lessons through which your students will learn. You will be prepared to develop cross-curricular units in which music is an integral aspect. Also, you will know how to present programs for parents so that they can see their children's growth. You will be ready to guide your students' musical experiences. You will have learned to do a lot with a little.

Throughout this section you will find references to the "Appendix." As you probably know, the "Appendix" in the back of this text is included to add to the teaching resource value of the text. In it, you will find names of songs easily accessible in schools and/or online correlated with concepts included in the Sample Conceptual Curriculum. The lists are geared to appropriate grade groups and contain descriptive comments that will help you make song choices according to your students' needs and abilities. The "Appendix" also contains descriptive and conceptual references to one listening example, *Carnival of the Animals*. The work is comprised of 14 short pieces that children enjoy and through which they can hear components in an instrumental setting.

As you go into your classroom, you will find that the text with its content and strategies sections plus the "Appendix" is a valuable resource. You will be able to use it to plan and present music experiences that children will enjoy and through which they will develop skills and concepts while learning the expressiveness of music and its role in the lives of humans. You will be ready to do this. All you will have to do is begin.