

**Westminster Choir College of Rider University
Department of Music Education**



ME 582: Praxis in Secondary Music Education
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The Context

The challenges of teaching music to children in grades 6 – 12 are many and complex. Since there is no national curriculum and National Standards are voluntary, teachers can decide to consider them or not. While many music teachers have a school curriculum guide, the guide is often outdated and sits on the shelf. Integrating YouTube videos, group assignments using goggle docs and teleconferencing with iCHAT or SKYPE are absent from many music classrooms. While many children have an MP3 player, many of their teachers do not connect what students are listening to on their own, with school music. Judges from *American Idol*, *So You Think You Can* (*fill in the blank*) and *America's Got Talent* set the standard for quality performance and the habits of mind that children and their teachers bring into the music classroom.

Some music teachers try to make all children professional musicians. They aspire for all children to read musical notation, to compose melodies and accompaniments and to know and love the great classics of our European tradition. Others use a unit approach that is topical. For example, they teach a unit on the American Musical Theatre, a unit on form, or a unit on the music of a particular culture. Many middle school classes are scheduled in cycles where children may have music every day for 6 weeks or so, and then not again until the next year. The same may be true in high schools that are scheduled in blocks. Continuity from one year to the next does not exist.

In most places, music is still required through the end of middle school. While a significant number of high schools have an arts requirement for graduation, students may meet that requirement in a variety of ways that sometimes do not include music study.

Acknowledging the context of secondary school music programs in this way presents a challenge for students in secondary methods classes. What should they be prepared to do? Critical Pedagogy for Music

Education is one intervention. It advocates empowering students to be musicians and engages them in experiences that are transformational by helping them to connect “word” or more aptly “music” to “world.” Integrated or connected learning is another. Teaching from a music text or basal series is yet a third. Enacting a method like Kodály or Orff is a fourth. Connecting to language literacy is still another.

What you may expect from this course

Part of this course will be devoted to the exploration of strategies used in teaching general music and choral classes in the middle school and high school. You may expect to write lesson plans and rehearsal plans based on the materials in the required texts and on topics you will encounter in your practicum experience. All lessons honor the 4MAT sequence as well as the tenets of Critical Pedagogy for Music Education. All lessons include strategies to engage children in critical thinking, problem-posing and problem solving. All lessons nurture the empowering of musicianship. All lessons include reciprocal teaching strategies and connect to *Understanding by Design* by Wiggins and McTighe. Lessons address the 21st century skills required by the State of New Jersey.

Included in this course consists is a practicum experience. We will work as a group in tandem with the Westminster Academy located in John Witherspoon Middle School. There, you will have the opportunity to observe, assist and teach. In addition, we will visit exemplary secondary programs where you may have opportunities to teach as appropriate.

Prerequisites

Students must complete two semesters of piano study and TH 142: Musicianship II as well as hold a 2.75 minimum, cumulative grade point average (GPA).

What You Will Need

Required Texts:

Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by design (2nd ed.)*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD (available in hard copy or as an e-book).

Billmeyer, R. (2004). *Strategies to engage the mind of the learner*. Omaha, NE: Dayspring Printing.

Required Technology:

1. A laptop with webcam and mic. You will need external speakers to play musical excerpts when teaching in class or at the practicum site.
2. Access to GarageBand on the MAC for class. Students are expected to conquer the challenges of technology.
3. If you are using a Macbook, you must have the appropriate dongle.
4. The ability to video EVERY TIME YOU TEACH in class and at the practicum.
5. A program to edit video and make movies.
6. A personal website using sites.google.com that will integrate your blog, lesson plans, reflections, teaching observations and feedback, INTASC Standards and teaching videos. Instructions for creating the website are on YouTube by searching "Becoming an e teacher."

Grades

Personal Website

85 %

This includes assessment of your reflective blog, lesson plans, teaching observations and teaching videos. Websites must be current and up-to-date at all times. They are checked each Sunday evening.

Teaching Dispositions

15%

This includes your professionalism in class and at the practicum site, your ability to work together with colleagues in a team, your ability to integrate and apply positive feedback and criticism, promptness, attendance and the quality of your contributions to class.

You must make yourself available for all class meetings, practicum responsibilities and must participate in all off-campus visits scheduled during Summer Session I. There are no excused absences. You are expected to be present every day as scheduled.

Important Caveats

Students, who intend to teach at the practicum site **WITHOUT AN APPROPRIATE LESSON OR REHEARSAL PLAN**, may expect to repeat the course. All lesson and rehearsal plans must conform to the requirements of the course. All plans must honor the tenets of Critical Pedagogy for Music Education and the principles in *Understanding by Design*. All teaching must include Billmeyer strategies.

In the unlikely event that you cannot be present for class or attend an off campus visit, you must call Dr. Abrahams in advance. Failure to do so may result in your being removed from the course. Unfortunately, there are no excused absences. Absences will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Students are required to video record every lesson they teach. Videos are posted on the student's website. Websites must be updated each week and should be current by each Sunday evening.

What I expect from you

Since this is a course within a professional sequence of music education courses, I expect that you will commit to the course expectations and master the course content with a professional attitude. I expect that your website will be up-to-date and that your teaching convinces me that you

have mastered the concepts that are presented in the texts and in demonstrations during class. I expect prompt and regular attendance at all classes and at your practicum site and I will lower grades when you are absent, late or leave early. I expect that you will be prepared for class and that your work will be your very best effort. I expect that you will not use cell phones or that you will not multi-task by texting or surfing the web on your laptop during class and that you will not make or receive telephone calls during class. In the event that you wish to record the class, you must obtain permission from the instructor and each member of the class. I expect that you will dress professionally when you are present in a music class and that you will represent yourself, this department and your college in the best possible light.



What you may expect from me

You may expect that I will also approach the course with the commitment of a professional. In that regard, you may expect that each class will be thoughtfully prepared; that the materials selected for your purchase were selected with care and are important to your success in this course and beyond; and that your individual and collective learning needs will be addressed as appropriate. You may expect that each class will begin and will end on time. You may also expect that the course content will be thoroughly covered and that your work in class and outside of class, i.e., assignments, will be assessed fairly. You may expect that I will not tolerate lapses in professionalism or excuses when expectations are not met. You are teaching “real children” in this course. That raises the bar.

Class begins on Tuesday, May 18 and ends on Thursday June 24. On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each week we begin at 8:30 AM and finish at 12:30 PM. Included will be attending the 6th grade music class from 9:25 AM – 10:20 AM. All classes are at John Witherspoon Middle School in room B 201. On Mondays and Fridays of each week you will ONLY

attend the 6th grade music class at 9:25 AM unless it is a day when we are at an off-site visit. On several days, we will visit exemplary programs in the area. On these days you will have commitments from 7:30 AM until 4:30 PM. You must provide your own transportation for these visits. A schedule will be available as soon as it is finalized.

Learning Goals

Learning goals for this course are embedded in the following essential/focusing questions.

- 1. To what extent do lesson plans that are grounded in the principles of constructivism (Vygotsky), connectivism (Siemens) experiential learning (McCarthy) and Critical Pedagogy for Music Education empower student learning in general music classes and ensembles? To what extent does Understanding by Design facilitate planning?*
- 2. To what extent can students connect the Understanding by Design planning model to the principles and tenets of Critical Pedagogy for Music Education?*
- 3. To what extent do well-paced, thoughtfully planned, and developmentally appropriate lessons and rehearsals that are free of colloquialisms, gender bias or stereotyping impact a positive classroom climate?*
- 4. To what extent can students demonstrate proficiency with technology and integrate technology into their teaching and their own learning in significant and meaningful ways?*
- 5. To what extent can students demonstrate good classroom management techniques?*

6. To what extent can students demonstrate a variety of teaching strategies, including the facets of understanding, reciprocal teaching and those that differentiate instruction such that they are significant, change perceptions (i.e., transform) and add value to their pupils' lives?
7. *To what extent do the course and practicum experiences foster the development of habits of mind, that are appropriate for pre-service music teachers?*
8. To what extent does participate in a practicum experience foster the development of a teaching disposition?
9. *To what extent can pre-service music teachers evoke developmental psychology and research to make appropriate decisions regarding what to teach, how and when to teach?*
10. To what extent can students demonstrate an understanding of what it means to accept the professional, ethical and moral responsibilities for teaching music to children in middle and high school? To what extent can pre-service teachers model professional behavior at the practicum site?

Course Calendar

Individual assignments for class may be found on the Course Calendar – a separate document posted on Blackboard.

This course meets the Standards of the NJ State Licensing Code as follows:

Standard One: 1.1, 1.2, 2.2, 3.2, 3.3

Standard Two: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5 3.0

Standard Three: 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4

Standard Four: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7

Standard Five: 2.0, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4

Standard Six: 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6

Standard Seven: 1.1, 1.2, 2.0, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5

Standard Eight 1.0, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4

Standard Nine: 1.3, 2.1

Standard Ten: 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3

By Sunday evening (6 PM) of each week, websites are to be up-to-date with all lesson plans, blog entries, and teaching videos posted from the previous week. You must meet the challenges of the technology. There is no forgiveness for late work due to complications with technology.

10 Ways to Ensure a Low Grade

1. You are unprepared because you do not have a lesson plan or your materials for teaching prepared in advance.
2. You do not include the strategies in the Billmeyer book in each and every lesson and rehearsal. You do not show mastery of the UbD model.
3. You do not know the lesson content well enough that you are constantly looking at your plans. In chorus, you don't have the music memorized and cannot play or sing the parts accurately. Your beat pattern is not musical and does not connect to the affect of the piece. There is little communication between you and the singers.
4. There is no evidence that you know anything about Critical Pedagogy for Music Education, constructivist teaching, learning styles, or Understanding by Design. Your lesson plans are a "to-do" list. Somehow you don't think that it is not necessary, possible, or you can't figure out a way to write a plan for an ensemble rehearsal. Your warm-ups do not connect to the musical challenges of the piece you are to rehearse.
5. You are late or absent and do not call ahead. You dress inappropriately when in a music classroom with children. You are not helpful when your colleagues are teaching.
6. You don't get along with your classmates and cannot work productively and constructively with them.
7. Your website is not up-to-date. You can't figure out the technology.
8. You don't have the things you need (speakers, dongles) required for your lesson.
9. You don't contribute in positive and significant ways to class experiences.
10. You have stories and excuses when responding to constructive criticism.