



MENTORING

Richard Cangro, Chairperson



Mentoring: A Sound Investment for the Future of Quality Music Education

Mentoring . . . not just a job, but an adventure! This is my first article and my first year of service in IMEA. I am very happy to be starting my involvement in IMEA as the chair for Mentoring. In the issues to come, I hope to provide mentoring resources for all teachers—new and not-so-new, mentors and mentees. Mentoring happens on many levels. Learning the ropes and learning how to teach someone the ropes are two areas that require attention and study. We are all in this profession together. Let's help those teachers that are just forging their way for the first time be successful. We were all new teachers once.

My Background

I moved to Illinois in the summer of 2008 and joined the faculty at Western Illinois University. I teach graduate and undergraduate courses in music education, direct the new Community Music School, conduct the youth string orchestra and advise the CMENC and ASTA student chapters. Formerly, I was a band and orchestra director in Connecticut for 15 years as well as a presenter for music departments and conferences. I come to IMEA after a decade working with the Connecticut Board of Education as a portfolio assessor for beginning teachers and as the chair for the Professional Affairs Commission of Connecticut Music Educators Association overseeing profession development, journal, affiliate organizations, and in-service conferences. As a public school music director, I have had many student teachers whom I mentored and now work in assorted states. The great part is that many still keep in contact with me. I am proud to call them my colleagues!

Cut to the Chase

Conway and Garlock (2002) chronicle some of the difficulties and realities of first year music educators.

How am I ever going to extend this a whole year? I am SO tired after just seven days. (journal entry, September 12, 1999; p.18)

Its [sic] only been six weeks. I need to relax in class, or I'm not going to make it to Christmas. The thought of going back tomorrow turns my stomach. I don't hate it, and I don't feel miserable, I am just completely overwhelmed at the thought of doing this long term. (journal entry, October 7, 1999; p. 18)

Multiple times today I went to veteran teachers for advice on how to deal with students in their classes. Every time I got the "I don't know, do what you think is best" speech. I told them that was the problem. As a first-year teacher I don't know what is best, and I feel pretty much clueless. (journal entry, March 1, 2000; p. 22)

These journal entries cut to the chase regarding issues with beginning music educators: mentoring is not only a cry from new teachers, it is an absolute necessity for the transition from pre-service teacher to in-service teacher. In her Masters thesis, Benson (2008) discusses various strategies of mentoring new teachers both in general education and specifically in music education. The researcher notes that "it is imperative novice teachers be exposed to beneficial, effective mentoring opportunities to combat the ever-looming dangers of

frustration, depression, and attrition" (Benson, 2008). Concern for students in schools should be coupled with concern for the educators who help these students fulfill their potential to achieve in music. John Dewey believed that the school is a microcosm of the larger community. Many believe this only applies to the students in that school. If we broaden our thinking, it is reasonable to suggest that teachers are also members of the community, modeling ways in which to contribute to the larger society. Collaborating with others, helping each other, and supporting our peers are hallmark tendencies in a caring community. If schools are to purport developing contributing members of society, modeling that premise is paramount in all levels and areas with all members of that community, including faculty.

In *All I Ever Really Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten* Robert Fulghum describes several characteristics that are recommended strategies to live by. Mentors and mentees should pay heed to the following two contributions by Fulghum:

- Share everything
- When you go out in the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands and stick together.

Of course, the advice to "Take a nap every afternoon" wouldn't hurt either! In closing, here is an activity for you to do right now. Hear in your head the following lyrics and see if the melody comes to mind. I think it will. Your mission—find someone who may need your help. They may be hiding it, but asking someone

who is new to the profession may be the beginning of a fabulous symbiotic relationship that, in the end, will be what is best for our students—effective educators who take the time to model a caring community. You'll be glad you asked!

Cue music . . .

*Help, I need somebody,
Help, not just anybody,
Help, you know I need someone, help.*

*When I was younger, so much younger
than today,
I never needed anybody's help in any
way.
But now these days are gone, I'm not so
self assured,
Now I find I've changed my mind and
opened up the doors.*

Lyrics by Lennon and McCartney

Some Helpful Links

(Open this article in our digital edition for easier navigation of web links)

The following links are great resources from different organizations that provide valuable information for new teachers.

<http://www.menc.org/careers/view/career-center-music-education>

<http://www.wmea.com/mentoring/index.html>

<http://www.middleweb.com/mentoring.html>

<http://www.ksmea.org/mentoring/handbook/?id=home>

References

Benson, M. (2008) Effective Mentoring for New Music Teachers in UPDATE: Applications of Research in Music Education, 26(2), 42-49, spring/summer.

Conway, C., & Garlock, M. (2002). The first year teaching K-3 general music: A case study of Mandi. Contributions to Music Education, 29(2), 9-28.

Division of Teacher Education and Licensure (2000) Guidelines for Mentor Teacher Programs [Brochure] Richmond, VA: Author.

Fulghum, R. (2004) All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten rev. NY, NY: Ballantine Books.

Illinois Music Educators Association FUTURE MUSIC EDUCATORS SEMINAR

Devoting time, talent and emotional energy to achieve something is the definition of investment. The Future Music Educators Seminar is IMEA's way of investing in the future of music. Music teachers from across Illinois nominate the most promising students who show the best potential to pursue a career in music education. These students then collaborate with other highly motivated students to learn more about the profession and begin networking with new friends from across the state. These students are the future of music education. And this year's conference theme, Music: A Sound Investment, is the perfect way to describe the efforts of the FMES program.

Forty-five students will travel to Peoria to participate in FMES this coming January. The students will invest their time to achieve greater understanding of the music education profession. Guest speakers Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser and Dr. Barbara Geer will share their time and talent with the FMES students. Their experience and passion in the field will both inspire and inform the students about the wide-variety of experiences that await them. Current collegiate MENC members will share their experiences about what life is like as a music education major. New teachers will speak to the students about the realities and joys of teaching in the first few years. FMES students will also learn from attending All-State rehearsals, performances and clinic sessions. Overall, the Seminar includes a variety of experiences in and in-depth discussions about the field of music education.

We look forward to investing our time working with another outstanding class of FMES students. As evidenced by last year, there are many incredible students who want to invest their time learning more about the profession, and we look forward to helping students find their path.

See you in Peoria!

Jonathan and Lori Lauff
Future Music Educator Seminar Coordinators