



Greetings to all CMEA Bay Section members from your Bay Section Board! As we enter March, we come up on the one-year anniversary of the first "Shelter-in-Place" order. While many of us have been on campus to obtain items and perhaps even tidy up, I wouldn't be surprised if many white boards still have "Friday, March 13, 2020" written on them. Last March, educators around the globe strove to quickly adapt mid-year curriculums to finish off the Spring terms; additionally, many teachers that I know spent most of the summer reimagining their curriculums for an unfathomable virtual start to the school year. As we continue to navigate the challenges of this present time, please know that CMEA Bay Section is here for you. We are immensely grateful for your courage in navigating this virtual medium as well as your continued work serving our precious music students from a distance.

Teamwork and collaboration are concepts innately woven into music education. We teach these ideals to our students not only through our words, but also through the very experiences of our music classes. However, these ideals have never been limited to our students, but also include us, the teachers. In the "beforetimes" (a clever phrase coined by one of my colleagues at Capuchino), we were already reliant on each other for mentorship, repertoire suggestions, the borrowing of obscure percussion instruments, and even just commiseration. How much more have the events of 2020 exposed this need to receive help from and support one another! I know I have been the recipient of massive amounts of help this year including information about the world of video/audio editing, virtual classroom management, repertoire suggestions for virtual ensemble projects, and even just emotional support!

Throughout this issue of *Tempo*, your CMEA Bay Section Board members offer their thoughts on topics ranging from distance learning to racial injustice, all relevant to our unique present-day challenges as music educators. You'll also find information about 2020-21 Virtual Solo and Ensemble Festivals as well as information about our Distance Learning Resource Series. As you read this unique issue of *Tempo*, our hope is that you walk away with not only tips for tomorrow's lesson or direction for the rest of the year, but more importantly, a sense of care. While the pandemic has separated all of us physically, our need for one another as colleagues together in this noble profession has increased, and we at Bay Section sincerely hope to be a support to you and your program as you strive to support your own students and communities.

Best wishes of safety and health, to you and yours.

## **Johnathan Hsu** *Tempo* Editor CMEA Bay Section



Johnathan Hsu is the Director of Music at Capuchino High School where he teaches band, choir, and orchestra. He currently serves as the Tempo editor for CMEA Bay Section.

## Distance Learning Resource Series

Our Special Representatives have put together an outstanding slate of virtual clinics covering a wide range of topics that address challenges music educators are facing during these difficult times. Topics and areas of focus for this resource series include Technology, General Music, Multicultural Music, Band, Choir, Orchestra, Jazz, and Higher Learning.

#### Adjudication

JAMEY AEBERSOLD

Teaching and Performing Jazz in the Pandemic

DR. TIMOTY YONTZ

Teaching in the Virtual World

#### Band

DR. MYRA RHODEN

From the Band Hall to The Zoom Call: Digital Motivation in the Large Ensemble

JONATHAN PWU

Creating Collaborative Recordings during Distance Learning

#### Choral

SCOT HANNA-WEIR

Breaking the Barriers to Buliding Community and Increasing Engagement

DR. CAROL KRUEGER

Music Literacy

#### **General Music**

JOHN JACOBSON

Own It! Continuing Music Education. NO MATTER WHAT!

KATIE WARDROBE

How to Create Awesome teaching Materials with Slides, Powerpoint, Keynote of Canva

#### **Higher Education**

DR. SCOTT N. EDGAR

<u>Music Education at Social Emotional Learning: Now More Than</u> <u>Ever</u>

DR. LARA KASSAB

Interactive, Best Practice of Remote Teaching

#### Jazz

**REBECA MAULEON** 

The Inclusive Syllabus: Ensuring Cultural and Gender Representation in your Pedagogy

**DEE SPENCER** 

Unsung Queens of Jazz Piano

#### Multicultural

**TED ALLEN** 

<u>It's More Than Changing Your Tunes; Discussing Social Justice</u> Music Education

#### Music Technology

MAJOR RYAN NOWLIN

A Conversation with Major Ryan J. Nowlin - Assistant Director of "The President's Own" Marine Band

**ANDREW LU** 

Putting It Together: A Guide to Virtual Ensemble Projects

#### Orchestra

**AUDREY MELZER** 

Beyond Repetoire: Social Justice and Equity in the Orchestra Classroom

JONATHAN GLAWE

Orchestra Online: The Human Connection



## **President**

## Keith Johnson



We've made it through the first half of the school year! Although we can probably all agree that this has been a challenging school year, it has been amazing to see the work that many of our colleagues have put on display. All of the virtual performances and showcases I have seen so far have been outstanding. I am honored to begin my tenure as the President of CMEA Bay Section and excited about the direction of our organization. A lot of work has already gone into adapting our organization for a digital learning environment this school year.

I'm sure many of us are planning on attending or have attended some of the online professional development conferences like the Midwest Clinic and CASMEC. If you haven't already, I encourage you to check out CMEA Bay Section's Distance Learning Resource Series, which was published on our newly revamped website in late October. Our Special Representatives put together an outstanding slate of presenters covering a wide range of topics. Some highlights include: Teaching and Performing Jazz in the Pandemic: An Interview with NEA Jazz Master Jamie Abersold presented by Dr. Robert Calonico, From the Band Hall to the Zoom Call: Digital Motivation in the Large Ensemble presented by Dr. Myra Rhoden, Music Education at Social Emotional Learning: Now More Than Ever presented by Dr. Scott N. Edgar, Beyond Repertoire: Social Justice and Equity in the Orchestra Classroom presented by Audry Melzer.

These resources are free and available at <a href="www.cmeabaysection.org">www.cmeabaysection.org</a>. A huge thanks to Patrick Dandrea, Lauren Diez, Tiffany Ou, Randy Porter, Zack Pitt-Smith, Victoria Schmidt, Greg Miller, and Dr. Kara Ireland D'Ambrosio, the Bay Section Special Representative team that put together this outstanding collection of videos.

As we continue to find ways to adapt, we've also made changes to the type of festivals we are offering. I am happy to report that our first Virtual Solo Festival in December was a success! The goal of the Bay Section Virtual Solo Festival was to encourage teachers to incorporate solo repertoire and performance into their curriculum this school year, using the Bay Section Virtual Solo and Ensemble Festival as another tool for assessment. We've made the festival rubrics available on the Bay Section website at the bottom of the festivals page as a resource for anyone interested. I'd like to thank all of the directors that submitted over 200 entries for the event. The festival's success was due to the hard work of Ken Nakamoto and Katie Starnes, the Bay Section Solo and Ensemble Festival Coordinators. A huge thanks to you both!

This spring Bay Section will be offering more Virtual Solo and Ensemble Festivals, including a Solo Jazz Festival. We encourage you to check them out. More information will be available on the Bay Section website in late February.

Lastly, I would like to thank Johnathan Hsu, CMEA Bay Section's new Tempo editor for all of his work in reimagining and designing our organization's magazine!

Have a great second half of the school year!

#### **Keith Johnson**

CMEA Bay Section President

Keith Johnson serves as the Director of Bands at El Cerrito High School in El Cerrito, CA. He also serves as the CMEA Bay Section President.



# **Past President**Bruce Lengacher



My first experience with CMEA was as a college student at San Francisco State in the late 80's. It was actually with MENC which is now NAfME because the Music Education coordinator was the President of MENC. I was encouraged to join the Collegiate Music Education National Conference (CMENC) and did so becoming president of the chapter in 1991. Through my involvement with CMENC, I not only met a lot of the music educators in the Bay Area, but gained invaluable experience. I learned how to schedule, plan and run a Solo and Ensemble Festival with 11 events! I learned about building relationships and community. I was able to meet a lot of prominent music educators and had many opportunities to observe some of the top music educators in the area. One of those educators, Kem Martinez got me my first job as a K-6 General Music/Choral teacher at 6 elementary schools in Daly City. The point of this is that for up and coming music educators, being a part of a professional community will provide opportunities and connections.

At my first job I had no curriculum as the previous teacher was a talented pianist and wrote all of his own material. Through MENC/CMEA I was able to talk to the CMEA Industry Representative, who told me how to get hold of materials so I could create a standards based curriculum for my K-6 students. For new teachers this organization is an amazing resource. They provide professional development, share best practices and experienced educators who are happy to help if you reach out to them.

There are a significant number of Bay Area Music Educators who are not CMEA members. You, our members are a vital part of letting them know the benefits of becoming a member of such a worthy and useful organization. If you work in a district with music educators who are not yet members, or know of folks that don't know about us, please send me their contact information at: <a href="mailto:bruce@cmeabaysection.org">bruce@cmeabaysection.org</a>.

If you have the opportunity to talk with them, here are some quick bullet points to let them know what kind of support they can take advantage of.

- Regional, State and National Professional Development Conferences and Workshops
- Regional and State Solo and Ensemble Festivals as well as Large Ensemble Festivals for Band, Choir, Jazz and Orchestra
- Monthly National publications sharing innovations and best practices as well as strategies for being an effective educator in these ever changing times.
- A network of dedicated music educators who have a breadth of experiences that can help solve problems or overcome challenges.
- The opportunity to contribute your expertise and experiences with the Music Education Community in California and your area.

#### **Bruce Lengacher**

CMEA Membership Chair CMEA Bay Section Past President Director of Choral Music Acalanes High School

Bruce Lengacher serves as the Director of Choral Music at Acalanes High School in Lafayette, CA. He also serves as the CMEA Bay Section Past President.



# **President-Elect**Sandra Lewis



Dear Bay Section Colleagues,

I am so honored to have been chosen as your President-Elect! Even though we are experiencing challenging times I am excited and impressed by Bay Section's amazing full board of area reps., special reps., and of course our faithful executive board. Though we have had difficulties this year due to the pandemic, you need to know that Bay Section is working tirelessly to help support our membership during these Covid times.

I am sure that you are ready for this quarantine part of your life to be over so we can get back to the business of what we all love most. Our passion is working with students in the classroom, engaging in meaningful conversations about music, and of course rehearsing and performing in all THREE dimensions. Right now, everyone is being called upon to learn new techniques and ways to administer our pedagogy while being denied the joy of in person engagement. I'll admit that I went through the four stages of grief:

- 1) Denial- "It's only the flu we will get better"
- 2) Anger- "I cannot believe that we will not be able to work with students the rest of the year!"
- 3) Sadness, "This is the first time in 30 years I have missed graduation" ... and finally
- 4) Acceptance, "This nasty virus is sticking around, so I will adapt".

I know it may feel as if this will be our life from now on, wearing masks, crossing to the other side of the street when we see people, awkward waves from six feet away, and making music on a flat screen in Upbeat or a virtual studio.

While I am grateful for the new skills I have learned in order to work with students under these conditions, I look forward to once again working with them in person. The Corona virus has had immeasurable health and economic impact and is NOT just a "bump in the road", it is definitely a significant detour. While detours are not usually my preferred route, they can provide an opportunity to explore some pretty interesting territory and see some things that you might not have noticed on your "well-worn" path.

Take Covid 19 seriously. Wear a mask and socially distance. We will eventually be on the other side of this pandemic. As we continue to work with our students and deliver music instruction, remember that this will eventually end. When it does, we need to make sure that our students are ready to return to our classrooms enthusiastic and prepared to make music.

With Gratitude, Sandra Lewis

Sandra Lewis teaches orchestra and band at Henry M. Gunn High School. Sandra also serves as the President-Elect of the CMEA Bay Section.





WHAT'S NEW?
VIRTUAL SMALL ENSEMBLES ENTRIES
SOLO PIANO ENTRIES
SOLO JAZZ AND COMBO ENTRIES
STUDENTS MAY REGISTER AND PAY ON THEIR OWN!

Registration Window: March 22-April 19
Registration and more info on Bay Section Website!

HTTPS://CMEABAYSECTION.ORG/FESTIVALS/

# 2020-21 Virtual Solo and Ensemble Festivals

This school year CMEA Bay Section will offer two Virtual Solo and Ensemble Festivals. This digital format mirrors the model of the CMEA State Solo and Ensemble Festival that took place this past spring semester. Our goal is to provide performance opportunities for young musicians in our community and encourage educators to incorporate solo repertoire and performance into their curriculum, using the Bay Section Virtual Solo and Ensemble Festival as another tool for assessment. Student performances will be evaluated by Bay Section's top adjudicators using the Bay Section Solo and Ensemble performance rubric. The virtual festivals will take place on the following dates: **April 26–30**.

#### **New for Spring Festivals:**

- Virtual Small Ensembles entries (2-9 performers)
- Solo Piano entries
- Solo Jazz and Combo entries (Combos 2-9 performers) more info below
- Students may register and pay on their own!

#### Registration

- The registration window for the Spring Virtual Solo and Ensemble Festivals is **March 22nd through April 19th**.
- Directors will register online through the <u>Bay Section website</u>.
- Payments can be made through our website using a credit card.
- Directors may register students, but students may also register.
- Online payments are preferred, but checks are also accepted.
- Cost per participant: \$35
- The following information is required at registration:
  - Director Name and contact info
  - NAfME ID#
  - School Name
  - Number of students being registered
  - A list of student names/instruments/grade
- The following information is required at registration for STUDENTS:
  - Director Name and contact info
  - Director NAfME ID#
  - School Name
  - Student name/instrument/grade

CMEA Bay Section is committed to providing access and opportunities for all students in our community. Scholarships and registration fee waivers are available for Title 1 schools. For more information on scholarships and waivers please contact President Keith Johnson at <a href="mailto:keith@cmeabaysection.org">keith@cmeabaysection.org</a>.

#### **Requirements for Submissions**

- Students must be enrolled in their respective music programs in order to participate.
- Directors must be a current CMEA/NAfME member (member ID required).
- Private studio teachers may also register their students as long as they are members of CMEA/NAfME.
- All vocal and instrumental students that play a standard band/ orchestra instrument may participate.
- Small ensembles of 2-9 players should all be enrolled in the same school/program.
- Submissions should include a minimum of 2 minutes of music but not to exceed 5 minutes in total.
- Student submissions should include a minimum of 2 minutes of music but not to exceed 5 minutes in total.
- Accompaniment is not required.
- Music does not need to be memorized.
- Video submissions are required for solo performances.
- Audio submissions are also accepted for small ensembles.
- Only video submissions will be accepted
- The performer should be in full view of the camera.
- At the beginning of each video, participants should introduce themselves, indicate which school they are from, and the works they will be performing.
- Participants performing more than one work should submit one continuous video.
- **Repertoire** can include solo etudes, including melodic or technical exercises from method books.
- Small ensemble submissions should have minimal editing. Any editing (balance, syncing, reverb, etc.) should be listed so adjudicators can accurately provide feedback.
- Submissions of large ensemble parts from band/orchestra/choir repertoire (i.e. 2nd clarinet part, 1st alto, soprano, etc.) will not be permitted.
- Popular music arrangements are acceptable if the arrangement has musical merit and performed tastefully.
- Directors should carefully work with students when selecting repertoire.
- Media release forms are required of all participants. <u>Download</u> the writable PDF HERE.



#### CMEA Bay Section Virtual Solo Jazz Festival Info

#### Jazz Solo Performance Requirements:

- Improvisation is required.
- Video submissions are required for solo performances.
- Participants should prepare 1-2 jazz standards.
- The performance should be no longer than 5 minutes in duration.
- Performers should play the head (melody) before and after the improvised section.
- 2-4 choruses of improvisation is recommenced on each selection. If the form of the tune is lengthy, consider limiting to one chorus of improvisation (especially if performing a ballad).
- Performance must include rhythm section backing (pre-recorded student ensemble or backing track) that is audible to the listener.
- Leadsheets and/or scores must be provided for adjudication.

#### **Jazz Combo Performance Requirements:**

- Improvisation is required of at least two members of the ensemble but all members of the group are encouraged to improvise.
- Video OR audio submissions are accepted for combo performances.
- Groups should consist of 2-9 players.
- Groups may perform jazz standards or original compositions.
- The performance should be no longer than 7 minutes in duration.
- Basic introduction and ending to each tune is highly encouraged.
- Combos are not required to perform/record in person as per state/county COVID-19 guidelines. Recorded projects using online mixing software is highly encouraged.
- Combo submissions should have minimal editing. Any editing (balance, syncing, reverb, etc.) should be listed so adjudicators can accurately provide feedback.
- Leadsheets and/or scores must be provided for adjudication.

#### **Uploading Files**

- All submission must be in a video format i.e. MP4, MOV, AVI, etc. (phone video quality is fine).
- Participating directors will receive a link to a shared folder containing subfolders for each instrument/voice type through Box. com. Links will be shared with participating directors on **April 19**.
- Directors are responsible for collecting and uploading all videos to the shared folder, including sorting performers by instrument type.
- The video submission window is **April 19-26**.
- Each file should be labeled correctly, i.e. student name, instrument, and school. **Example:** Jane Doe; trumpet; ABC Middle School.
- Files not labeled correctly will not be evaluated.
- No refunds will be issued due to incorrect submissions.

#### Ratings/Adjudication

- Performers are eligible to receive a total of 20 points for their performance.
- Participants may also enter for comments only.
- Participants will be scored and rated based on the quality of the performance and not the level or type of music being performed. Adjudicators will not take off points due to attire or poor audio quality (within reason).
- Only written comments will be provided.
- Adjudicators will use a Google form (sent to all adjudicators prior of the festivals) to input all comments.
- Comments will be made available to participating schools within one week of the festival date.

#### Ratings are as follows:

20-16: Superior 15-11: Excellent 10-4: Good

- A rating of "Superior" and a score between 18-20 will earn performers a "Command Performance."
- Command Performance Certificates will be placed in each school's shared folder no later than two weeks following the festival.

#### **Rubrics**

- Instrumental Rubric
- Vocal Rubric

These rubrics will be used to evaluate all student performances. We encourage you to use them to prepare for the festival and also as a tool for assessment in your classes!

#### Media Release/Consent Forms

#### • Download the writable PDF HERE

Each soloist participating in the CMEA Bay Section Solo Festival must have this form on file by **Monday, April 26th**. Directors: please collect all media forms from your students and upload into the designated Box.com folder that was shared with you.

#### **Questions?**

Please contact Solo and Ensemble Festival Coordinators <u>Katie Starnes</u> and <u>Ken Nakamoto</u> with any questions.



### **Solo & Ensemble Festivals**

#### Katie Starnes & Ken Nakamoto





Dear Colleagues,

We hope your 2021 is off to a good start, and that you are staying healthy. Thank you to the directors and students who participated in our inaugural virtual Solo and Ensemble Festival. We are hosting another Solo and Ensemble Festival this spring.

For the Spring Solo and Ensemble Festival, we are adding the following entries to the festival:

- -Virtual small ensembles (2-9 performers)
- -Solo piano entries
- -And new to Solo/Ensemble: Jazz Solos and Combos.

The festival registration window will be from April 5-April 19, the submission window is from April 19-26, with results back to participants by May 14th.

We are requesting all directors to fill out a festival evaluation form. The link for that can be found here.

If you had a student who received a command performance, here is the link to their command performance certificates. Also, we would like to feature the command performances on the CMEA Bay Section website and our social media platforms. However, we need all command performance students to fill out this Google form as a media waiver so we can showcase their performance. There is an opt out option on the form if the student does not want their performance to be showcased.

We appreciate your feedback and commitment to enriching the lives of students. For more information, please visit the <u>Festival</u> page on the CMEA Bay Section website.

Katie Starnes is the music teacher at Peterson Middle School in Sunnyvale, CA where she teaches band and orchestra. Katie is one of the coordinators for Solo and Ensemble Festivals for the CMEA Bay Section.

Ken Nakamoto is the Director of Instrumental Music at William C. Overfelt High School in San José, CA where he teaches band, orchestra, and piano. He also serves as one of the coordinators for Solo and Ensemble Festivals for the CMEA Bay Section.



# Multicultural Zach Pitt-Smith



As protesters filled the streets this past summer in reaction to police killing of George Floyd and other unarmed Black individuals, young people eagerly sought ways to join the movement. As teachers and leaders of our classrooms, we must address the systemic racial injustice that plagues 21st century America and inspire our students to take action.

I teach in urban schools where racial and economic diversity is present but equity is far from a reality. My job allows me to be a beacon of hope within a broken (but not unfixable) public school system that does not adequately serve all students. Many of our students face racism first-hand as a real and everyday experience. I grew up in schools like these. I saw racism up close, but didn't know what I could do about it. Now, as an adult, white, heterosexual, cisgendered, college-educated man, I have come to recognize my responsibility in conversations around racial injustice. As a teacher, I have replaced feelings of white guilt with a sense of obligation and engagement.

For many years I have been humbled by my students' fierce advocacy for justice and their impatience with bigotry of any kind. Recently, I've noticed my students more determined than ever before to speak out with a sense of immediacy about diversity and inclusion. As a music teacher, I'm particularly excited to witness them using music as a tool for their activism.

Here in Oakland, our All-City Honor Band decided independently to "take a knee" in 2016 and 2017 during performances of the national anthem at major league baseball games. They gained international attention both positive and negative, but they were proud with their decision to let their voices be heard.

In the midst of the current pandemic, several Oakland youth ensembles have continued engaging in musical activism. Oakland Eastside All-Star Ensemble (OEASE) collaborated with Public Enemy 2.0 rapper Jahi to create <a href="Freedom of Speech">Freedom of Speech</a>, a jazz/hip-hop fusion addressing police brutality.

The Grammy-nominated <u>Alphabet Rockers</u> are young Oakland musicians who know they can change the world through music and see it simply as their responsibility. In addition to composing songs that foster an anti-racist movement, they have created <u>online curriculum</u> focused on helping children "learn how to stand up, show up and get loud as change makers in their community."

Paulo Freire told us that education is an inherently political act. I take this to mean we must address the ills of society, whether we teach in diverse urban areas or more homogenous affluent communities. Whatever our demographic, it does them a disservice to avoid these issues. In order to address them, I have begun to change my practice in several ways. One simple decision that we can control is the music we choose to program, and the pieces we omit. I make an effort to feature BIPOC composers in all my concerts. There are posters of Calvin Simmons, Mary Lou Williams, and John Coltrane on my wall next to Beethoven, Bach, and Brahms. I teach protest songs and discuss their context. I deliberately employ a music staff that reflects my diverse student body. I have found great inspiration from the work of Decolonizing the Music Classroom, ColourFULL Music, and the Institute for Composer Diversity. We have an opportunity to inspire our students to fight for the changes they want to see.

Zack Pitt-Smith is the Music Director at Edna Brewer Middle School in Oakland, CA where he teaches concert band, jazz, and general music. Zack serves as the Multicultural Music Representative.



## **Innovation & Learning**

## Gregory Miller



During the 2018-2019 school year, I had the privilege of completing the Palo Alto Unified School District's Blended Learning Cohort and am now a certified "Blended Learning Instructor". While my goals were not to "flip" the performance based classroom. I instead wanted to increase my technology based skills, and learn ways to incorporate technology into the music classroom. Little did I know at that time how valuable those skills would become in 2020. My hope is that through the following paragraphs, you can take 1-2 valuable ideas that can be incorporated into your current teaching situation.

Allow me a few paragraphs to introduce you to methods employed and written about by Dr. Catlin R. Tucker, a Google Certified English teacher, Sonoma County's teacher of the year in 2010, who currently works as a blended learning coach and educational consultant. She has published multiple books including *Blended Learning* in Grades 4-12 and *Blended Learning in Action*. You can find her online at CatlinTucker.com and on Twitter @Catlin\_Tucker. The following idea is her application of what she calls the Station Rotation Model with application ideas of my own on how to use it in the online, hybrid, or in person music classroom.

The Station Rotation Model is exactly what it sounds like. Students rotate through learning stations at fixed intervals. Dr. Tucker suggests to include activities that incorporate group work, individual work, one on one teacher feedback opportunities, and exploratory exercises. For teachers with shorter classes, this may take multiple days.

Full group rehearsals are currently highly restricted, or impossible during the pandemic. That being said, you can utilize this model to continue to engage students in meaningful musical activities. The goals of this model will vary by teacher and situation, but can include increasing teacher student communication, incorporating more theory and terminology, performing more chamber music, giving students opportunities to perform alone, expose students to professional recordings of world class musicians and ensembles, or something you come up with that will directly benefit your situation.

Once you've decided upon your goals, it's up to you to design stations that will allow students to accomplish one or more of these goals as they rotate through the stations. Here are some station ideas that can all work in an online, hybrid, or in person I've developed.

- 1) Chamber Music (SoundTrap or BandLab)
- 2) Theory, Terminology, and/or Symbol Definitions and Examples (musictheory.net)
- 3) Listening Lab (YouTube Playlists)
- 4) Individual Playing/Singing Creation/Practice Studio (SoundTrap, BandLab, FlipGrid)
- 5) Peer to Peer Coaching (Zoom Break-Out Rooms)

- 6) Peer to Peer Performance Reflection (Zoom Break-Out Rooms)
- 7) 1:1 Student/Teacher Discussion on Individual Performance (Zoom Break-Out Rooms)
- 8) Written/Online Assessments (Google Docs, Auto-Grading Quizzes)
- 9) Group Discussion (online discussion board or face to face) 10) Teacher lead small group instruction (Play along with sound share from YouTube or SmartMusic)
- 11) Composition (Flat.io)
- 12) Introduction/Learn a New Composition through Recordings (YouTube)

A final step is dividing your students into groups. This could be as easy as instrument or voice sections, random Zoom break-out rooms, or could be more thought out allowing for some peer to peer educational opportunities. Please note that not every station should be group work. It's important that students have opportunities to work collaboratively as well as individually. The choose your own break-out room feature of Zoom makes separating students into groups quick since students can move about the rooms on their own when the rotations occur.

As the students are rotating through these learning stations, teachers must remain active and engaged in their classrooms interacting with students on an individual level. This is not the time to try and fix that french horn string or return the 100's of emails we all receive each week. I often pop into the individual break out rooms to connect with kids. I use the time to listen to their recent playing quiz submission together and give individualized feedback. It is also good to just check-in our students and let them know we care.

If this idea interests you, please continue your own research as this short article is only able to scratch the surface of Dr. Catlin Tucker's book *Blended Learning in Action - A Practical Guide Towards Sustainable Change*. Her website has a wealth of information and she's accessible for questions through Twitter.

The pandemic has changed the world of music education seemingly overnight. There are countless ways teachers utilize technology to enhance student learning. If you haven't already taken the opportunity, please check out the <u>Distance Learning Resource</u> section of the CMEA Bay Section Website. There are nearly 20 professional development videos, curated by the Bay Section Special Representatives, totally free for you to help you get through these difficult times. If there is anything I can help you with, do not hesitate to reach out to me at <a href="mailto:gmiller@pausd.org">gmiller@pausd.org</a>.

Greg Miller teaches Band at Palo Alto High School, Frank S. Greene Jr. Middle School, and Jane Lathrop Stanford Middle School in Palo Alto. Greg also serves as the Innovation and Learning Representative for the CMEA Bay Section.



## Classroom/General Music

### Victoria Schmidt



On Monday, March 16, I reported to both of my schools for instructions regarding school closure. The next day, we were teaching via Zoom or Google Meets, and sending homework through Google Classroom. We were supposed to prepare student work for 3-6 weeks, and here we are, almost a year later.

My dilemma is the same as most of yours: teaching remotely--hoping students will attend class, keep their videos on and mics muted during class, and turn in homework. Hello? Are you there? Can you hear me? Give me a thumbs up or any kind of reaction so I know you understood the directions. And they do, but they don't. Like you, I send out work regularly, hoping students will complete and submit them. Some do, some don't.

What do I teach? Where do I find my resources? Thank goodness for my Kodaly training, I have a curriculum to follow, I just have to make adjustments during synchronous instruction since zoom does not allow for groups to perform together, as you already know. I have to find ways to teach games, songs and elements differently while trying to manage the classes, esp. the younger students. Along with Kodaly methodology, I am using Sight Reading Factory, MusicPlayOnLine, Musicators.com, 4Solfy.com, YouTube samples and Jamboard with synchronous instruction. What I struggled with earlier was figuring out what to send as asynchronous work, especially since not all the students had devices to use. While my middle school students met online once a week and most had their theory workbooks, they had no way of sending completed work back to me. I ended up sending PDF copies of their worksheets with Google forms or documents for answers, but the entire process felt so detached. For my elementary students, I was sending recorded lessons with Google forms for check-ins, but I was worried that the kids were not really watching the lessons, just turning in the forms for credit.

I needed to find different ways of delivering my asynchronous lessons. I needed assignments that are digital and interactive, directly related to the synchronous lesson, and not just using a check-in form for a response. I needed to see how students were completing their assignments, what they understood and did not understand, and I needed to be able to attach comments and digital badges directly to their submitted work.

I spent a lot of time looking for resources on the internet. I joined music groups, and networked with colleagues from all over to find resources I could use. I took a design course over the summer, and learned to create asynchronous work.

My district is still completely online. Our middle and high school students are in block schedules, where we see each class 2-1/2 days a week. The classes are 50 minutes long, and we work on the choral repertoire, basics and theory. The biggest switch, of course, is more focus on individual performance and development.

My middle school choir is learning more theory and doing more sight reading. Some are still shy to sing by themselves in zoom, but they are getting there. I do love hearing them sing individually, watching them develop day by day. Our elementary general music classes meet on zoom on an A/B schedule. On week A, we see them synchronously for 30 minutes. On week B, we send out asynchronous work. My 5th/6th grade choir meets every week.

During the summer, I took a design course from Katie Wardrobe on Creating Beautiful Resources. (Check out her special session on our <u>Distant Learning Series</u>). I learned how to create worksheets, posters, Bitmoji classrooms, digital presentations, and combined with Google slide techniques, I am now able to create interactive digital assignments for every grade level that I teach. I would like to share some examples of these assignments:

1st grade - <u>Loud/Soft</u> graphic organizer - students place objects into loud and soft categories

2nd grade - <u>Ta, ti-ti review</u> - students perform rhythms and cross out those done correctly

3rd grade - <u>Bow, Wow, Wow</u> - a rhythm unit on form and missing rhythms

4th grade - <u>Hot Cross Buns</u> - a melodic unit on staff placement 7th/8th grade - <u>Music Rhythms</u> review

My asynchronous assignments are sent with Screencastify videos as mini lessons on reviewing the concept behind the assignment, with directions on how to complete it. I also attach digital badges to submitted work and challenge the students to earn as many of them as possible. So far, so good! Students are submitting work, I don't care if they are late, they are submitting them. I am proud of these worksheets and I depend on them for my asynchronous work. Let me know if you are able to use any of them, I have created more since this article was written. Let me know if you would like to get together for a zoom meeting and create similar worksheets. You can reach me at <a href="mailto:vschmidt@husd.kl2.ca.us">vschmidt@husd.kl2.ca.us</a>

As our districts continue to slowly ease students back into the classroom, I hope that you are finding resources that you can use in your teaching. Whether the zoom student is in bad lighting, at the bottom of the screen, with family or other distractions keeping them from focusing, I know we all want to keep reaching them. Please check out John Jacobson's inspirational message on our <u>Distant Learning Series</u>. He does a great job reminding us why we became teachers, and why we strive to do what we do best-Own it, despite this pandemic. Teachers, you are the best!!!

Victoria Schmidt is the Kodaly Music Specialist and Choral Director at Eden Gardens Elementary School and Ochoa Middle School in Hayward. She teaches Kodaly-based classroom music to grades 1-4 and choral music to grades 5-8. She is also a Visual and Performing Arts Lead Teacher for the district. Victoria is serving as the CMEA General Music Representative.



### Band

### Patrick Dandrea



Greetings fellow educators! I hope you have found success navigating the challenges of teaching ensemble classes remotely.

Remote learning has taken away a foundational experience in music ensembles: making simultaneous music with others. The effects of this on students are many, including a lack of engagement, limited peer accountability, and unclear shared goals. For teachers, it has taken away our ability to help our students improve through assessment feedback on their sound, one of our most necessary tools. Given these challenges, we need to find new ways for our students to interact and collaborate musically.

Providing and receiving peer feedback is a powerful and engaging learning experience. It allows each student to get the necessary individual attention that is so challenging to provide online. It also makes each student responsible not only for their own sound, but also for the growth and development of their peer's sounds. Lastly, it helps provide a social connection and interdependence that makes their musical experiences feel impactful and collaborative.

One modality we have found successful for online learning is called a "feedback loop." In a feedback loop, students work to perform a common task in small groups. The students break out into sectionals and create a performance order (e.g. alpha order first name). Performer #1 performs the task, and Performer #2 provides them feedback. Then Performer #2 performs, and Performer #3 gives feedback. This continues until the final performer completes the task and receives feedback from Performer #1, closing the loop. The process can then conclude, or can be repeated to give students the opportunity to apply the feedback they received on a second repetition.

While powerful, a feedback loop is a challenging task for students to achieve without support. It is helpful for the performance task to be concise and to have a clear and measurable target.

For example: "Perform 8 staccato 8th notes, aiming that all 8 are matched in length and style"; "Play this 4-bar unison melody in tune." Providing students some kind of rubric with vocabulary helps to focus their listening and encourage specificity beyond, "It was pretty good." Teachers can also model a strong and weak performance as a reference.

It is also helpful to provide the students a script. We asked our students how they liked to receive feedback and used their responses to help inform tone and directness. Before giving feedback, greet one another by name. If possible, offer diagnosis of possible solutions to performance challenges. They also need to know how to acknowledge and manage technology challenges (e.g. "Your audio was glitchy, can you try again?"). After receiving feedback, acknowledge it with a thumbs up. Before sending students to engage on their own, pick a section to demonstrate a feedback loop for the class, and then provide them feedback.

If this concept resonates with you, adapt it to the specific needs of your individual students, your school learning platform, and the culture of your classroom. However it looks, peer feedback can provide an engaging, effective and exciting learning experience despite the challenges of remote music education.

Stay Well!

Patrick Dandrea is the Assistant Director of Bands at Amador Valley High School in Pleasanton, CA where he teaches band, jazz and AP Music Theory. He serves as the Band Representative for CMEA Bay Section.



# **Orchestra**Tiffany Ou



At a total loss on how to start this article, I am tempted to write "I hope this email finds you well" but will restrain my comedic whims. I do assume this article is finding you some combination of exhausted, fragile, hopeful, stretched thin, finding small joys, and feeling truly floored at where this year has taken us. I am taking it all day-by-day - some days in stride and some days with a "try again tomorrow" sign in the window. I am more grateful than ever for our community and colleagues, and glad to be going through these new orchestral adventures alongside you all.

I am happy to share the two orchestra-centric videos from CMEA Bay Section's Distance Learning Series. Both presenters are fantastic and I am so glad they were willing to share their work with our membership. First, Audrey John Melzer (Director of Orchestras, Oberlin City Schools) shares her presentation, "Beyond Repertoire: Social Justice and Equity in the Orchestra Classroom." In this video, Ms. Melzer shares best practices and examples of orchestra classrooms that center equity beyond just diverse programming. She focuses on relationship building with students and this quote she shared by Dr. Baruti Kafele seems more apt than ever: "You can't separate the outside of the classroom experiences from the inside of the classroom experiences." Ms. Melzer is a moderator of the "Decolonizing the Music Classroom" Facebook group, which is an incredible place to learn and grow - I would encourage you to check that out if you have not!

In the second orchestral video of the series, Jonathan Glawe (Pioneer High School Orchestras, Ann Arbor, MI) presents "Orchestra Online: The Human Connection" where he shares his best practices for our online rehearsal world. He is a shining example of being a human-centered teacher, and his never-ending focus on making connections despite all of our situational challenges is inspiring.

He specifically demonstrates how his program is <u>Upbeat</u> <u>Music</u> (both Live and Perform) and shares a wealth of resources and materials linked in the YouTube video.

I am thrilled to share these two presenters because they align with many of our common focuses - how can we make online orchestra a connected place, and how can we make sure we are being equitable in our practice along the way. When I think about equity in our online spaces, camera policies come to mind. Likely, your school and district have policies in place and not every teacher may have much choice on the matter. However, I do hope we all continue to consider equitable practice in regards to cameras. While a requirement to turn on cameras may seem like the best way to make sure students are on task (teachers are used to informally assessing our in-person classes in this manner), we know that students might not be on camera for reasons out of their control (WiFi connection issues, home environment, or mental health to name a few).

The role of the teacher is then to find ways to connect with them regardless, and to assume best intentions despite being out of our own comfort zones. I encourage you to continue to assume best intentions for your students and to spend your efforts creating a community that students want to turn their cameras on for, rather than enforcing the requirement to do so. This is one tiny drop in the ocean of equitable practices, but I hope it is something we can continue to consider as we learn and teach online.

I am ever grateful for our strong orchestra educator community in Bay Section and will miss seeing all of you without our Winter Conference this year. I'm wishing you a strong finish to 2020 and new hope in 2021!

Tiffany Ou teaches orchestra at Gunn High School and Fletcher Middle School in the Palo Alto Unified School District. Tiffany serves as the Orchestra Representative for CMEA Bay Section.



## **Choral**

### Lauren Diez



Greetings, colleagues! My name is Lauren Diez, and I am proud to be serving as your new Choral Representative on the CMEA Bay Section board. I would like to introduce and welcome my successor in the role of Assistant Choral Representative, Andrew Hathaway.

This issue of Tempo is usually all about our annual Winter Conference. I should be writing an article that highlights the exciting choral interest session offerings and tells you more about our world class honor choir conductor. We should be connecting at SJSU to learn together and watch our students shine in the honor choir concert. This year is obviously different, and the absence of a Winter Conference is just one of many shared losses we are experiencing this year. While we are justified in our sadness over missed experiences and feeling exhausted and stressed in this radically different school year, I would like to mention a few glimmers of positivity and hope that have stemmed from this uniquely challenging time.

I have always known the choral community to be supremely supportive and willing to share resources and words of encouragement with one another, but with the onset of the pandemic the level of engagement amongst choral educators near and far has been remarkable. Colleagues are freely sharing their time and expertise by creating instructional videos, sharing lesson ideas, assisting with tech troubleshooting, and offering moral support. Social media groups for music educators are buzzing with new tips and tricks alongside all the relatable 2020 memes for when we need some levity. Unbound by geographic location, we are able to connect with experts in our field from anywhere in the world and invite them into our virtual classrooms. Choral music educators are a great bunch, and I am certain our camaraderie and collective knowledge will continue to inspire and motivate us as we weather this storm together.

Organizations like ACDA and CCDA have put together tremendous virtual conferences and have hosted a number of timely and relevant Zoom talks. Check out the latest issues of CCDA's magazine, Cantate, for some excellent remote teaching resources. ChorAmor is a magnificent hub for pandemic teaching knowledge and resources shared by choral directors from all over the country; I recommend signing up for their weekly newsletter.

Last but not least, CMEA Bay Section proudly features a Distance Learning Resource series on our new website that is free and available to all. If you have not already, I highly encourage you to watch both of the excellent choral sessions: Breaking Barriers to Building Community and Increasing Student Engagement presented by Scot Hanna-Weir, and a fresh take on Music Literacy by Dr. Carol Krueger.

Perhaps one of the most disguised blessings of this school year is the opportunity to hit pause and reflect on the role of choral music in our lives and in the lives of our students. In the absence of the flurry of events that typically keep us moving at light speed year after year, and throughout the necessary process of reinventing the choral experience and distilling it down to the most essential elements, we have been faced with important questions to ponder. How is choral music relevant in our students' lives right now? What should they ultimately learn and experience? Why? The recent spotlight on social and racial equity implores us to challenge the traditionally hierarchical and narrow representation of diverse communities within our art form. Whose musical heritage do we value? Whose stories are we telling? Why are we telling them? Who are we omitting? The present time is a unique moment to reassess our teaching practices with a renewed vision for the future of choral music education. The ultimate question we can ask ourselves is, What kind of "normal" will we eventually return to?

The day our classrooms ring with the full sound of our singers' voices again will be such a joyous one! Until then I wish you all health, peace, and positivity as we navigate the remainder of this wild school year together!

Lauren Diez teaches Choral Music at Los Altos High School. She serves as the Choral Representative for CMEA Bay Section and the SSAA R&R Chair for CCDA.



## **Jazz**

## Randy Porter

From the Jazz Corner

Greetings from Quarantine 2.0 of our pandemic. During these challenging months, I've been trying to look for the silver linings. What have we learned and what can we take back into our classrooms? One of our silver linings is our growth in using technology and a fresh take on how we connect with our students. I had no idea what a <a href="bitmoji classroom">bitmoji classroom</a> was a year ago, and now it has become central to many of our practices. We can use this virtual classroom to present a more inclusive teaching environment, as it is quite easy to find any content on the internet and paste it into your classroom.

I have a photo of Anthony Brown's Asian American Orchestra that links to a <u>youtube performance</u> along with photos of <u>Mary Lou Williams</u>, <u>Abbey Lincoln</u>, and <u>Lauryn Hill</u> which all link to information about them. I also have a Black Lives Matter poster which links to Detroit Youth Choir performance of the song <u>Glory</u> from the movie *Selma*. I hope we can all use this unprecedented era to reinvigorate our teaching environment and help students who might be marginalized to feel more comfortable.

Another silver lining is our CMEA virtual series which can be shared with CMEA members and non-members alike. In the jazz department we have presentations by two Bay Area luminary women, Professor Dee Spencer, founder of the Jazz Studies Program at SF State, and Rebeca Mauleon, SFJAZZ Education Director, author, pianist, and recording artist. Both women are speaking on themes of equity. Professor Spencer's presentation, Unsung Queens of Jazz Piano takes a look at the work of Mary Lou Williams, Hazel Scott, and Emma Barrett, and Ms. Mauleon is speaking on 'The Inclusive Syllabus - Ensuring Cultural and Gender Representation in your Pedagogy. Additionally, our esteemed adjudication chair, Bob Colonico, interviews Jamey Aebersold.

I hope we can take advantage of some of these silver linings to reinvigorate our work. I encourage you to share any best practices with me at <a href="mailto:randy.porter@ousd.org">randy.porter@ousd.org</a>

Randy Porter is the music director at Roosevelt Middle School in Oakland. He is currently the CMEA Bay Section Jazz Rep.



# **Adjudication**Bob Calonico



George W. Shannon II (2020) discussed the future of music education in the most recent Teaching Music publication. With technology taking center stage at all levels of education during the pandemic, Shannon posits whether digital instruments and student compositions will play an integral part in our curricula post-pandemic. Shannon questions the long-standing teaching methods that focus primarily on the performance of Western European music and suggests that music educators blend past and current practices to help ensure the future of music education.

One of the outcomes of performance-based practice was the inception of music contests and festivals. What began in 1926 as a means for instrument manufacturers to sell their products, festivals have flourished as its centennial celebration nears (Burdett, 1985; Rohrer, 2002). My experience with festivals dates back to the late 1970s as I began my career as a high school teacher in San Rafael. I taught high school for twelve years and participated regularly in CMEA festivals and others, both competitive and non-competitive, and I have been an adjudicator for over thirty years in CMEA Bay Section and elsewhere. For many educators of my generation, ratings at festivals were treated as a progress report for our programs and us. Festivals provided a push for my students, or forced practice from another source other than myself. Recognition for a job well done was important to my students, their parents, and the community. For me personally, festivals provided a sense of competence from my peers, and the feedback, both positive and negative, was greatly appreciated. Buyer (2005) and McLain (2011) outlined the benefits and positive effects of festival competition.

There are those who oppose festival participation, however. The issue for most scholars who approach this topic believe there is no place for competition in music (Austin, 1990; Miller, 1994). Lautzenheiser (2012) warned that competition led to inevitable comparisons among teachers, students, and schools. Many colleagues in CMEA Bay Section call the comparison between schools as "the haves versus the have-nots." They have expressed their discontent regarding festivals on a variety of topics, including scores being posted, adjudicator comments being incommensurate with ratings, lack of educational value, and cost (Calonico, 2016). Yet while the debate about whether or not festivals belong in music education continues, participation has not diminished (Burdett, 1985; Rohrer, 2002).

expressed their discontent regarding festivals on a variety of topics, including scores being posted, adjudicator comments being incommensurate with ratings, lack of educational value, and cost (Calonico, 2016). Yet while the debate about whether or not festivals belong in music education continues, participation has not diminished (Burdett, 1985; Rohrer, 2002).

Shannon provides food for thought for all of us. Is it time to look at a new festival prototype that better reflects the current music education landscape? If we are going to look at the music education landscape, I believe we also have to look at the world landscape and examine whether our teaching methods reflect the cultural diversity of our respective communities and beyond, and if they are responsive to the issues of social injustice that permeate society. The pandemic changed how we approach teaching, and technology has provided us with tools that we may have never discovered. It is no doubt a tangled web, and I would like to hear your thoughts. Feel free to email me at the address below.

Stay healthy, stay safe, stay positive, and test negative!

Robert Calonico, DMA bob@cmeabaysection.org

Dr. Robert Calonico is Director of Bands Emeritus at UC Berkeley, and now teaches and supervises student teachers part-time at San José State University. He serves as adjudication director for CMEA Bay Section.

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Tempo

## **Higher Education**

## Kara Ireland D'Ambrosio



Walking in a Winter Wonderland....I think of that beautiful, optimistic song often during this time of the year. I enjoy our Bay Area sun and rain, our students running around campus laughing, and hearing students singing and playing instruments...it is pure joy! This year, it's been a little different. It's been quiet with children learning from home, it's been lonely sheltering in place. However, audiating this song, brings me hope that there will be an end to this pandemic and using this song as an SEL tool is key to my optimism!

Teaching through a pandemic with the on-going uncertainty of what will happen next has pushed me to hold SEL (Social Emotional Learning) as the most important part of each and every lesson I teach. Whether I am teaching remotely to college students or bubbled in person with my first graders, the start, end and everything in between is tied to supporting my students' wellness, developing a growth mindset, and coping skills to empower them to persevere and use their MSEL tools to stay positive. Music is the amazing medium for this process. Music Education can develop all areas of the five CASEL competencies. Aesthetics of music connect to self-awareness, social awareness and responsible decision-making. While we strive to teach strong musicianship and technique, research and philosophy enlighten us that when we fully engage in music making, we can experience "flow" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), a form of self-actualization, connecting us to further development of EQ (emotional intelligence).

With so much uncertainty and change, our children need music and SEL more than ever. Hospitalizations for teens who are anxious, depressed and suicidal concerns is on the rise. Teens dropping out and failing high school is at an all time high (my local high school district is at 47% of HS students failing in distance learning). We, music teachers, possess a fit and. I encourage you to let your gift shine. Talk to the other teachers at your school, district, community. Reach out to parents. Ask administration for flexibility in your schedule, so you can allow more students to experience your Art and create their own Art. We are all burdened, exhausted, and overwhelmed. Share with each other on FB, Instagram, and thru emails each time you have a success with your program experience or a breakthrough with a student. We need to figure this out together. Use this pandemic as a catalyst to show that music education goes beyond our ensembles and penetrates deep into the hearts of our community. Just like "The Queen's Gambit," we cannot do this on our own.

I have found some amazing MSEL resources during this pandemic. The first is QuaverMusic.com and QuaverSEL.com. The Quaver company is now QuaverEd.com. They have offered access to all music teachers and free pilot access to teachers during this pandemic. I am amazed by their composed songs to help children remember SEL tools for emotional regulation. Take a look at their "Coping with Difficult Times" Unit – here are a couple of pages to explore: Reflecting on what happened: <a href="https://www.quaversel.com/QR/4397M2">https://www.quaversel.com/QR/4397M2</a> When Bad Things Happen (song) <a href="https://www.quaversel.com/QR/RB57K8">https://www.quaversel.com/QR/RB57K8</a> and the final reflection Returning to School <a href="https://www.quaversel.com/QR/HUNBMY">https://www.quaversel.com/QR/HUNBMY</a> These are just a sample of some amazing SEL work that can be taught in remote or in person.

Another resource is Arts Ed NJ (<a href="https://www.artsednj.org/">https://www.artsednj.org/</a>). This resource is focused on helping music teachers integrate the Arts and SEL (EQ competencies) standards together. Teachers can access excellent research and advocacy support to employ as reasoning why Arts is important and needed in the curriculum. With stressful budget cuts and programs being deeply affected by the pandemic/remote teaching, these articles may help you prepare to educate your school boards and parents to protect your programs.

Finally, the Arts and SEL framework is a wonderful resource for example lessons and strategies to use in your teaching practices <a href="https://selarts.org/">https://selarts.org/</a>). This interactive map of CASEL competencies and VAPA standards support the development of enduring understanding and essential questions. This website can be very helpful for teacher candidates and beginning teachers who are completing their CalTPA. It helps you set rationale and analysis focus to your assessment. Also, for teacher in their mid-career to experience, to gather new ideas and update academic language to the new VAPA standards. This is also valuable when advocating for your program to your principal, superintendent, school board and parents.

Higher Education has two incredible presenters share with you some encouraging examples of moving from surviving to thriving during distance learning. I hope they will provide you with some wonderful guidance and support during this difficult teaching year. Dr. Lara Kassab is an expert at Learning Environments from SJSU. During this pandemic she has become a leader in building a community of learners online. Furthermore, Dr. Scott Edgar is our NAfME MSEL expert. His ideas of developing SEL in the music classroom are inspiring.

Dr. Kara Ireland D'Ambrosio is a music education adjunct faculty at San Jose State University in San Jose, CA where she teaches elementary general/choral music methods and performing arts education. Kara also serves as the Higher Education Representative for the CMEA Bay Section.



## Shelley Durbin



My husband and I were married for fifteen years before we had our one-and-only daughter, Echo. Echo (See what I did there...?) is either the only grandchild or one of very few grandchildren for four sets of grandparents, and so, at the time of her birth, all of our family members were like benevolent canons set to go off with pent up gifts and joy.

We did all the important reading about milestones and anticipated each new development with the energy of a wind turbine spinning out of control, so when Echo's fourmonth birthday rolled around, and the books told us she would be ready for rice cereal (a mushy gruel, in reality), I set the whole scene up in our dining room with incalculable fervor.

Now, picture this: I have Echo in my arms. The gruel is in a cute bowl on the table next to me with an adorably-matching baby-friendly spoon. I've got her dressed up; I'm dressed up. This dinner date is important, right? I aim the spoon like the proverbial airplane headed for the hangar, but the doors just won't open up. Her sweet little lips are slammed together with the force of a vice grip. I try some benign prodding and wedging. It's a no-go for a few minutes. Then, in a moment of inattention on her part, I manage to deposit the first spoonful of gooey rice in that unsuspecting mouth.

Suddenly, "SPLEEEEEEEGGHHHHHHHH!" Mush goes flying all over the kitchen. Echo will have NONE of that! I'm a FAILURE. I cry.

Metaphorically speaking, the scene above is being reenacted in classrooms, be they virtual or in-person, all across the country.

With some experience, we can predict when students will be ready for next steps. If we did not have this ability, we would not be able to design curriculum guides and units of study. Nevertheless, a child who is not ready to learn is not ready to learn, however much we might wish otherwise. Though we can offer food, the child will determine when to open up and take it in.

In addition, in these unusual circumstances of teaching around and through COVID19, we face even more potential obstacles, resistance, and delays to learning. We lack the experience to completely predict the scope of what students can learn in a school year like this one.

The impetus for sharing Echo's story was a post going around on Facebook: "If some students are unresponsive, maybe you can't teach them yet, but you can love them.

And if you love today, maybe you can teach them tomorrow. (I am sorry I am unable to credit the post adequately. Thank you, whoever put this idea into these exact words!)

So, what to do?

Firstly, forgive your students a bit. They do not have much control over some of the mayhem, unease, and upheaval going on around them. Whatever you can do to sweeten the experience and appeal of your content right now certainly might help build up an appetite for learning. But, I encourage you to not assume you or your students can solve our current challenges by simply working harder, which leads me to my second point.

Forgive yourself.

I would like to believe in a superwoman narrative where I swoop in to save the day, educationally speaking. I love big projects with grand results. But, small victories are important right now, and those can include getting a child to smile, to laugh, or to say they had a good time in class.

As Dr. Scott Edgar, a leader in the field of social emotional learning and music, explained at a recent CMEA leadership event, the assurance (for any one student) of the lower three levels of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs has been swept away, and "you cannot address Bloom's taxonomy until you have addressed Maslow's needs." It is certainly possible to teach rich content in these times, but your pace might be significantly different, and that is alright.

It would be fair to assume Echo eventually developed a taste for cereal. Indeed, we decided not to push any more solid food on her until she showed interest in it. That patience actually released us from a great deal of anxiety. And, our attitude change helped make it totally giggle-worthy when one day, unexpectedly, she reached over, grabbed a fistful of fried okra, and enthusiastically stuffed it in her mouth.

Shelley Durbin teaches choir, musical theater, and orchestra at Kennedy Middle School and is a member of the CMEA Bay Section Board. She enjoys mentoring teachers and sharing best practices regarding metacognition in the music classroom.





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