

Music Education Processfolio

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Music Teachers as Lifelong Learners

I believe all teachers should possess a lifelong desire to learn. I have demonstrated this desire through the pursuit of a Master's degree. Students come into the classroom with certain needs, interests, and ability levels. Therefore, I need to constantly update and refine my skills in order to best serve student needs. I have also refined my writing by completing assignments and receiving feedback, developed my vocal technique through studying voice, and improved my teaching skills in practical teaching experiences throughout this degree. I know all of these skills will enhance the learning environment and experiences of future students.

Writing Skills

Writing is a skill that I will use throughout my career as a teacher. Whether I'm writing syllabi, daily lesson plans, or student evaluations, all require writing that is clear and concise. I received many opportunities to practice my writing for various assignments. I received feedback that helped to further refine my writing throughout this degree. For example, Quantitative Research Methods exposed me to the process of conducting research. We learned how to design a research study, conduct research, analyze collected data, and draw conclusions from that data. I synthesized my thoughts and analyzed data in a [Final Research Project](#). This report helped me to be concise yet thorough in academic writing.

Another example of my writing is a [Quarell assignment](#) I completed for History of Opera. This assignment allowed me to demonstrate my knowledge of the characteristics of operas written by Pietro Metastasio and Christoph Gluck. I applied my knowledge of the musical characteristics used by these composers to craft a debate between a Gluck opera supporter and a Metastasian

opera supporter. I had never done this type of applied, historical writing. This assignment further emphasized the clarity in which I was expected to write as a graduate student. I plan to apply the expectations of graduate level writing in my teaching career.

An additional example of graduate-level writing can be read in a [Take-home Assignment](#) from Music in the Renaissance. I wrote a summary of one of the first examples of French music in the 15th century. I also created a historical narrative based on various articles about the life of Guillaume Dufay. I read various historical research and biographical articles to create a coherent summary and narrative. This assignment reinforced the expectations of incorporating research to support all work. I plan to apply my knowledge and experience with research to my teaching career when providing justifications for decisions made in the classroom.

I have developed a higher standard of writing which I will apply to my teaching. Teachers are required to synthesize information such as the national music standards, state music standards, laws including ADA and IDEA, and district requirements. This information will inform course syllabi, lesson plans, and teaching decisions in the classroom. Teachers also write grants to help receive additional funding for their programs that require concise, well-researched writing. Thus, writing is a skill that all teachers should practice and refine in order to ensure clarity and purpose of written documents. My writing will reflect the high standards that have been demonstrated in my coursework throughout this graduate program.

Vocal Technique

I have also developed my vocal technique through taking voice lessons with Dr. Camille Ortiz. I recognized that I had several vocal technique issues that needed to be addressed from the start of

my graduate work. Dr. Ortiz and I worked on several goals which included not “swallowing” the sound, maintaining an open space when singing open vowels such as [a] or [o], and maintaining a consistent and resonance sound between my vocal registers. In Winter 2021, Dr. Ortiz assigned repertoire that helped to address these issues. One piece I studied was “Que L'huere Est Donc Brève” by Jules Massenet. I recorded a performance of this in Winter 2021. While technical progress was evident in the openness and consistency of the sound, I still had room to grow in the consistency of my forward resonance throughout my range. My vocal model will demonstrate the ideal sound for repertoire rehearsed in class. Therefore, progress in vocal technique will be a vital asset to helping students hear and imitate a more resonant, technically appropriate sound.

One year later, Dr. Ortiz assigned me repertoire from Carlos Guastavino’s song cycle *Cuatro Canciones Coloniales*, Juan Bautista Plaza’s song cycle *Siete Canciones Venezolanas* and selections of Aaron Copland's *Old American Songs Pt 1 & Pt 2*. I continued to work on and develop more vocal efficiency by rehearsing these pieces with Dr. Ortiz and in practice. Vocal growth is further demonstrated in my performance of “Little Horses” by Aaron Copland in Winter 2022. It is evident that the vocal tone is more present at this time. I sang with a more consistent, forward resonance throughout my range and more consistent, open space in my throat. I also developed greater diagnostic abilities. These abilities enabled me to notice when I was slipping into past unhealthy vocal habits. Diagnostic skill growth also helps me to hear potential vocal inefficiencies that might be present in the classroom. I will be able to craft warm-ups and give feedback to help students manage and improve their own vocal technique.

An example of my application of these strategies can be seen in my experience with teaching a choir for singers with Parkinson's disease. I worked in collaboration with graduate student clinicians from the Speech and Language Pathology department to help lead choral rehearsals for singers with Parkinson's disease. My goal for this group was to create a community in which members felt comfortable singing appropriate repertoire and warm-up exercises for each other despite their vocal limitations. I applied my improved vocal technique to provide a more resonant vocal model for the singers. Each of the choir members had specific vocal challenges as a result of the progression of their Parkinson's disease such as limited range, inability to use their falsetto and head voice, and singing with pushed vocal sound when using their chest voice. I modified exercises and repertoire based on the members' singing voices. Alterations were made to the length of phrases, keys of songs, and ranges of melodies to better accommodate the singers' vocal limitations. I shared this [Powerpoint](#) with the group every rehearsal to provide additional support for the singers. The graduate student clinicians and I also planned a concert with over forty audience members. It was a pleasure to work with this group over the past two years, and I can't thank them enough for allowing me to guide them through each rehearsal.

I was also involved in choir every term during of my graduate work in addition to taking voice lessons. Covid-19 restrictions made this choral experience unique compared to my involvement in collegiate choirs in the past. Participation in Covid-compliant choir the past two years adapted all parts of rehearsal to meet new demands and/or restrictions, many of which I could encounter in the classroom. I wore a mask for choir during my graduate work. This caused me to listen more closely to the singers around me in order to match their vowels and tone quality. My experience in University Singers over the past two years showed how students can adapt to

difficult situations while continuing to develop musicianship skills such as blend, vowel modification, and balance. This type of commitment to choral excellence, technique, and musicianship despite major obstacles is what I will bring into my the classroom.

Teaching Skills

The effectiveness of my teaching is another area in which I felt growth throughout this graduate program. I wrote and reflected on teaching experiences in a [Final Reflection](#) for Secondary Choral Methods. One main theme that appeared throughout this assignment was that teaching requires constant adaptation and flexibility. The classroom is unpredictable and teachers need to adapt their teaching at a moment's notice. I had many opportunities to adapt instruction based on classroom issues that I encountered in the lab choir for Secondary Choral Methods. The lab choir was designed to simulate different classroom environments that I might encounter in teaching. It was made up of fellow music education students in addition to some surprise guests. These guests worked to create real-life situations that teachers deal with such as telling a student news that their pet passed away or a secretary bringing an ice-cream cake to 2nd grade students. I had to adapt my lessons quickly to facilitate student needs and/or unexpected guests while also continuing with the lesson. The experience with the lab choir increased my confidence when modifying instruction. This confidence allows me to create a safe and supportive learning environment for all students regardless of what occurs in the classroom.

The lab choir experience also provided me with opportunities to specify and shorten my feedback. Feedback is vital for student learning. I have struggled to provide feedback that is both short and specific throughout my graduate studies. I reflected on the lab choir teaching experience. This reflection allowed me to practice and strategize ways to provide concise,

specific feedback to students. Concise feedback allows more time for students to rehearse music and develop their musicianship skills in class. I will apply my understanding of how to provide short, specific feedback to enhance student learning.

A practicum experience in Winter 2021 allowed me to further reflect upon and develop teaching strategies. I reflected on teaching experiences from Winter Practicum 2021 in a [Final Reflection](#). I analyzed ways in which teaching was modified for student learning needs and the effectiveness of those modifications. This practicum was done over Zoom due to Covid-19. Student learning was supported by providing short and clear instructions, asking frequent ‘checks for understanding’ questions, and incorporating body movements for each learning activity. These strategies were effective in engaging students during all learning activities. I learned the importance of planning purposeful musical activities that engage students’ minds and bodies. This experience allowed me to utilize strategies applicable to future teaching that incorporate engaging and purposeful learning activities.

These strategies were then applied in Elementary Methods. I created a [Learning Segment](#) that detailed a unit plan for 12 weeks of activities, assessments, and learning objectives for a K-1 classroom. I had little experience teaching or planning coursework prior for K-5th grade students prior to this course. This assignment helped me sequence developmentally appropriate vocal and instrumental literature for students in Kindergarten through first grade. Each activity was selected with the purpose of helping students achieve specific learning objectives by the end of twelve weeks of instruction. I selected literature combined with specific teaching strategies and methods such as scaffolding, Kodaly, Orff, and Dalcroze to develop musical skills. These skills include pitch accuracy, steady beat, rhythmic accuracy, music literacy, etc. Students of any age can

acquire and develop musical skills and knowledge required for future musical development if appropriate teaching strategies are employed. This type of sequential planning provides students with purposeful musical experiences that build to enhance skill and development. I plan to apply this type of purposeful planning to my future teaching.

Assessment Practice

I also reflected on the current assessment practices of music educators and how that could inform my own use of assessment in the classroom. I wrote a [Final Essay](#) in Survey of Educational Research Methods. This essay analyzed four research articles that gathered opinions regarding the purpose and method of student music performance assessment. Results from these studies indicated that music educators disagree on what aspects should be focused on when assessing student performance and what strategies should be used when teaching performance skills. The information from these studies helped inform the assessments I plan to use in the classroom. I realized assessment should accurately reflect what the students have learned over a period of time and their current skill level. Each assessment should be tied to both the activities and goals for a unit and should inform future teaching. I plan to use my knowledge of assessments to accurately measure student learning and adjust my teaching based on student responses on all assessments.

Student Teaching

I applied different types of assessments and teaching strategies throughout my student teaching. I relied primarily on informal performance and knowledge assessments to determine what students knew and could do on a daily basis. These informal observations were planned throughout my student teaching to assess student knowledge of specific repertoire, knowledge of music theory

(key signatures, solfege, intervals, etc.), and vocal technique. These informal assessments took the form of asking students to identify key signatures, holding up fingers to show how many beats specific notes received, holding up a hand when a part is at a forte dynamic, etc. All students were able to answer these questions. I also informally assessed vocal development every day while listening to the choirs perform specific sections of repertoire. Results from these assessments informed my teaching. I determined what concepts needed to be reviewed the next day, what strategies to use to help enhance student understanding, and which students needed additional support. Students can increase their musical knowledge, enhance their performance skills, and improve their vocal technique every day if appropriate strategies are used while teaching. Informal assessments used during my student teaching clearly revealed this fact. I plan to incorporate daily informal assessments in the future to provide students with daily supports to enhance student learning.

I gave one formal [Written test](#) to determine student knowledge and skills regarding rhythmic identification, dictation, and notation. This test was given at the start of student teaching to determine how much students knew about rhythmic notation and symbols prior to teaching them. The results of this assessment informed how I planned the unit following this assessment. I utilized the technique of backwards design to ensure that the student learning objectives were connected to planned activities and assessments. The connection between my learning objectives, assessments, and activities created an effective sequence of learning. All students improved in their knowledge and skills related to rhythmic identification, diction, and notation by the end of the unit. Backwards design is a strategy that I plan to use in further teaching to better inform the sequence.

Assessment is essential to determine student progress in the classroom. Some students will quickly reach specific learning goals. Other students will take more time to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to fulfill the goals of the class. I've learned to provide adjustments to instruction that allow students of all knowledge and skill levels to demonstrate their understanding. Strategies include providing more repetitions to practice specific sections of music and asking clarifying questions to give all students a chance to respond and demonstrate their level of understanding. I will incorporate both formal and informal assessments that accurately measure student learning and make adjustments to my teaching.

Conclusion

Teaching is a profession that requires constant reflection to provide an effective learning environment. I found that my vocal technique, teaching strategies, and assessment practice needed improvement. I recognize that there are more elements of my teaching I need to improve upon, but those were a few skills that stood out to me when reflecting. Every class of students is going to be different. Therefore, teaching and assessments strategies need to constantly adapt to best fit students' learning needs. Teachers should always strive to learn more about their students, how they learn, and strategies to help create a learning environment that fits specific needs. I plan to apply the knowledge and skills of teaching strategies, vocal technique, and assessment practices I have gained from this program to enhance student learning experiences in the classroom.

Classroom Management

Effective classroom management skills are necessary to create an effective learning environment for all students. I was insecure about my ability to effectively manage a classroom at the start of this program. This insecurity came from a lack of content-specific knowledge regarding how to manage student behavior. Now I understand that behavioral expectations need to be put in place by the teacher to create an effective learning environment. I have deepened my understanding of behavior management techniques and strategies throughout this degree. I learned that student behavior can be analyzed and modified if the appropriate reinforcements are put in place.

Teachers must also modify instruction and the classroom environment to support students with exceptional needs. Students with exceptionalities directly affect how they learn and participate in the classroom. Instructional modifications and accommodations provide all students with equal opportunity to participate and demonstrate their knowledge.

Behavior Modification

One main behavioral management technique that I will apply to my teaching is the process of behavior modification. I will analyze student behavior and implement a behavior modification plan to modify their behavior. I completed several [Research Analyses](#) in Classroom Management. These articles described the success of implementing behavior modification plans in various settings. I learned how student behavior can be modified regardless of age or grade level using informed behavior modification strategies. Specific behavior modification strategies were discussed in Classroom management. These strategies included ignoring behaviors, providing positive feedback to desired behaviors, and stating behavioral expectations daily in class. Teachers can determine potential causes of undesired behavior through observation and

documentation of student behavior. These observations can then be used to inform strategies, reinforcement, and feedback to decrease or increase specific behaviors. I plan to implement similar processes in the classroom. These processes include gathering behavioral data by pinpointing specific behaviors through observation and then implementing informed behavioral intervention plans. Informed behavioral modification will create a more positive learning environment in which all students understand the behavioral expectations of the classroom.

I had the opportunity to perform multiple behavior modification plans similar to those I will use in future teaching. An example was a [Self-Shaping Behavior Modification Project](#) in Classroom Management. The modification project was performed on myself. I chose a behavior to decrease and then determined strategies that would motivate me to decrease the frequency of that behavior. These strategies informed the reinforcements I implemented to decrease my behavior because I know what would motivate me. The reinforcements were effective because the results indicated a decrease in frequency of the targeted behavior.

I implemented an additional a behavior change plan in a [Final Project](#) for Classroom Management. This behavioral change project was based on a complete reversal (ABAB) research design. The aim of the project was to increase a desired behavior in a roommate. I targeted a behavior, collected behavioral data, and implemented a behavior modification plan informed by the collected data. My roommate's behavior did not increase much over the course of the plan. However, this process revealed the importance of implementing consistent behavioral reinforcements.

Teachers should be consistent when they attempt to manage and modify student behavior.

Consistent reinforcement of classroom rules will reinforce behavioral expectations for the all

students. It also shows students which behaviors are appropriate in the classroom and which behaviors are not. I plan to incorporate this type of behavior modification plan in the classroom. This type of plan will benefit my students because I will make informed decisions when attempting to modify behavior. Student behavior will be managed effectively using this technique. Thus, I will create a more focused learning environment for all students.

Students with Exceptionalities

Behavior modification is one aspect of effective classroom management. Another aspect of classroom management is how to accommodate students with exceptional needs. I believe all students belong in the music classroom regardless of learning, behavioral, emotional, and/or physical exceptionalities. Students with exceptionalities often have Individual Education Plans (IEPs). These plans list specific needs and goals for students that teachers are required to accommodate in the classroom. I learned how to plan and implement instructional, assessment-related, and other classroom accommodations for students with various exceptionalities in Music in Special Education. I applied my knowledge of creating accommodations based on student needs in a [Final Synthesis Project](#). I wrote IEPs for three students with different exceptionalities. All the IEPs included specific instructional, task, and assessment accommodations and goals. These specific accommodations were then applied to a previously-written lesson plan. For example, an accommodation I planned for a student with a speech impairment participating in a 1st grade general music lesson was to allow this student to perform all singing exercises on a neutral syllable or a vowel. This eliminated the barrier of having to pronounce words correctly. That student would be able to participate in all portions of the lesson and demonstrate their knowledge along with the other students. I can assess this student's

understanding of specific concepts such as pitch accuracy and participation. The accommodation allows this student to sing with the whole class and not feel limited due to their exceptionality. I will apply my knowledge of accommodating instruction and assessments to ensure all students feel successful and supported in all lessons.

Student with specific needs such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, English Language Learners, and physical impairments need accommodations to feel successful in the classroom. Instructional accommodations could include translating lesson plans in a student's native language, limiting the range of songs, and allowing students to complete assignments orally rather than in writing. These accommodations provide necessary support for students to effectively learn and demonstrate their knowledge in the classroom. There will also be students who have multiple exceptionalities. I plan to cooperate with support staff to ensure all student needs are being effectively accommodated. Teachers specializing in special education, special education coordinators, student aids, and other colleagues in music education can provide helpful advice and guidance when accommodating student needs. I plan to utilize both my knowledge and the expertise of specific education teachers to create a supportive classroom environment. Students will learn more effectively if they are being supported through specific accommodations.

Student Teaching

My student teaching was an exceptional learning experience. I applied behavioral management strategies and my knowledge of instructional accommodations. For example, my first experience with the tenor bass choir included multiple students rolling their eyes when I asked them to stand, one student complaining about why he needed to stand up, another student being on his phone during a lot of the class, and a student staring off into space throughout the class period.

These were things that I didn't necessarily expect on my first day working these students.

However, I felt that I had learned some strategies to use that would help teach students expected behaviors and accommodate their specific needs. These tools included asking students to put their phones away in their backpacks, praising students who were paying attention, and stating that being on one's phone does not demonstrate proper choir behavior expectations. I addressed their behavior on a consistent basis. Their distracted behaviors gradually decreased as the students came to learn the behavioral expectations in the classroom.

I also applied behavior management to large groups of students. Some strategies I used were more effective than others depending on the group of students. With the large advanced Concert Choir (about 55 students), I found that they responded more quickly to my attempts to get their attention. I could hold their focus for longer periods of time without a break, and they responded well to silent reminders to put their phones away to stop talking. Other students also helped to mitigate talking in the choir as the term progressed.

The beginning tenor/bass ensemble consisting of only nine students required more frequent verbal and individual reminders. Reminders included instructions to hold their music up, not talk to their neighbor, put their phones away, stand up, tell them what page/measure we were on, etc. There was one student in the tenor/bass choir who was fairly disobedient towards all authority figures. This student was a talented musician but would sit down during any break in rehearsal. He also refused to stand back up during rehearsal, and argued with me about why he had to stand. I changed my strategies for managing his individual behavior. These strategies included being direct with him regarding my approval of his behavior, giving a reason for why we are doing specific activities in class, and increasing the pacing of rehearsal to not give him

opportunities to sit or be distracted. These strategies did work to decrease the number of outbursts and arguing behaviors. My approach to behavior management is still a work-in-progress. However, it will continue to grow and improve as I teach and apply my knowledge in different environments.

I also modified my instruction to accommodate specific student exceptionalities during my student teaching. There was one student in the Concert Choir who has ASD. His IEP stated that he would have trouble focusing on instructions and blurting out in the middle of class. A specific goal was of his was to decrease the frequency of blurting out comments in class. I kept my instructions short when working with this group. I also asked frequent 'checks-for-understanding' questions to determine if this student was following along with the group. I adjusted my instruction if he seemed confused or unfocused. These accommodations were effective for keeping this student focused and engaged. I reminded this student to raise his hand when he had something to share. I also only acknowledged his comments when he did raise his hand to support the goals listed on his IEP. His comments were usually related to the music, but sometimes would just be very off-topic. If he blurted out a comment related to the music we were working on, I would address it by asking him to raise his hand. This showed him that his voice was valued and appreciated in the group. It also reminded him of the behavioral expectations of the classroom. I observed a small decrease in the number of times he blurted out in class by the end of my student teaching. This strategy was specific to this student's needs. I will apply the process I used to determine appropriate accommodation for this student's needs to future students with exceptional needs.

Conclusion

I have deepened my understand of classroom management strategies during this program. Student behavior can be managed every day through daily reminders of behavioral expectations. Data can be gathered about specific behaviors through daily observation and documentation of student behavior. This strategy will help determine effective behavioral plans to help mitigate specific disruptive behaviors. Appropriate supports can also be planned to increase appropriate classroom behaviors. Students will come into the classroom with different needs and exceptionalities. It is my job to accommodate their needs by modifying instruction and activities. This ensures all students can participate and demonstrate their knowledge to the best of their abilities. I have gained more confidence in my ability to manage a classroom full of students. I plan to continue to develop an understanding of specific classroom management strategies to ensure all students in the classroom feel supported.

The Purpose of Music Education

Prior to entering this program, my view regarding the purpose of music education focused on refining each student's musical skills and knowledge with an emphasis on developing performance skills. My thoughts have since been altered due to my graduate studies. I wrote a [Music Philosophy Statement](#) in Music and School and Society. In this paper, I articulated my current beliefs about the purpose of music education. Themes that emerged from this paper included creating a student-centered and culturally-inclusive music community, catering to student's developmental levels, focusing on student learning and exceptionalities, and developing musical and extra-musical skills through involvement in choral music education.

Personal Philosophy Development

My thoughts on the purpose of music education were further developed and informed by learning about the history of western music education. I learned that philosophy regarding the purpose of music education in society has changed throughout history in History of Western Music Education. A [lecture presentation](#) shows my studies on the philosophical development of music education in the United States from 1950-1983. I discovered that music education philosophers have altered their thoughts about the purpose of music education to reflect more up-to-date research, social reforms, and laws. Two main educational philosophers, Bennett Reimer and David Elliott, influenced the development of modern music education philosophy. Reimer set a foundation for further philosophical development with Aesthetic philosophy of music. This philosophy centers around the idea that music expresses emotion. Elliott developed the Praxial philosophy of music. This philosophy interprets music as a method for developing student abilities through making and listening to music of diverse styles and cultures. These philosophies

influenced my philosophy of music education. Elliott's philosophy informed my decision to include diverse repertoire in the classroom. Reimer's philosophy informed my belief that music is inherently emotional. Students should be taught how to express themselves through music. I plan to incorporate these philosophies by discussing how music can help students connect to their emotions in the classroom. Music from other cultures will also be discussed in-depth so students can learn the importance of inclusive and authentic musical performance. Members of those cultures will provide students with a more authentic explanation regarding performance practice and cultural significance of the music. This will allow students to learn about the importance of culturally-inclusive and informed music practice.

We also discussed current issues surrounding music education in History of Western Music Education. Topics included authentically representing and performing music from different cultures, appropriateness of some folk music, and why music should be a part of the required school curriculum. These discussions were aimed to deepen understanding regarding the purpose of music education today. I learned that music education philosophy is continually evolving. Music educators, students, researchers, and philosophers develop new justifications for the purpose of music education. I am a part of this development as a music educator,. Therefore, my educational philosophy should continue to develop as I teach and as new information becomes available. I have articulated my current views about the purpose of music education. However, I plan to continually update my philosophy and approaches towards music teaching. This is because I want to better accommodate current needs of students and include the development of music education philosophy in the future.

Philosophy into Practice

I put my developing philosophy into practice in a practicum experience. I modified my instruction, learning activities, and assessments to be done over Zoom. The students' skill level and learning needs were also taken into account in a [Warm-up Sequence](#). This practicum experience allowed me to implement the "student-centered" part of my philosophy. I adjusted my teaching and instruction to accommodate the learning needs of the students and their specific needs for participating in music class over Zoom. One adjustment I made was to have all activities accompanied by movement. I learned from their teacher that these students were spending all of their time sitting at their computers and would benefit from some kind of movement. Students had also asked that we incorporate more movement into this class. Therefore, I invited all students to move during warm-ups. This help them engage in each activity. The movement also allowed me to assess if they were participating in the activities. I catered to both student interests and needs. This strategy resulted in more engaged, excited learning from the students. I will continue to apply my student-centered approach to future teaching to enhance learning and engage all students in the classroom.

I was able to further refine my personal philosophy regarding the purpose of music education through other coursework as well. I believe students should be the central focus of a music program. Each student that walks into the classroom brings different learning and behavioral needs. Every student's vocal development will also be at different stages. I was able to learn more about specific strategies that help students develop proper vocal technique through Teaching Singing in the Classroom. I addressed vocal technique concerns including breathy tone quality and strained vocal quality at upper extremities of the range with exercises designed to further the singer's vocal efficiency in an individual [Voice Lesson](#) sequence that I taught. Some

strategies included making the student aware of breathing deeply, supporting their sound with their breath, bringing awareness to their alignment of their body, and using more closed vowels and “mmm” sounds to help bring the resonance forward.

Teaching voice lessons allowed me to practice leading a student-focused singing experience on an individual level. I asked the student about their goals for lessons and adjusted my teaching strategies to align with these goals. The strategies listed above were a few techniques that I used during these lessons. Teaching individual voice lessons helped me to develop both my knowledge about deciphering specific vocal technique concerns, and where to start when attempting to help students develop more efficient vocal technique. Students will come into the classroom with different vocal challenges. I plan to apply my knowledge of vocal technique, vocal development, and individualized instruction to enhance the vocal technique of all students in the classroom.

In order to ensure the success of student-centered instruction, I must plan lessons with appropriate activities and assessments sequenced to develop each student’s vocal technique and musical skills and knowledge. I created a [District Curriculum](#) using backwards design technique in Curricular Strategies. This project altered the way I thought about planning an effective unit. I planned this curriculum by creating student learning goals first. Then, I created assessments that would accurately measure progress towards achieving the goals. The sequence of instruction and experiences were planned last in order to determine what activities would best guide students towards achieving each learning goal. Students will remain the focus throughout the planning process when planning any unit. Backwards design is a strategy that allows me to take into account the needs of my students and what goals I want them to achieve. Planning

activities that are both sequential and engaging for all students can help to achieve the desired level of understanding by the end of the lesson sequence. I plan to use this technique to promote clear student objectives and an effective, thorough teaching sequence for all learning segments and concerts.

Student Teaching

My student experience allowed me to apply the technique of backwards design and apply my philosophy to teaching. I planned a learning segment that focused on the skills of identifying, recognizing, and performing rhythmic notation in repertoire and improvised performances. This learning segment began by planning student learning goals. These goals were used to inform my assessments and learning activities. The learning activities were scaffolded to develop student understanding of how to identify and perform specific written rhythms. Students then applied these visual identification and performance skills when aurally identifying rhythmic patterns. I found using backwards design to be very effective when planning a lesson sequence. This technique combined with effective teaching strategies and assessments allowed for all students to achieve the established learning goals by the end of the unit.

The student-centered portion of my educational philosophy remained unchanged throughout my student teaching. I have become a stronger advocate of teaching both musical and extra-musical skills in the music classroom. I taught students musical skills and technique such as how to stand with tall posture, how to listen for blend and balance, and how to sing with tall choral vowels.

Extra-musical skills were taught alongside these musical skills. These included giving constructive feedback, speaking about music using musical vocabulary, and respectfully talking with other students despite disagreeing about certain topics. I did not expect the amount of extra-

musical skills I would be teaching. These extra skills were taught without much diversion from the musical lesson. Teaching social, emotional, and behavioral skills fell naturally into the sequence of the lessons. This helped me realize how much of an impact music teachers can have on their students musical, social, and behavioral skill development. I felt that I aided each student's development of social and behavioral skills in addition to their musical skills and knowledge. I plan to develop both musical and extra-musical skills of each student in the classroom.

Conclusion

My approach towards teaching has shifted towards being more student-focused and less reliant upon the development of only musical skills. Students can learn musical knowledge and skills in addition to extra-musical skills. I plan to utilize my knowledge of educational philosophies and theories, student goals, and student needs to create an engaging learning environment for all students. My views about the purpose of music education will continue to change. This change is necessary in order for my beliefs to continue serving the current needs of the students in my classrooms.