



Building Strong Instrumental Ensembles through Curricular Connections

Presented by

Kevin Mixon

Composer, Carl Fischer Music

National Board Certified Teacher, Early and Middle Childhood Music

Fine Arts Coordinator, Syracuse City Schools, New York

kmixon1@verizon.net

<http://mysite.verizon.net/vzexz2xt/kevinmixon/>

The Midwest Clinic

Chicago, IL

Dec. 19, 2012

National Association for Music Education and Rowman & Littlefield Education Present

Reaching and Teaching All Instrumental Music Students

Second Edition

AVAILABLE NOW!

Kevin Mixon

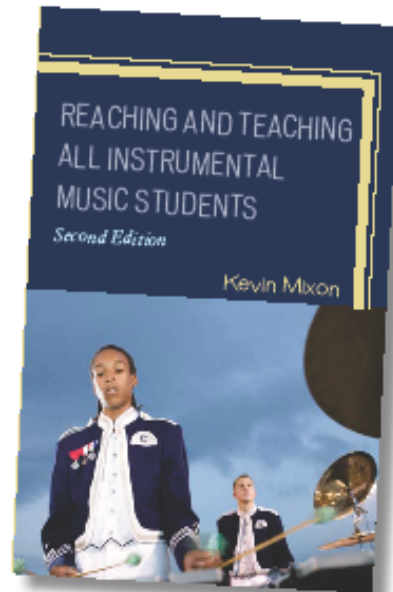
Foreword by Larry Clark

"Reaching and Teaching All Instrumental Music Students is a much-needed text that addresses the specific needs of those who teach music in difficult circumstances. Guiding teachers through the complexities of today's classroom realities, Mixon shares proven instructional strategies to produce music programs of merit, particularly in urban settings. University methods courses should put this book at the top of their reading list."—Edward S. Lisk, clinician, conductor, and author, Oswego, NY

Reaching and Teaching All Instrumental Music Students draws from credible research and established approaches to offer practical applications for the variety of music classrooms teachers face today, many of which are not ideal. Kevin Mixon shares successful techniques for recruiting and retention, garnering program support, teaching for diverse learning styles and exceptional students, classroom management, and teaching notation, composition, and improvisation. This expanded second edition adds practical advice on reading rhythm notation, teacher feedback, home visits, community building, and establishing positive relationships—with even the most challenging students. Mixon demonstrates that fostering respect and going the extra mile are rewarding for students, parents, and teachers alike.

Kevin Mixon is a National Board Certified Teacher and has taught in varied urban, rural, and suburban environments. His ensembles consistently receive the highest ratings at festivals and are widely recognized for achievement. He publishes and presents regularly on several topics related to music education, and his growing list of published compositions for band and orchestra reflect and respect student diversity.

This book is a co-publication between the National Association for Music Education and Rowman and Littlefield Education



National Association
for Music Education

For today's students to succeed tomorrow, they need a more personalized education that helps each student by employing varied solutions.



To order, visit www.rowmaneducation.com,
click on Co-Publishers or call 1-800-462-6420

“A Definition of Curriculum Integration

An integration is a philosophy of teaching in which content is drawn from several subject areas to focus on a particular topic or theme. Rather than studying math or social studies in isolation, for example, a class might study a unit called The Sea, using math to calculate pressure at certain depths and social studies to understand why coastal and inland populations have different livelihoods.”

“[Teachers designing] interdisciplinary studies [should strive to] include the following elements:

- A topic that lends itself to study from several points of view.
- Two to five valuable themes (or essential questions) the teacher wants the students to explore.
- An approach and activities to further students’ understanding more than is possible in a traditional, single-discipline unit.”

Source: From *The Language of Learning: A Guide to Education Terms*, by J. L. McBrien & R. S. Brandt, p. 55, 1997, Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

A Powerful Rationale for Arts Study:

Gallas (1994) observes that humans are wired to communicate artistically. Before they enter school, young children communicate through drawing and painting/coloring (visual art); dramatic play (drama); song (music); and movement (dance). Spoken and written language takes precedence in school, but this is not a natural transformation, as it is imposed by parents and teachers to prepare children for adulthood. But, if we respect the natural development of children to guide teaching, why are these earliest forms of communication and expression marginalized in schools?

(Gallas, K. (1994). *The languages of learning: How children, talk, write, dance, draw, and sing their understanding of the world.* New York: Teachers College Press.)

Fiske’s (1999) review of arts integration research concludes:

The arts reach students who are not otherwise being reached; reach students in ways that they are not otherwise being reached; connect students to themselves and each other; transform the environment for learning; provide learning opportunities for the adults in the lives of young people; provide new challenges for those students already considered successful; connect learning experiences to the world of real work. Consequently, school attendance rates increase, dropout rates decrease, there are fewer behavior problems, and homework completion increases.

Fiske, E. B. (ed.) (1999). *Champions of change: The impact of the arts on learning* [On-line]. Available: <http://artsedge.Kennedy-Center.org>.

Integrating ensembles strengthens support for your program:

School personnel and community stake holders see you as a “real teacher” teaching substantive material, often to disenfranchised students. This further positions your program as an integral and indispensable component of the complete school program.

Integration can occur:

I. While meeting curricular goals and education mandates. This is a critical component for success.

Common Core State Standards Six Shifts:

Informational Texts

Knowledge in the Disciplines

"Staircase of Complexity"

Text Based Answers

Writing from Sources

Academic Vocabulary

The following National Standards for Music in bold are realized through active listening and verbal and written discussion.

1. Sing alone and with other, a varied repertoire of music.
2. Perform, on instruments,, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
3. Improvise melodies, variations, and accompaniments.
- 4. Use musical vocabulary and language to analyze and describe music.**
5. Read and notate music.
6. Compose and arrange music within specified guidelines.
- 7. Know and apply appropriate criteria to music and music performances**
- 8. Understand the relationships between music, history, culture and other disciplines.**

(Petersen, 2006, p.66)

II. With a single teacher using an interdisciplinary approach. For example, a teacher can play exemplars of music being studied, or of other significant works by the same composer. In another example, teachers can help students discover how elements of a poem used as a text for a music composition are manifested in the musical work performed by the ensemble.

Idea examples for discussion (speaking or writing) while active listening to recordings or live performances:

1. Listen for: the melody; accompaniment (harmony, texture); tempo changes (rhythm); certain instruments (timbre); different sections (form)
2. What do you think was the composer's purpose when writing this?
3. Why do you think the composer used this/these particular instrument, mode, tempo, style?

For all above: cite examples in the music.

Similarly, when using written text, students should base responses from evidence in the document. Sample activities: writing program notes for concerts, researching composers and pieces, and regular journal entries a few minutes during class.

Examples of Academic Vocabulary Assignments (Common Core State Standards)

Music Vocabulary for _____ (name of musical work)

Review Words:

Term	Definition
melody	
tempo	
dynamics	
form	
slur	

(partial list)

New Vocabulary:

Term	Definition
subito	
sforzando	
staccato	
accelerando	

(partial list)

Musical Paragraph

Inspired by: _____ by: _____

Topic Sentence:

Detail sentences (Use six different vocabulary words):

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Closing sentence: _____

(excerpted from Petersen, 2006)

Use the writing process, format, and rubric used in other classes at the given grade level.

III. Through teacher collaboration involving:

A. One other discipline, possibly two of your own classes if you teach ensembles and general music (e. g., choir, orchestra, or band with general music classes). Start small and grow from there. You and another teacher can also collaborate—see sample letter below that you can distribute to other teachers to get started. Once there is interest, you can meet during planning times or, less ideally but sometimes the only option, in halls, before school, via e-mail and so on.

B. Two or more disciplines. This will usually require some planning sessions. Some ensemble directors arrange schedule so that they can attend common planning times of other teachers (e. g., team, grade level). See sample planning template on last page of this handout.

C. Building-wide curricular themes. Broad concepts work well for this; for example, conflict resolution (tension/release in music; study of wars in social studies, etc.)

D. Service learning, or socio-emotional school initiatives: e. g., service learning, character education, drug awareness. Clinical staff (social worker, psychologist, nurse and so on) can be included.

“Simply put, service learning connects school-based curriculum with the inherent caring and concern young people have for their world” (Kaye, 2010, p. 8). Issues and causes could be within the school, a local food bank, or an issue in another state or country.

Experiences are deeper if students are more involved than merely bringing in canned goods or other donation. Ideas might be a student presentation at concert, organizing donations collections at lunches, or at an event in the community.

IV. With a culminating activity, such as a display, demonstration, or performance that can serve as a form of assessment and a communication and advocacy tool that informs school staff and students, parents and other community members.

Sample Letter for Initiating Collaborative Teaching and Curriculum Integration

Hi, (Colleague’s Name)_____ :

Although music is an important subject worthy of study on its own, it is also a powerful way to help engage and motivate students, as well as to greatly enhance learning in other classes. Would you please take a few minutes and answer the following and return to my school mailbox? I am very interested in teaching collaboratively with you! Thanks!

Musically,

____(Your name)_____ (continued next page)

1. Subject area: _____

2. Some appropriate units of study involving topics such as periods in history, literature, fractions, acoustics, and elements in other arts:

3. Anticipated start and end dates of units of study:

4. Optional: Brief description of units:

Thank you!

Curriculum Integration Planning Practice:

Document Instrumental Music during the Civil War

Music played a prominent role on both sides of the conflict: Union and Confederate. Bands performed at rallies to entice men to enlist. On the battlefield, different instruments including bugles, drums, and fifes were played to issue marching orders or sometimes simply to boost the morale of soldiers. Buglers had to learn forty-nine separate calls just for infantry, with more needed for cavalry. These ranged from battle commands to calls for meal time. Some of these musicians were drummer boys not even in their teens, which allowed an adult man to instead be a foot soldier. Similar to buglers, drummers had to learn 39 different beats: fourteen for general use, and 24 for marching cadence. However, buglers were given greater importance than drummers.

Contrary to popular belief, fifers and drummers went to the rear during the battle, put down their instruments, and served as stretcher bearers and assistants for the medical surgeons. However, buglers were often still needed as communication out on the field. This is a dangerous endeavor, as a common military strategy is to wipe out communications systems of the opposing side—live musicians were commonly used in this role prior to modern technology.

Singing was also a typical recreational activity, serving as release from the tensions of battle, homesickness, and boredom. Soldiers on both sides often engaged in recreation with musical instruments brought from home. Banjos, fiddles, and guitars were particularly popular.

When the opposing armies were near each other, sometimes the bands from both sides of the conflict played against each other on the night before a battle. Musical duels between the two sides were

common, as they heard each other as the music traveled across the countryside. Each side had its particular favorite tunes, while some music was enjoyed by Northerners and Southerners alike, as exemplified by United States President Abraham Lincoln's love of *Dixie*, the unofficial anthem of the Confederacy. Whole songs were sometimes played during battles. It was said that music was the equivalent of "a thousand men" on one's side. Robert E. Lee himself said, "I don't think we could have an army without music."

--excerpted from Barrett, J. R., McCoy, C. W., & Veblen, K.K. (1997). *Sound ways of knowing: Music in the interdisciplinary curriculum*. New York: Schimer Books.

Another potential document for beginning players:

Many traditional or folk melodies found in beginner method books (e.g., "Yankee Doodle"), were used as song parodies and recycled tunes. "The Star Spangled Banner" was recycled from an English drinking song in 1814, "To Anacreon in Heav'n". Specifically in the Civil War era, "When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again" was recycled from the Irish tune, "Johnny, I Hardly Knew Ye". Also, the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" melody was borrowed from "John Brown's Body". Verses were added throughout the war, one commemorating the first African American regiment of soldiers in the war.

Recycled tunes were used for expediency; only the text needed to be written for a new song, printed on paper called a broadside, and distributed as a type of media often reaching people before newspapers. People who did not read music could quickly learn and pass along.

1. Read the Civil War documents. What instrumental music ideas emerge? What songs or compositions could students learn? What music standards would you address and performance goals would you have? How would you assess them?
2. Read the Common Core State Writing Standards, Grades 6-8 and 9-10 below, while keeping in mind what you are also planning to teach students in your music class. What potential themes, essential ideas or projects with or without a culminating activity or performance emerge? How would your plan in instrumental music class strengthen standards in reading and writing? Would you need to revise the music project to help make students connections between the music and reading/writing goals? How would you assess student growth?

Common Core State Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects 6–12 [excerpt]

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

Grade 6-8 Students:

--Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

--Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

--Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Grade 9-10 Students:

--Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

--Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

--Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

References (and some useful resources):

Burnaford, G., Aprill, A., & Weiss (2001). *Renaissance in the classroom: Arts integration and meaningful learning*. Muhwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Barret, J. R., McCoy, C. W., & Veblen, K. K. (1997). *Sound ways of knowing*. New York, NY: Schirmer Books.

Fiske, E. B. (ed.) (1999). *Champions of change: The impact of the arts on learning* [On-line]. Retrieved December 10, 2012, from: <http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/champions/pdfs/ChampsReport.pdf>

Kaye, C. B. (2010). *The complete guide to service learning: Proven, practical ways to engage students in civic responsibility, academic curriculum, and action* (2nd ed.). Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing.

Peterson, E.M. (2006). *Inspired by listening*. Hampton Falls, NH: Yeoman Press.

Internet:

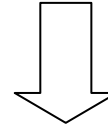
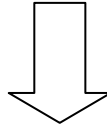
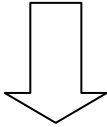
<http://www.ncsu.edu/chass/extension/ci/index.html>

http://www.my-ecoach.com/resources/curr_integ.php

<http://www.corestandards.org/the-standa>

Template for Integration Project Planning

Starting Point
Title of Unit, Musical Piece, and/or
Unifying Big Ideas or Essential
Questions:



Music Ensemble:

Objectives:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Activities:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Culminating Performance /
Event / Display:

Assessment (evidence that
objectives were met):

Ideas for next project:

Curricular Area:

Objectives:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Activities:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Culminating Performance /
Event / Display:

Assessment (evidence that
objectives were met):

Ideas for next project:

Curricular Area:

Objectives:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Activities:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Culminating Performance /
Event / Display:

Assessment (evidence that
objectives were met):

Ideas for next project:

Other Curricular or School Goals (character education, plans for parent involvement, key words and vocabulary, social justice, critical thinking skills needed, etc.):

Time Frame (dates of planning meetings, culminating activities, etc.):

Excerpted from Mixon, K., and McAnally, E. A. (in press). *Connections: Building strong performing ensembles through curricular integration*. See also Burnaford, G., Aprill, A. & Weiss, C. (2001). *Renaissance in the classroom: Arts integration and meaningful learning*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.