

Teaching to the Future: We Need *Your* Students to Become String Teachers

Bob Gillespie, Ohio State University

I. The string teacher shortage: It is a problem and it is becoming a CRISIS.

1. NASM estimates that there are about 3,000 undergraduate string education majors. Approximately 800 of these students will graduate each year, but less than two-thirds will start teaching immediately (Hamann, Gillespie & Bergonzi, 2002).
2. In 1999-2000 no teachers could be found for 24% of available string positions (Hamann, Gillespie & Bergonzi, 2002).
3. Between 1999-2001 most school systems reported difficulty in finding teachers to staff string teacher openings (Hamann, Gillespie & Bergonzi, 2002).
4. In 2000-2001 no teachers could be found for 43% of available string positions (Hamann, Gillespie & Bergonzi, 2002).
5. In 2001-2002 current string teachers reported 47% of string positions available in their schools (Hamann, Gillespie & Bergonzi, 2002).
6. There was an estimated shortage of 5,000 string teachers in 2001-2002 (Hamann, Gillespie & Bergonzi, 2002).
7. Between 2002-2004 57% of current string teachers predicted string teacher positions in their schools would be available (Hamann, Gillespie & Bergonzi, 2002).
8. The profession will lose 22% of string teachers between 2000-2005 due to retirement (Gillespie & Hamann, 1998).

II. There are many reasons *why* current university string education majors chose a career in teaching strings in the schools (Gillespie & Hamann, 1999):

1. Liked teaching as a profession, and considered it rewarding work,
2. Enjoyed and loved music,
3. Desired to enrich and share the joy of music with others,
4. Loved children, people, and working with groups,
5. Influenced by their school orchestra teacher,
6. Job market security, as string teachers are needed,
7. Liked performing and desired to keep involved with music,
8. Enjoyed previous teaching experience,
9. Desired to be a role model for children and positively influence them,
10. Desired to promote a noble image of strings in the schools,
11. Loved the sound of string instruments.

III. Write one reason *you* chose to become a string teacher

IV. The Solution: A call to action with recommended strategies to interest your students in the profession. *We are the critical factor!*

1. Realize that you are a role model to your students for the string profession, particularly high school teachers.
2. Relate positively to students by showing a love for teaching and through creating a positive learning environment. Show them your joy for teaching, playing, and music.
3. Give your students teaching and conducting opportunities, including mentoring younger students.
4. Talk positively about the profession. Inform students about the values of a career in orchestra teaching, including personal satisfaction and job security.
5. Challenge students with a variety of music.
6. Keep your eyes and ears open. Identify and talk to individual students who you think have the potential to be a successful teacher.
7. Take a personal interest in students who express a desire to teach. Adopt them!
8. Make students' orchestra and music experiences enjoyable, fun, and challenging.
9. Talk with students about your personal growth as a musician and teacher.
10. Encourage those students who are interested in teaching to take private lessons and practice, practice, practice!
11. Keep performing on your instrument so students see you as a performer as well as a teacher.
12. Encourage private teachers to positively influence their students to teach *and* play.
13. Emphasize that college studio professors need to encourage and support students in music education. The power of influence of a college studio teacher is immense on students' ideas of careers. Talk to their Deans!
14. Encourage college administrators to have valid and vital string methods courses, and to provide pre-student teaching opportunities.
15. Encourage colleges to award music education string scholarships selected by the music education faculty.

V. New resources to help you recruit your students to teach:

1. *Imagine A Career with Strings Attached!* This is a collection of teaching strategies designed for use in the classroom to help teachers interest their students in the string teaching profession. It is published by the American String Teachers Association (ASTA) and funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.
 - *Strategies 1-10* include topics on peer-conducting, analyzing and describing music, evaluating performances, improvising, interpreting and performing music, and many others.
 - *Strategy 11* provides guidelines for creating and motivating students through performances that extend beyond-the-school activities
 - *Strategy 12* is a guide for discussing a career in string teaching.
 - *Strategy 13* is a guide for teachers in helping their students provide meaningful peer-teaching experiences.
2. Website: careersinstringteaching.com
This website is designed for high school students to help encourage them to become string teachers. It was developed under the sponsorship of the

American String Teachers Association (ASTA) and funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

3. Classroom posters: *Imagine A Career with Strings Attached!*

REFERENCES

- ASTA. (2006). *Imagine a career with strings attached!* Washington, D.C.: American String Teachers Association.
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