

In-Service Inspires!

I am so very proud to be a Missouri Music Educator! During our 75th In-Service Workshop I heard great ensemble perform with impressive musicianship, outstanding literature, great programming and excellent preparation. When I was able to escape the salons and get to some of the clinics they were standing room only with music educators hanging on every word in order to take something unique and new back to their classrooms. Nancy Ditmer, NAFME President, was impressed with our conference and with the quality of performances and clinics and with our attendance and the conscientious nature of our educators.

To all of the affiliates and the MMEA Vice Presidents thank you for providing outstanding student opportunities and rewarding content. To the membership thank you for your support and attendance. I am proud to be a Missouri Music Educator! It is an honor to serve such an inspired membership.

Following our annual conference I always return home tired but excited to return to teaching. I am inspired and motivated! Our students are not as fortunate to hear and see what is available to us at our conference. I often wish I could expose them to all that I am fortunate to witness and get them fired up as well.

With this in mind I would like to briefly discuss some ideas on motivation and share a few ideas on helping students share some of our excitement for learning.

Motivation is a complex branch of human psychology. Unlike other animals, which are motivated by the primal need for survival, humans add to that a complex social existence in which our desire and will to complete a task is influenced by a host of factors. (Feldman/Contizius)

What is motivation? Who is responsible to motivate whom? Is it our sole responsibility to provide the stimulus to motivate the students, or is it the student responsibility to motivate themselves? In reality, it is all of the above.

We are familiar with the “Five Principles” of learning developed by Holz and Jacobi based on the instructional model of John Dewey and Heinrich Pestalozzi. Principle #5 states: “If learning depends on wanting to learn, then teaching is the art of making students want to learn.....” Making students want to learn requires motivation.

The inspiration for this portion of this article comes from a book that I picked up by Daniel H. Pink, *“Drive, The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us.”* A very interesting look at how we as humans truly respond and react to various types of motivation. From our psychology classes we understand the difference between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic or “carrot and stick” motivation includes rewards or punishment to improve task completion. Intrinsic rewards come from within.

In an ideal world students behave and participate because they care about the study of music. The reality is that students are not always intrinsically motivated for music study. They are motivated to do something, not necessarily what we teach in the rehearsal. In the absence of intrinsic motivation we rely on external factors, grades, prizes, trophies, certificates, tokens etc. Often the extrinsic motivation is manufactured through competition. The often heard argument is that competition breeds excellence. But according to Daniel Pink and his documentation of studies by noted psychologists’ extrinsic motivation undermines intrinsic motivation.

The book documents studies and experiments on how the introduction of extrinsic or external rewards can cause a loss in interest for the activity. Rewards deliver a short-term boost, similar to caffeine but the effects wear off. Studies show that the introduction or dependence on external rewards reduces a person’s longer-term motivation to continue the project or activity and stifles the desire to learn. (Pink)

For example one study showed that third graders eventually spent less time reading if they were rewarded for doing so with tokens such as toys and candy. The reason may be because children often resist being controlled and they can sense that extrinsic rewards are attempts to do this even if the rewards are pleasurable. (Pink)

Humans have an innate ability and tendency to seek challenges and to extend their capacity to explore and learn. We are naturally driven to learn more, the reward is the challenge, the knowledge, and the desire to achieve and press beyond what is the normal every day occurrence, the reward therefore is in the process. The product becomes the goal but the true reward is in the process.

Anyone interested in developing and enhancing intrinsic motivation in children, employees, students, etc, should not concentrate on external control systems such as monetary rewards. (Pink) For us that means not depending on contests and trophies as a means to motivation but instead relying on inspired teaching and making the process of learning the real reward.

So how.....great music motivates. Learning about the music motivates. Organizing rehearsals around obtaining a specific objective or development of a specific musical concept motivates. Intrinsic motivation intensifies when students perceive a task to be unique. Here are a couple of additional examples:

- “Practice Theme”: Define a practice theme for the week, such as tone quality or an aspect of diction. When rehearsing a piece or excerpt make tone quality or diction priority one. Next week target a different aspect.
- “Variety Drill”: practice a difficult passage in a variety of ways other than how it is written. My applied teacher would have me do this. Change the rhythm, articulation, tempo, and dynamics. If the passage is all eighth notes, play dotted eighth sixteenth; slur two, tongue two; slur three, tongue one; write out a difficult passage for a particular voice or instrument and have the full ensemble practice this line in unison. This list is endless if you use your imagination.
- Make an ensemble “To-Do” list: on the board write down objectives for your ensemble based on the pieces you are rehearsing. When accomplished mark it off. A visible list of accomplishments assists in gratifying the psyche.(Jagow)

A comprehensive education that asks more from us in terms of stretching ourselves and asking more from our students will breed success. It is not about the prize it is the desire and challenge within the music and the individual and ensemble accomplishments that should drive us.

Educator Evaluation Update:

I will continue to post to the MMEA web site updates on what I know of the development of this ongoing process. I would love to hear what is happening in some of the pilot districts in regards to criteria being used for your evaluation. What follows is an excerpt from the web site that briefly gives an overview of the Evaluation system.

On June 29, 2012, the U.S. Department of Education approved Missouri’s Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) waiver giving the state flexibility from the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements. Missouri’s waiver submission addressed three principles: college and career ready expectations for all students; state developed differentiated recognition, accountability and support; and supporting effective instruction and leadership.

In addressing the support of effective instruction and leadership (the teacher evaluation part of ESEA waiver), Missouri used current research to identify seven

principles of effective evaluation. The areas are listed below that serve as components of effective evaluation. Each of these areas are being studied and developed by committees. Here are the seven areas:

1. **Clear Expectations**
2. **Differentiated Performance levels**
3. **Probationary Period**
4. **Student Measures**
5. **Regular, Meaningful Feedback**
6. **Evaluator Training**
7. **Use of Evaluation results**

As a systemic process, the Educator Evaluation System employs a developmental sequence defining a professional continuum that articulates how the knowledge and skills of educators mature and strengthen. The professional continuum identifies expectations of performance at the candidate level (pre-service) and at four levels of performance for the teacher and leader and superintendent. These established levels are as follows:

1. **Candidate**
2. **New Teacher**
3. **Developing Teacher**
4. **Proficient Teacher**
5. **Distinguished Teacher**

Missouri recognizes the fact that to be effective the process of evaluating educators must extend beyond providing an accurate and reliable rating of performance to a process that promotes growth and improvement in practice. This is our collective obligation as a profession. (Additional information can be found on the MMEA web site.) If you have questions about this process please give me a call. Thank you for the pleasure and honor to serve MMEA.

Feldman, Evan. (2011). *Instrumental Music Education: Teaching with the musical and practical in Harmony*. Routledge Publications.

Jagow, Shelley. (2007). *Developing the Complete Band Program*. Meredith Music Publications.

Pink, Daniel. (2009). *Drive, The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*. Riverhead Books, New York.

