

Curriculum, Assessment & Grading

Feldman, chapter 8

An outstanding music curriculum should have...

- A short philosophy
- Goals and beliefs for the overall program
- List of developmental skills or benchmarks
- Required resources (teaching spaces, staffing needs, equipment, budget, class time)
- Sample teaching strategies (lesson plans)
- Sample assessment strategies (checklists, rating scales, rubrics)
- Suggested curricular resources (method books, ensemble literature)

Advantages to having a well-developed curriculum

- Learning goals for each level insure transition to the next grade with certain skills
- Learning goals guide repertoire decisions rather than allow repertoire decisions to dictate learning goals
- It creates continuity (e.g. same counting systems, use of solfege, etc.)

Spiral Curriculum

- Concepts and skills are “context independent”
- Same concepts and skills are taught from elementary through high school in increasing complexity
- Emphasizes the quality of music-making, not the difficulty of repertoire

Types of Assessment

- Summative
 - Students study a unit for some time and take a test of some kind to assess what they learned
- Formative
 - Daily exchange between students and teacher in evaluating understanding
- THINK OF EXAMPLES OF EACH IN A HIGH SCHOOL ENSEMBLE

MENC Standards...

not so good?

- David Elliott
 - *Ineffective for summative assessment*
 - *Standards reduce music-making and listening into a fragmented set of skills and facts*
 - *Reason for them is not centered on the students but on school administrators to label 'failing' for budget implications*
 - *'Walk the walk and talk the talk' "If we are teaching music well (in a caring, holistic, artistic, and humanistic way) we are already exceeding any 'standard' the writers of MENC standards had in mind."*

Formative Assessment Strategies

- Often informal, not assigning a grade
- Hear individuals, but not every individual every day
- Make it non-threatening
- Ask questions that test learning (see page 111)
- Try to get responses to questions from a wide range of students
- Tell students they will be tested on what they are learning..is this bad?
- This allows the teacher to “compress” the assessment cycles.

Summative Assessment in Ensembles

- Usually formal with an assigned grade
- Holds students accountable for understanding what you are teaching
 - passages in music or method books or solo lit
 - scales and technical exercises
 - music history
 - music theory

Summative Assessment Strategies

- Live playing Assessment
 - A number of passed passages means you can be objective and subjective
- Recorded playing assignments (time saver, take-home)
- Computer-aided (expensive)
- Performance test rubric on p. 115
- Writing assignments - program notes, rehearsal or concert reviews like adjudication

Assessment vs Grading

- *Assessment is the measure of student performance and grading is the way we communicate the information provided by assessment.*
- *Assessment is “finding out” and grading is “communicating what you’ve found out.”*

Grading Systems

(problems? p. 127-132)

- On-time obedient participation = A
 - Reduction of grade based on
 - absences, tardies
 - Excused vs unexcused absences
- Demerits (point reduction based on infractions)
- Merit (catching students being good)
- Extra credit points
- Varsity letter, pins, other awards

Discussion Questions

- How can we justify an inordinate amount of As?
- Does a bad grade encourage a student to do better?
- What percentage would you assign to these in elementary, middle school, high school band/orchestra?
 - Attendance
 - Attitude
 - Playing tests
 - Written tests
 - Practice Sheets