

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR

PMEA Toward the Future: Serving the Musical Needs of all Pennsylvanians in a Changing World Environment

by Patrick M. Jones

Introduction

We are living in a time of great change. Terrorism, urban sprawl, inner city revival and gentrification, decay of older inner ring suburbs, digitization, globalization, outsourcing, insourcing, a decline in civic engagement and social bonds and the development of the creative economy have changed our society in ways that will affect our students' lives beyond anything we can currently imagine. As I'm writing this I'm vacationing in Scotland. The news media and BBC talk shows here are filled with discussions of the terrorist attacks and attempted attacks in London and people are questioning how Britain, which prides itself on tolerance and openness, could have bred the terrorists who were born and raised here.

It's a dialogue as pertinent for us in Pennsylvania as it is here. All multi-ethnic, multi-racial, multi-cultural societies today need to address very difficult and complex issues related to ethnicity, race, culture, and nationality. At the same time, the economic upheaval in the USA today is as great as in two previous eras: the Industrial Revolution and the later deindustrialization of the US economy, both of which radically altered the American social landscape.

The Industrial Revolution is well known to all of us from our history classes and the literature of Charles Dickens who shared with us the misery of the working classes in England of the time. Those of us over 40 personally

remember the deindustrialization of Pennsylvania in the 1970s-80s. We saw vibrant communities turned into rust-belt ghost towns and the indignity faced by many members of Tom Brokaw's "Greatest Generation" who were reduced to standing in welfare lines and depending on charity to help feed their families.

Communities in every corner of Pennsylvania were decimated by the loss of our industrial base and our Commonwealth has never completely recovered.¹

"The resources needed to fuel this new economy are not the coal, oil, and steel of Pennsylvania's industrial age, nor the service jobs now being outsourced to India and China, but the creativity and innovation of our people. Music educators have an important role to play in preparing our students for the creative age in which we now find ourselves."

Those of us who came of age during that period know too well the disaster inflicted on a society unprepared for a massive economic shift. Therefore, we have a moral responsibility to our communities and students to insure they are prepared for the future.

We are moving from being a knowledge-based service economy to one built on individual creativity, small-group local and global collaboration and interdependence among members of a variety of cultures. The resources needed to fuel this new economy are not the coal, oil and steel of Pennsylvania's industrial age, nor the service jobs now being outsourced to India and China, but the creativity and innovation of our people. Music educators have an important role to play in preparing our students for the

creative age in which we now find ourselves. Our challenge is to determine how it is we can contribute and then develop curricula to do so.

Background Reading

This requires us to do some homework and read outside of our discipline in order to get a sense of what is happening and what our students need to know and be able to do. To get started I recommend four books and some articles that have great value for all music teachers. While they are presented here in chronological order, they needn't be read that way.

The first is Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*.² Putnam, the former dean of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, chronicled an unprecedented decline in

American civic and social engagement and a break down of society during the latter decades of the 20th Century.

We music educators will find much relevant information in his work since social engagement is the essence of musicing. Putnam's research helps us identify that one of our greatest roles is to help our students learn to engage musically with others in social settings so they can build the social capital necessary to sustain civil society.³ This is particularly relevant for our time given the discussions in Britain about the decay of social interaction and civil connectedness there as well.

Second and third on the list are two books by Richard Florida, Hirst Professor of Public Policy at George Mason

University and a nonresident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. Florida has gained notoriety for identifying the shift in our society away from a knowledge economy to one in which creativity is of primary importance. He identified what he calls the “creative class” in *The Rise of the Creative Class*⁴. His research has spawned a great deal of dialogue in the business, government, and professional arts industry communities. The K12 arts education community, however, has been strangely absent from this critical dialogue concerning the role of creativity in the economic future of our nation. Therefore, I convened a colloquium in October 2004 for K12 arts education to address it. Abstracts from the colloquium are available in the research section of www.keyarts.ws. My paper on music education’s role is available in *Arts Education Policy Review*.⁵

After reading *The Rise of the Creative Class* I recommend you move on to his latest book *The Flight of the Creative Class*⁶ in which he outlines how the USA is now losing its competitive edge to other countries around the globe. Florida calls for an evolution from a creative economy that benefits a small segment of the population to a creative society that draws on the creative potential of all members. We music educators have a crucial role in helping develop that creative society.

Finally, a current best seller everyone in education should be discussing is Thomas Friedman’s *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*.⁷ Friedman is a three-time Pulitzer Prize winning New York Times columnist who traveled the world investigating globalization for this book. Not only is globalization a reality, it is more pervasive throughout society and more invasive in our individual lives than most of us probably imagine. Friedman tells us that the world into which our students graduate each year is becoming increasingly connected, collaborative, and interdependent. He also warns that our standard of living will decline if we

don’t reinvigorate schools to be both more comprehensive and more demanding.

These books and articles are excellent resources to help us gain insight about the society in which we currently live so we can envision the kinds of contributions music educators can make. Taken together they tell us that civic participation in the US has been in a steady state of decline since the 1970s, individual creativity of as many workers as possible is essential to our future, digitization has leveled the playing field for corporate competition so that our students will increasingly compete with workers from around the world, our students need to be able to work in small group collaborations in groups ranging from their local office to international networks, and globalization requires them to be culturally informed.

Meeting the challenges of this new economy requires the collaboration of all of us engaged in music education. It is not enough for scholars to write articles and hold colloquia. Substantive change cannot happen until teachers in the schools take responsibility for the future of our society and make curricular changes to address society’s needs. Such changes will require taking risks, making mistakes, and jettisoning some of our ingrained values and traditions no matter how much we love them or how relevant we found them to our own lives. It was in the spirit of taking such risks and concern for the future that music teachers from all corners of Pennsylvania met in July to address the future of music education in the Commonwealth.

PMEA Professional Development Seminar

Attendees at the PMEA Professional Development Seminar last July met to develop a vision for the future of music education. After attending several sessions devoted to our profession’s history, current issues and concerns for the future, they broke into district teams to strategize how music educators can meet

the musical needs of all Pennsylvanians in this new environment. The following is a compilation of their input to guide PMEA toward the future. It consists of lists of goals that will need to be further refined and developed into actionable objectives if they are to have a statewide impact.

Vision Statement

The participants determined what music education in Pennsylvania should “look like” for the first half of the 21st Century as follows:

Music Education in Pennsylvania Must...

- Focus on lifewide & lifelong musicing⁸
- Prepare students for the “creative” or “knowledge” economy
- Develop cultural awareness and tolerance
- Reach out to the school and local community
- Become and remain current in offerings and pedagogies
- Be united among music teachers of all levels and specialties
- Focus the community on a music education of quality, not simply big and showy performances

Curriculum

- Consider community demographics (cultures) in curriculum and program design
- Connect music curricula to the entire school curriculum
- Serve all students, not simply large ensemble members
- Include more creative offerings (i.e. ensembles, classes, productions, etc.)
- Include traditional and small ensembles & genres reflective of student and community interest
- Offer instruments, ensembles, and genres students can and will choose to perform in both lifewide and life-long settings
- Immerse students in current and emerging music technologies

Pedagogy

- Step outside the barriers of our tradition in order to reach students’ needs and current trends

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- Balance traditional pedagogical techniques with more current trends
- Embrace student-led ensembles and emergent/grounded pedagogy
- Focus on developing student creativity and independent musicianship

PMEA's Role

After developing a broad vision for music education, they provided guidance for what PMEA can and/or should do to advance that vision. They identified roles for PMEA at the state and PMEA district levels as follows:

Statewide:

Advocacy

- Advocate PDE adopt a requirement in music for high school graduation
- Advocate for current music technology in all schools
- Advocate at PDE for collegiate programs to update music teacher education curricula
- Assist in pre-service music teacher education to ensure graduates have relevant skills, dedication and work ethic
- Send mailings to administrators and school board members promoting music opportunities and presenting current issues and concerns; distribute a reproducible version to members who can send them to parents
- Keep members updated on current legal issues

Resources

- Provide a grant-writer
- List opportunities for community music across the state in *PMEA News* & on the PMEA website
- List specific specialty programs throughout the state (i.e. steel drums) in *PMEA News* & on the PMEA website
- Provide materials from the Professional Development Workshop to teachers who were not present
- Develop a PMEA guide for advocacy at the local level
- Connect with “outside” resources (i.e. Pennsylvania Council on the Arts)

Professional Development Provide:

- a mentorship program

- articles, materials, examples and workshops on diverse ensembles, genres, classes and technologies
- in-service training on diverse genres, classes, etc.
- in-service training on various pedagogical approaches, such as being facilitators of student-led ensembles
- in-service training on developing new curricular offerings with limited resources & facilities
- in-service training on grant writing
- in-service training on how to embrace and involve the community

PMEA District Level

- Focus on both lifewide & lifelong musicing
- Develop into more of a professional development resource & network, not simply a festival presenting organization
- Be a resource for all teachers, not just music teachers
- Reach more people who are currently not members
- Get all members to avail themselves of PMEA opportunities and resources (i.e. Professional Development Seminar)
- Present more opportunities for elementary and middle school teachers, not just festivals
- Collaborate with Intermediate Units

Community Level

Strategic change in PMEA is necessary but change at the community level is vital. Therefore, the participants developed a vision of what music education should “look like” in the K12 schools and communities of the Commonwealth. They addressed what the curriculum at each of the three levels of schooling should include as well as the needs of Pre-K and Post-12 populations.

School Districts District Wide

- Focus on both lifewide & lifelong musicing
- Serve as a community arts center (provide facilities for rehearsal, performance, recording, production, composition, instruction, etc.)
- Develop visiting artist & artist-in-residence series for all levels
- Invite community members to perform “side by side” with students

- Interact & collaborate with musicians in addition to K12 music educators (i.e. church musicians, community music educators, music industry members, professional & amateur musicians, university professors, etc.)
- Establish a child-centered philosophy of music education for all students that meets all students’ musical interests and needs
- Offer a unified music curriculum with offerings at all levels that are unique to the community and include assessment
- Connect music curricula to other school offerings
- Provide offerings of interest to the students and community
- Incorporate current music technologies at all levels

PreK Level

- Identify and network with PreK teachers interested in music
- Offer parent/child musicing opportunities
- Use folk, children’s songs, & nursery rhymes
- Incorporate music & movement
- Involve K12 music students in working with PreK children

Elementary Level

- Create a hunger and love of music
- Develop foundational musicianship skills
- Cultivate creativity: composition, improvisation, etc.
- Make cultural connections to the community
- Perform traditional & diverse genres vocally and on authentic instruments
- Collaborate with community members, university faculty and culture bearers
- Incorporate music technologies
- Increase performance opportunities in and outside school - community outreach

Middle Level

- Build on the musicianship skills developed in PreK and elementary school through composition, improvisation, recording arts, etc.
- Offer traditional, indigenous and contemporary instruments, ensembles and genres
- Develop student-led small ensembles of diverse genres (instrumental and vocal)

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- Collaborate with other teachers: art, theater, social studies, science etc.
- Offer more creative opportunities for all students (classes, ensembles, etc.) not just large ensemble members
- Include performance units in classes (drums, guitar, digital media, social instruments, etc.) that will foster lifewide and lifelong musicing

High School Level

- Enhance and further develop student musicianship through composition, improvisation, recording arts, etc.
- Offer traditional, indigenous and contemporary instruments, ensembles, and genres
- Develop student-led small ensembles of diverse genres (instrumental and vocal)
- Collaborate with other teachers: art, theater, social studies, science etc.
- Offer more creative opportunities for all students (classes, ensembles, etc.) not just large ensemble members
- Include performance units in classes (drums, guitar, digital media, social instruments, etc.) that will foster lifewide/lifelong musicing
- Focus on the commonality of the creative process and its components
- Help students develop personal responsibility and community identities that underscore the necessary balance between individuals and society
- Connect high school students to community musicing opportunities

Post-12

- Foster community musicing
- Offer community ensembles in a variety of genres
- Start beginner community ensembles (i.e. New Horizons bands)
- Present ad-hoc performances (short-term commitments such as the “Messiah,” Broadway musicals, etc.); perhaps offered seasonally
- Have family music nights
- Organize alumni performances
- Offer community classes in music on a variety of topics such as audiophile, recording arts, performance, music history, etc.
- Involve K12 musicians in Post-12 musicing

Conclusion

The previous lists provide an excellent starting place for updating music education to address the current needs of our society. They address the core issues we face today: focusing on lifelong and lifewide musicing; engaging all students musically; offering a broader variety of instruments, ensembles and genres; developing students’ musical collaboration and musical leadership skills through small ensembles; focusing on student creativity and developing their independent musicianship; and connecting music curricula and offerings to other curricular areas and the wider community.

Closing

American music educators have constantly evolved music curricula to meet the needs of their day. The singing-schools addressed the needs of congregational singing, instrumental instruction in schools originally had a symbiotic relationship with the community band movement, and large ensembles based on the teacher as maestro fit perfectly into a school system designed to prepare factory workers for the industrial age. Society’s needs have changed once again and we must continue the tradition of evolving our programs to meet current and future needs. Music education can help prepare our students for this new world in unique ways no other academic discipline can. The challenge now is to be proactive and do it. If every music teacher in Pennsylvania would implement just a few of the recommendations on this list each year we would experience a vibrant musical revolution within five years that would ensure the next generation is musically better prepared for life than the last one was. Like Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*, the power is yours. Take the lists above, pin them on your bulletin board or tape them to your office wall, select a few to implement this year and begin leading us into the future.

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ⁱThe current health of Pennsylvania was well studied by the Brookings Institution and published in December 2003 in Bruce Katz, Amy Liu et al, “Back to Prosperity: A Competitive Agenda for Renewing Pennsylvania,” (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution Center of Urban and Metropolitan Policy, 2004).

ⁱⁱRobert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2000).

ⁱⁱⁱI addressed the disconnect between contemporary music education and the community in a paper I read at the ISME 2004 conference: Patrick M. Jones, “Returning Music Education to the Mainstream: Reconnecting with the Community,” in Proceedings of the International Society for Music Education (Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain: ISME, 2004). I am more than happy to send a copy of it to anyone interested.

^{iv}Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It’s Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2002).

^vPatrick M. Jones, Music Education and the Knowledge Economy: Developing Creativity, Strengthening Creative Communities,” *Arts Education Policy Review* 106, no. 4 (2005).

^{vi}Richard Florida, *The Flight of the Creative Class: The New Global Competition for Talent* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2005).

^{vii}Thomas L. Friedman, *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century* (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005).

^{viii}Lifelong musicing has received a great deal of lip service in music education but we have done precious little to systematically address the musical needs of our Pre-K and Post 12 populations. Lifewide musicing is a concept borrowed from leisure studies. It refers to multiple simultaneous engagements with an activity. For example, a high school student might simultaneously sing in a church choir, play trumpet in the school band, take piano lessons at a local music academy and play keyboard, sing and write songs in a garage band.

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