



Collegiate Communiqué #13 *Transitioning from Collegiate to “Pro!”* May 2018

Greetings from the PMEA Chair of the Council for Teacher Training, Recruitment, and Retention. Here is your monthly *Collegiate Communiqué* geared to higher education music education students and teachers.

Past issues are posted on the PMEA website: <http://www.pmea.net/resources/pcmea/>.

This month’s *Collegiate Communiqué* is devoted to the **metamorphosis** from pre-service to in-service – becoming a professional music educator upon graduation from your university of higher learning. Do you have what it takes to assume the role of a school music teacher? Besides the successful completion of your coursework and field experiences, have you acquired the necessary attitude, personality, 21st Century skills, and understanding of what it takes to become an ethical role-model, leader, and “fiduciary?” This transition is all about moving from “book learning” to “practical application.” Excerpts shared in this edition originated from <https://paulkfoxusc.wordpress.com/becoming-a-music-educator/>.

Definitions First...

Shedding the label and image of a “college student,” can you describe the true meaning of these terms?

- **Professional:** an individual with advanced education who uses intellectual skills in the job
- **21st Century Skills:** creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking
- **Ethics:** moral principles that govern a person’s conduct
- **Fiduciary:** a person of good faith and trust who is bound ethically to act in another’s best interests

Philosophy

It is time to revisit and revise your **“personal mission.”** As Regina Zona says in “For Teachers: Writing a Music Teaching Philosophy Statement” (<http://musiclessonsresource.com/writing-a-teaching-philosophy-statement>), a music education philosophy is “a way to connect on a personal level to your students... by stating who you are as a teacher (your beliefs and ideals), how you do what you do, and how that positively impacts the study of music.” She proposes several essential questions to help guide your thoughts and to be ready to expand on at the coming job interviews:

- What do you believe about teaching?
- What do you believe about learning? Why?
- How is that played out in your studio/class?
- How does student identity and background make a difference in how you teach?
- What do you still struggle with in terms of teaching and student learning?



Artist vs. Teacher

The passage from collegiate musician and pre-service educator-in-training to becoming an in-service “master teacher” involves the balance of two distinct skill sets: depth of knowledge vs. methodology.

Dispelling the myth, **“Those who can – do; those who can’t – teach,”** your professors trained you to become “the total musician,” including a deep understanding of music theory/history/forms, ear-training and sight-singing, exposure to literature, advanced technique, and self-expression, helping you attain the highest level of personal artistry that will carry you throughout your career in teaching advanced repertoire and near-virtuoso level of personal performance. Later, your methods classes introduced you to many “how-to teach” concepts... everything from conducting to the application of “scaffolding of learning” and brain theory in lesson planning, leading to that next step - “on-the-job” practice to apply it to your school.

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“Filling in the gaps”

However, your music education methods courses and other college classes were never expected to provide 100% of the necessary knowledge and skills to become a competent teacher in every setting. This spotlights the need for professionalism. Once you land a job, you will have to “catch-up” and seek additional training to improve those areas in which you feel inadequate or unfamiliar:

- Specific educational jargon and the latest approaches, applications, and technologies in the profession (e.g. Backwards Design, The Common Core, Whole Child Initiatives, Multiple Intelligences, Depth of Knowledge and Higher Order of Thinking Skills, Formative, Summative, Diagnostic, and Authentic Assessment, etc. - Do you know the meaning of these terms?)
- Teaching outside your “major” area or specialty (e.g. instrumental music for voice students, etc.)
- Behavior management and preventive disciplinary procedures
- Valid assessments, scoring/rubrics, and the school’s grading and attendance reporting software
- Provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and other confidentiality policies
- Individual Education Plans and service agreements, and accommodating students with disabilities

Seeking Mentors

Ego and arrogance have no place in the teaching profession. Besides fulfilling the requirements of your new school district’s induction or orientation program, joining a mentoring program or cultivating a veteran teacher “buddy” will go far to insure your early professional success and to dodge those first-year teacher “pot holes” (dumb but common blunders) and “rookie blues.”

PMEA has a formal mentoring program. Go to <https://www.pmea.net/specialty-areas/mentor-program/>.

Thanks to its retired members, PMEA also offers a list of free, informal advisers/consultants to “coach” you in nearly every subject area or problem. Find the **Retiree Resource Registry** at <https://www.pmea.net/retired-members/>.

In addition, take advantage of the good resources on the “Music in a Minuet” blog-site by NAFME, like the following articles:

- <https://nafme.org/advice-for-first-year-teachers/>
- <https://nafme.org/easy-ways-deal-pesky-parents/>
- <https://nafme.org/three-easy-steps-classroom-discipline/>
- <https://nafme.org/one-thing-every-new-music-teacher-know/>
- <https://nafme.org/clever-music-teacher-hacks-will-make-year-amazing/>
- <https://nafme.org/help-one-keep/>
- <https://nafme.org/reading-list-music-educators/>



One Final Definition and Goal... Professional *Engagement*

Engagement is “the emotional commitment to an organization and its goals; willingness to learn and perform.” Engagement for prospective music teacher may include synonyms like “participate,” “enroll,” “join,” “be active,” “volunteer,” “seek experience,” and “make a difference!”

Many have said that aspiring to be a music educator is a lot like a *calling*. One school superintendent said he expected prospective new recruits to show high energy, enthusiasm, sense of purpose, and dedication during the interview... even a supposed willingness to “lay down in front of a school bus” or “do whatever it takes” to make the students (and the educational program) successful. That’s engagement! Good luck!

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