Organization and Administration of Elementary and Secondary Music Programs

ScMu 431

Final Exam

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When a teacher is considering the question of how they are going to run their classroom, assess and grade assignments, or lead, motivate, and discipline their students, their decisions are all based fundamentally on their philosophy of education. This may be done consciously or unconsciously, but the underlying rationale behind it all still comes from these basic ideas. The decisions I make in my classroom are no different; they will all be based on my philosophy of music education.

The first and most basic idea to take into consideration is why music is valuable. In my philosophy of music education, I quoted Bennet Reimer, a famous music education philosopher who said, “Whenever and wherever humans have existed music has existed also.” Music is valuable at the most basic and human level. According to George Elliot, “Music is a domain of human activity accessible, achievable, and applicable to all.” The value of music impacts me as an administrator, as it informs the decisions I make about advocacy of the program, writing budgets, and deciding what to teach. It also effects assessment and grading. As Walker wrote, “As music educators, if we wish to have our efforts seen as genuine parts of a complete curriculum, we must be accountable, and that means accepting assessment.” The assessment and grading process affirms the value of music to other educators, and takes it from the realm of extra-curricular to curricular. If the value of music is not simply for performance but is cognitive, as both Reimer and Elliot say, then they should be assessed on both levels according to the standards set forth by NAfME.

The second question to consider is why music should be taught in schools. This plays into decisions concerning the teacher’s leadership and motivation of students. Reimer reminds his readers, “Professional music educators should have a convincing rationale for why the work
they have chosen to do is important. The Tanglewood declaration put forth some convincing reasons for education, as I noted in my philosophy. “We believe that education must have as major goals the art of living, the building of personal identity, and nurturing creativity. Since the study of music can contribute much to these ends, we now call for music to be placed in the core of the school curriculum. Music teachers, then, are responsible for helping their students to learn many things other than just how to read notes or play an instrument. This means that they must be more than teachers; they must be leaders both in the classroom and outside of it, exemplifying the kind of life skills that their students are being taught. Teachers must motivate their students to think independently and creatively. Motivation, according to Tim Lautzenheiser, is the result of developing a set of controlled habits that will lead to a desired set of goals. So our classroom practices should be based on helping our students develop habits of creative and independent thinking that will be useful not only in the music classroom but also in the rest of their lives.

The third idea is that of who should teach music. In my music education philosophy, I put forth the argument that music teachers should understand the value of music and be able to communicate it to students and parents. They should also have knowledge of their field and be competent educators. Being competent educators means that they are able to effectively manage a classroom through motivation and discipline. As William Bauer said in his article on classroom management, “students must be active participants, whereas in other classes they may be able to be more passive.” Music teachers must be able to motivate their students to take an interest and become active participants. According to Walker, this means that they should display energy, enthusiasm, friendliness, integrity, and good teaching skills. If a teacher
is lacking in these areas, they will have a harder time motivating students to learn. A music teacher must also be proactive when it comes to discipline, planning for the worst ahead of time so that they are not caught off guard if it does happen.⁹

All of these teaching practices and goals all come back around to the teacher’s philosophy of music education. They are all based on the value that is given to music and the reasoning behind why it should be taught and who should teach it. The answers to these questions shape the way a music program is run and how effective it is. Based on my personal philosophy of music education, these are the answers that I have decided upon, and I hope and believe that they will make for a successful program in the future.
Works Cited

1 Reimer, Bennet. “Why Do Humans Value Music?” Pg. 1


3 Walker, Darwin E. *Teaching Music: Managing the Successful Music Program*. Belmont, CA:


4 Reimer, Bennet. “Why Do Humans Value Music?” Pg. 1

5 Britton, Allen and Broido, Arnold and Gary, Charles. *The Tanglewood Declaration*. Pg. 1


8 Walker, Darwin E. *Teaching Music: Managing the Successful Music Program*. Belmont, CA:
