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Tommy Finnigan
SCMEA President

Dear Colleagues,

I hope you enjoyed a well-deserved summer break—time to recharge your mind, body, and spirit. Each of us needs those moments to rest, reconnect with loved ones, and reflect before the busy year ahead.
It is a true honor to serve as President of the South Carolina Music Education Association for the next two years. I am grateful for the opportunity to work alongside such a passionate and talented community of music educators, students, and advocates. Together, we will continue advancing the vital role of music in South Carolina's schools and communities.

I want to extend a heartfelt thank-you to Past President Colleen Marcou for her outstanding leadership. Under her guidance, we have made significant progress for music education in our state. I am also deeply grateful to Joe Gulledge and Patti Foy for their invaluable encouragement and support as I prepared for this role.

Please join me in welcoming our new President-Elect, Erik Hines, to the SCMEA Executive Board. His expertise, energy, and vision will inspire exciting growth in the years ahead.

Looking back, I am sure you'll agree that our 2025 conference was one of the finest we've ever had. From elementary ensembles to collegiate groups, the performances showcased the remarkable teaching and musicianship happening every day in South Carolina classrooms. It was a powerful reminder of why we do what we do.

Now is the time to plan for our 2026 SCMEA Professional Development Conference, February 5–7, 2026, at the Columbia Convention Center. We have outstanding performing groups and sessions scheduled, and we are thrilled to welcome Grammy Award-winning educator, author, and saxophonist Mickey Smith Jr. His inspiring message will uplift all of us who serve students through music education.
As we begin this school year, I'm excited to share that all of our committee chairs are in place and ready to serve. The SCMEA thrives because of the many hands and hearts that dedicate themselves to our mission. I encourage you to stay engaged, invite new teachers to get involved, and help us continue building the future of music education in South Carolina.

If I can be of service to you in any way, please don't hesitate to reach out. And rest assured—I'll be reaching out to you as well. Through collaboration and shared commitment, we will achieve great things for music education in our state.

Thank you again for your dedication, and welcome to another exciting year with the SCMEA!

Musically yours,

Tom Finigan

Editor's Note

Dear readers,

I hope that your summer provided you with opportunities to rest and left you refreshed and ready to begin a new school year.

As always, it is the goal of the SC Musician to provide meaningful and insightful content for educators in all phases of their careers. In this edition of the SC Musician you will find articles that I hope will give you new ideas and perspective on technical and cultural topics that can be applied to your classroom.

If you have a topic you are passionate about or currently researching, please feel free to reach out and share your work as they could be articles that others would be interested in reading. If you are interested in submitting an article, please reach out to me at jake.henejs@scmea.net. Additionally, if you or a business in your area would like to advertise with the SC Musician, please reach out to me.

Thank you all for your continued support and engagement with our publication!

Jake Henjes, *SC Musician Editor*

HIGHER EDUCATION

Fellow Music Educators,

As we begin the 2024-2025 academic year, let us continue to highlight diversity in music education. This is a profession of which diversity may be practiced and observed. At all levels, teaching music provides opportunities for introducing and performing music of different styles that inherently offer content for learning. Among others, such music may include art music, jazz, country, gospel, rhythm and blues, blue grass, hip hop, and music from around the world. Teaching and performing music of all styles may also improve the chances of expanding students' cultural awareness. Regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, or gender, music is a venue through which ideologies, events, and principles are communicated. Music may be one of few venues by which diversity may be readily observed.

As you plan for this year's annual South Carolina Music Educators Association (SCMEA) Conference, plan to make note of repertoire you hear, presentations you attend, and workshops you attend that include components of diversity strategies.

I pray that you have a productive, successful year in continuing to make quality music education accessible to all students.

Rosetta Dingle, *President*

BAND

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 2025–2026 school year with SCBDA! I'm so grateful for the opportunity to connect with you again as we begin what I truly believe will be a year full of growth, creativity, and meaningful moments. I hope your summer gave you time to recharge, reflect, and reconnect with the things that bring you joy, both personally and professionally.

There's no denying that our field comes with its share of challenges. Education continues to evolve, and we're often asked to do more with less. But even in the midst of those demands, I see so much hope. We have the chance every single day to shape lives, build community, and help students discover what they're capable of, not just as musicians, but as people. That's powerful.

One of the things that makes this organization so special is how we support each other. We're not just colleagues, we're a team. Whether you've been doing this for decades or you're just getting started, your voice matters. You're making a difference. And when we stay connected, share ideas, and lift one another up, we all benefit.

As you head into this new year, I hope you'll give yourself the space to focus on what truly matters to you. Your core values, your passion for students, and your love for this art form are all part of what makes your work so impactful. Stay grounded in that. The influence you have, on and off the podium, goes far beyond what you may realize in the moment.

Please know that your SCBDA board is here for you. We're committed to leading with care, consistency, and a deep respect for the incredible work you do. Whatever this year brings, we're in it together.

I wish you a year filled with fresh inspiration, personal fulfillment, and moments that remind you why you chose this path. Thank you for the trust you've placed in us. It's a privilege to serve alongside such a dedicated and passionate group of educators.

Dr. Adam Sheuch, *President*

ORCHESTRA

It is with excitement and deep gratitude that I step into this new role as President of the SCMEA Orchestra Division. As I look ahead to the coming year, I'm filled with energy and optimism for the work we will do together and the music we will create and celebrate as a community.

My journey as a string musician began years ago in an elementary school in Pickens County, SC. The SCMEA opportunities I had throughout my school years shaped not only my musicianship but also my purpose. Those formative experiences led me to pursue music education at Anderson University, where I discovered my passion for teaching and mentoring the next generation of string students. Today, I'm fortunate to lead a strong orchestra program at Chesnee Middle School and Chesnee High School, filled with passionate young musicians.

This year promises to be full of meaningful events—from Region and All-State, to Concert Performance Assessment, Solo & Ensemble Festival (one of my personal favorites), and of course, our annual conference. I'm especially excited about what's in store for us at this year's conference. We are organizing sessions and performances that will inspire, challenge, and recharge us as educators and musicians.

I would also like to take a moment to thank Allison Key, whose leadership as our past president has left a lasting impact. Her dedication, vision, and tireless efforts have strengthened our organization in countless ways. It is my goal to continue the momentum she so skillfully built and to honor her legacy by moving us forward together.

On a personal note, I'm blessed to have a supportive family and a school community that continually inspires me. I've been honored with awards in teaching, but the real reward is seeing students grow—not only as musicians but as people.

Thank you for the work you do every day. I'm honored to walk this journey with you and can't wait for all that's ahead.

With appreciation,

Tammie Burrows, *President*

PIANO

Greetings, SC musicians! I hope this letter finds you rejuvenated from your summer endeavors and ready to infuse music into the lives of more young people entering your classrooms this fall. It is an exciting time in the Piano Division! We have quadrupled our festival participation since I was elected back in 2023. In 2024-2025, we also welcomed two new schools to our festival.

Spring Master Class Clinician, Dr. Eunjung Choi from Claflin University did an excellent job getting some technical and musical elements out of our featured students. The Spring Honors Recital directly followed and showcased many talented students from across the state at the Parkside Presbyterian Church on Saturday, May 17, 2025.

We hope to see our annual Piano Festival continue to grow in the coming years. This year we are re-launching the SCMEA Piano Division Virtual Festival. We invite all of our membership to participate, but specifically our Elementary Piano Programs. There's so much wonderful repertoire to explore at the rudimentary level, we encourage you to have your students play it and submit them to the Virtual Piano Festival to be eligible for performance in the LIVE Masterclass & Honors Recital.

This year, our Fall Piano Festival will be held on December 11th for the Upper State at Shandon Presbyterian Church in Columbia, SC, and on December 12th for the Lowcountry at James Island Charter High School in Charleston, SC. Our Fall Master Class clinician is Lin Harness, a Charleston Southern University Piano professor. The Fall Honors Recital will be at the 2026 SCMEA Conference.

Our mission in 2025-2026 is to continue connecting with as many Piano teachers and programs across the state as possible so they have all the support they need to thrive. We are constantly seeking out feedback and listening to what you have to say, so please do not hesitate to reach out.

If you're interested in learning more about the SCMEA Piano Division or sharing ideas with us, feel free to contact me at krissy.peters@scmea.net.

Krissy Peters, *President*

CHORAL

I am honored and humbled to move into the role of President of the Choral Division of the South Carolina Music Education Association for the next two years as we continue advancing the choral arts in South Carolina's schools and communities. I am humbled to work alongside such a passionate and talented community of music educators, students, and advocates for whom I have so much respect. Furthermore, as a product of South Carolina schools, it is an incredible honor to give back to the communities who have poured so much into me.

I would like to thank Past President Maurice Burgess for the job he has done during his presidency. Maurice's leadership has been exceptional, and we've made significant gains for choral music education in our state under his guidance. Attendance at our state conference has grown over this time and we have expanded offerings for teachers and students across the state. Additionally he has been, and continues to be, a source of wisdom and guidance for me over these past 2 years, and many years before that as well! I also want to express my gratitude to David Richardson and Lisa Pecarina for their invaluable advice and encouragement as I prepared to step into this role. We would also like to welcome our new President-Elect, Millie Shiflett. Millie has been a great leader in the choral community since coming to our state and I know that her passion for the choral arts will help move us forward in the coming years!

We are hard at work making plans for 2025-2026! We hope to see you at our Fall Choral Arts Seminar on September 5-6, 2025 where we will have workshops by Dr. Shannon Jeffreys from Georgia Southern University as well as other great opportunities to meet with other colleagues from across the state! We are also excited about our next conference February 5-7th, 2026 featuring our headliner Dr. Andrew Crane from Brigham Young University, engaging reading and interest sessions, and of course, amazing performances by choirs from across our state! Our committees are working hard to prepare for our upcoming events, and we can't wait to see you all and make great music together this school year. It takes many hands to keep the Choral Division running smoothly, and I invite each of you to be part of that collective effort. Please encourage new teachers in your area to get involved and help build the future of music education in our state.

As always, please check out choraldivision.org for the most up to date information about events across the state. If I can be of service to you in any way, please don't hesitate to reach out. It's through collaboration and shared commitment that we'll accomplish our goals for music education in South Carolina.

Thank you again for your dedication—and welcome to another exciting year with the South Carolina Music Educators Association.

William Bennett, *President*

ELEMENTARY

Welcome to the 2025-2026 School Year! I am both excited and honored to assume the role of your Elementary Division President. I wish to extend my gratitude to Seth Phillips for his dedicated service over the past two years. His exceptional leadership has set a high standard, and I recognize the challenge of stepping into such significant responsibilities. I would also like to congratulate Kristin Bence on her election as President-Elect. I am confident she will contribute greatly to our endeavors.

As we embark on this new year, I want to take a moment to inform you about recent developments within the division and highlight some important upcoming events.

2025 Fall Workshop: We held our Annual Fall Workshop and Business Meeting on September 6 at AC Moore Elementary School in Columbia, SC. Our guest clinician, Suzanne Logue from JW Pepper, conducted an engaging choral reading session tailored for elementary educators (K-5) encompassing warm-ups and valuable resources for classroom implementation. Additionally, we provided important information regarding the Elementary Honor Choir. Attendees were able to purchase the Honor Choir music packet. If you were not able to attend, I hope you will consider joining us next year.

Elementary Honor Choir: You should have received the Honor Choir Audition packet by now through email, which will enable you to begin preparations with your students. Please note that the submission period for the Honor Choir will open on September 8 and will close on October 3. Remember that you must be an active SCMEA member to have students audition. Honor Choir rosters will be sent out no later than November 1, and the registration deadline is December 3.

Wishing you a successful academic year enriched with music, joy, and exciting experiences! Should you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

Musically,

Ginny Capps, *President*

GUITAR

Friends and Colleagues! What a privilege to write and tell you of all the Guitar happenings in SC. It has been such an encouraging year watching our Division take shape. In February we added some amazing people to our team. Ian Grimshaw, from Academic Magnet in Charleston, Dr. Isaac Greene from Bob Jones University, Dr. Brett Floyd Charleston Southern, Dr. Christi Pickle, and McKenzie Cochran from River Bluff High School. It is such a privilege to work with such caring professionals. This team helped pull off another awesome event in May that we call Guitarfest. With so many hands on deck we are now able to pull off better and better events each year!

Professional development remains a huge priority in our growing efforts to expand opportunities for Guitar students. This summer, the team at Austin Classical Guitar (ACG) graced us again with an awesome training that was totally free thanks to a grant written by USC student Michael Bunny. Since 2014, ACG has lead the way in guitar education, community development, and advocacy both in the US and Internationally. We were so fortunate to have them here again in the great state of South Carolina. Over the course of three days ACG trained approximately forty guitar teachers from across the state and a few across the country. We got to know so many great guitar teachers who are in our backyards and districts. Those who participated in the training will form the Directors Ensemble and perform this year at the conference!

On November 9th we will hold our annual All State Auditions at Dreher High School. Get your students ready early. All excerpts and updates can be found on the Guitar Division web page via scmea.net. All State Guitar Ensemble performs at Guitarfest on May 3rd, 2025 at River Bluff High School.

The SCMEA Conference 2025 is a going to be awesome! We are blessed to have Phil Swasey from ACG bring us his wisdom on building and sustaining your guitar ensemble. Grammy Nominated Mak Grgic from UofSC will also be there showing us his new video game that teaches notational literacy on the guitar. There will be a Reading Session and don't forget the Directors Ensemble!

I am humbled and privileged to be a part of the path ahead. We are continuing to investigate more opportunities for guitar students to thrive in and out of the classroom and grow as musicians. Thank you for coming along side us!

Benjamin Broughton, President

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Reconceptualizing Classroom Management in the Ensemble: Considering Culture, Communication, and Community

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Lisa D. Martin | Ohio University

What behaviors do we expect from our students, and why? In the traditional ensemble ideal, students are attentive, focused, quiet, still, and ready for direction. Those deviating from such norms may be seen as disruptive, disrespectful, or otherwise disengaged—but why do we cast such labels on these students? How might classroom misunderstandings cause harm? In what ways might our behavioral expectations stand at odds with student needs?

In education, classroom management is commonly understood as the structures and procedures that establish and reinforce an emotionally healthy, academically productive learning environment.[1] Classroom management includes both proactive and reactive elements. Proactive procedures center on preemptive actions in the classroom that are designed to shape student attitudes and behavior in a manner that supports attaining various goals. Reactive measures focus on consequences, which occur when established expectations are not met.

Presumably, a successfully managed classroom correlates with student engagement, of which there are three main categories: (1) behavioral engagement, which references overall attention and participation; (2) emotional or affective engagement, which captures motivation, enjoyment, and interpersonal connection with others in the classroom; and (3) cognitive engagement, which refers to students' concentration, interest, and investment in the content.[2] Oftentimes, when teachers imagine a well-managed classroom, they prioritize behavioral engagement. Though it is convenient to assume a well-behaved student is also a cognitively and affectively engaged student, there is not always a direct relationship. Furthermore, prioritizing behavioral engagement over emotional engagement may send a message to students that it is more important how you are and what you do in the classroom than who you are as an individual. This approach can have an adverse effect on interpersonal relationships in the classroom. Emphasizing behavioral expectations can create problems when norms reflect power structures and reinforce biases that target and devalue individuals.

In this article, I briefly explore common challenges associated with classroom management in traditional, autocratic ensemble classroom models. I then unpack the layered circumstances surrounding classroom cultural norms related to behavioral expectations and disciplinary consequences. Finally, I offer a model of classroom management that supports what behavioral and parenting author Alfie Kohn describes as classroom community over classroom compliance.[3] Through this approach, I encourage teachers to reexamine their attitudes toward shaping classroom environment, moving away from power and biases and toward democracy, mutual regard, and safe spaces in the large ensemble.

"Managing" Classroom Behavior

Researchers have determined that classroom management is a primary area of concern for music teachers. These concerns span various career stages, from preservice to veteran music educators, and classroom-related discipline stressors are a leading reason for teacher burnout and turnover.[4] As such, numerous scholars have developed recommendations for classroom management in the music setting.[5]

Classroom management can be especially challenging for ensemble directors for a variety of reasons. For example, ensembles typically boast a higher student-to-teacher ratio, and ensemble physical setup can further limit opportunities for teacher–student interactions. Because ensembles are commonly offered as electives, contact time with students may be less consistent, which can present additional challenges to establishing routines and expectations. Moreover, music educators must demonstrate leadership and interpersonal skills across a range of student developmental stages, all while exhibiting content knowledge from a variety of music disciplines. This charge requires chameleon-like adaptivity within various classroom situations. Finally—particularly in performance-driven, large ensemble settings—music teachers must negotiate an environment where students are uniformly, actively engaged

with a single, collaborative task. This circumstance stands at odds with how student learning and engagement typically transpire in other classroom contexts.

To mitigate these challenges, ensemble directors adopt various principles and practices to facilitate some level of order in the classroom. These practices, however, are rarely culturally neutral, and they often illustrate issues of power. While certain routines can help set the stage for learning, teachers must critically examine these routines, their origins, and their related contexts, so as to establish a classroom environment that honors learners' varying needs and backgrounds. In doing so, teachers must also reflect on their position and influence in the classroom and in society at large.[6]

Power, Discipline, and Conflict

There are inherent issues with traditional conceptualizations of classroom management. Kohn suggests many believe the ultimate purpose of classroom management is to ensure student compliance. To achieve that goal, teachers work to "alter those [behaviors] that they, for whatever reason, deem inappropriate."[7] In other words, traditional models of classroom management are built on principles of control and conformity. Kohn goes on to point out that teachers are privileged: whatever expectations they establish for student behavior are often unquestionably perceived as "for the children's own good."[8] The resultant power structure can have unintended consequences for both students and teachers.

Issues between power and behavioral expectations exist in all classroom contexts. However, these challenges are amplified in diverse classrooms. Education scholars Carol Weinstein, Saundra Tomlinson-Clarke, and Mary Curran point out that "definitions and expectations of appropriate behavior are culturally influenced, and conflicts are likely to occur when teachers and students come from different cultural backgrounds" from one another.[9] Most P-12 music teachers are white.[10] Consequentially—and problematically—school music institutional expectations tend to reflect white, middle-class cultural norms.[11] Indeed, the fundamental issue is the ubiquity of these norms. As student populations become increasingly diverse, the effects of institutionalized bias become more apparent.[12] Students exhibiting language patterns, nonverbal communication, and other behaviors that fall (1) outside established institutional norms or (2) outside their teacher's own embodied cultural conventions can result in a discontinuity that urban education scholar Jacqueline Irvine describes as a "lack of cultural synchronization."[13] This disparity can beget several consequences, including disconnection between teachers and students, miscommunication, alienation, and poor student performance in the classroom. Challenges with cultural synchronization can also reveal deficit-based attitudes, which further complicate classroom climate.[14]

Ultimately, a lack of cultural synchronization sets the stage for a discipline gap, which references the documented, disproportional punitive actions taken against students with diverse backgrounds. The discipline gap includes both selection and sanction: selection refers to who is pinpointed as needing disciplinary action, while sanction refers to what consequence ensues. This disproportionately affects students according to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and disability,[15] rendering disciplinary inequities inevitable in nearly every classroom context. Males, regardless of race or ethnicity, experience more disciplinary consequences.[16] Discipline also disproportionality particularly affects black students, who experience more office referrals, suspensions, and expulsions than do their white peers, even when controlling for other factors. These penalties negatively affect students' investment in school, emotional health, and academic success, casting light on the concurrent achievement gap that exists between minorities and their white peers.[17]

In the large-ensemble setting, issues of power and disciplinary conflict can be amplified for a number of reasons. First, the very terms conductor and director are defined as "a person who is in charge." This authority manifests in most aspects of the rehearsal, rendering it an ever-present, seemingly essential aspect of the tradition—the conductor's power to choose the curriculum, the power to make final musical interpretation decisions, and the power to demand attention while on the podium, to name just a few. In instances of disciplinary conflict, power is magnified. Teacher–student interactions are often showcased on a platform where the rest of the ensemble serves as a captive audience. Imagine a student disengages from rehearsal in a manner that disrupts or distracts others. When the teacher pauses instruction to redirect this student, the interaction is on display for the entire ensemble. This platform can elevate adrenaline in both the teacher and the student, escalating tension. Such conflicts can feel especially tense in instances where there is a cultural

mismatch between the backgrounds of the teacher and student.[18]

Interpersonal conflicts are often at the heart of most classroom management issues.[19] Typically, these challenges are minor in nature, such as students talking out of turn, raising their voices, socializing, or arguing,[20] but these behaviors represent relational styles that can be mislabeled as infractions, and unjust punishment often follows.[21] Because our backgrounds inform our relational style, pluralistic classrooms may sustain more perceived disciplinary issues than homogeneous classrooms.[22] This reality heightens the need to unpack traditions associated with behavioral expectations in the large ensemble. Ultimately, because "conceptions of what constitutes orderliness vary across situations,"[23] there is no one-size-fits-all approach to classroom management. However, there are steps ensemble directors can take toward acknowledging power and unpacking bias. By questioning routines and considering alternatives, classrooms can evolve from a space of conformity and control to one centered on collaboration and community.

Shifting Perspectives

As music education scholar Amanda Soto affirms, "Educators must understand and acknowledge their position of power in order to be able to change the dynamics in their classroom."[24] Indeed, many music educators have made efforts to address power in relationship to curriculum, instruction, and interpersonal relationships through culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP).[25] Weinstein and her colleagues assert the need for teachers to adopt related principles specifically within the context of classroom management. Doing so considers elements of CRP alongside principles of social-emotional learning, multicultural counseling, and care, emphasizing relationship building, community, and collaboration over approaches that underscore behaviors alone.[26] The goal, the authors continue, is to create an environment where community members conduct themselves in a manner that reflects a sense of personal responsibility, rather than acting out of fear or a need for control. Applying these perspectives toward reimagining behavioral expectations, Weinstein and colleagues recommend the following foundational tasks.

Recognize and acknowledge your background and biases

When teachers honestly examine their past experiences and biases, they are "less likely to misinterpret the behaviors of… culturally different students and treat them inequitably."[27] Past experiences can include both personal and professional circumstances. Teachers must consider the confluence of these experiences to fully unpack the influence on their perspectives. For example, my own experiences as a K–12 student in a white, middle-class community informed what I believed to be "correct" behavior in the ensemble setting. Because I am white and from a middle-class background, my relational style complemented classroom expectations. Years later, as a young teacher, I learned that what worked with students at my first position did not necessarily transfer to the classroom in my second position, and in neither case did classroom realities align with my preconceptions about "correct" behavior.

Understand students' cultural backgrounds

Learning about students' cultural backgrounds is an essential step in developing culturally conscious approach to classroom environment expectations. Education scholars Rosa Sheets and Geneva Gay assert the particular importance of understanding sanctioned behaviors among different cultural groups. These authors also advocate for exploring students' unique "value orientations, standards for achievements, social taboos, relational patterns, communication styles, motivational systems, and learning styles."[28] As an example, in one teaching position, I once pressed a student to maintain eye contact with me during a conversation about her behavior. I later learned that in her culture, it was considered disrespectful to maintain eye contact with an adult in a disciplinary situation. Having an improved understanding of students' cultural backgrounds can help teachers avoid rebuking students for culturally instinctive actions.[29] Ultimately, teachers must honestly examine how they treat students. Weinstein and colleagues suggest asking questions such as "Are we more patient and encouraging with some? Are we more likely to chastise others?"[30] Owning these answers, and the "why" behind them, can help teachers move toward transparency and equity the classroom.

Investigate social, economic, educational, and political contexts

In addition to examining our personal biases and student backgrounds, Weinstein and her colleagues note that it is important to explore larger systemic prejudices and discriminatory practices in society. Doing so helps teachers better understand student privilege and marginalization and how those relate to classroom dynamics. In partic-

ular, teachers should examine how institutionalized oppression can manifest in their own classroom. Sometimes these issues fall very close to home. Even school building protocols and immediate community expectations can impede teachers' autonomy in addressing classroom challenges and their efforts to build interpersonal relationships.[31] Directives on how to handle certain behavioral challenges, for example, might force teachers into processes that stand at odds with culturally responsive classroom management practices. From another angle, community pressure to perform at a certain level amid limited rehearsal time might drive ensemble directors toward more autocratic models of classroom management. Because ensembles are typically elective classes, directors might even lean into autocracy, embracing the ideology that "if you don't like how it's done here, you can leave." This approach can have profound effects on students' relationship with their teacher and musicking as a whole.

Teachers must first identify and acknowledge these issues to initiate change. Balancing personal philosophies with outside expectations is delicate work. When faced with expectations that stand at odds with your own perspectives, strive to pinpoint areas or principles of common ground. For example, perhaps both you and your school administration believe that certain behaviors should always be met with some type of consequence. However, in an effort to build a positive classroom climate, you might opt for restorative approaches over punitive options. In other words, rather than punish a student, you and the student can work cooperatively and with empathy to explore the effects of that behavior on classroom community and relationships so as to stimulate positive change in the future.

Willingly adopt culturally informed perspectives and strategies

Teachers must be open to implementing approaches that effect change in the classroom. This might mean abandoning what is considered to be "common practice." For example, questioning establishment approaches to classroom management can help teachers identify disparities in cultural synchronization between espoused behavioral expectations and student background.[32] In the large ensemble, this might mean reevaluating students' traditionally passive role and instead opting toward more democratic, student-driven practices.

One approach for incorporating more culturally informed classroom management strategies is known as mutual accommodation, that is, finding the sweet spot between where teachers accommodate students' backgrounds and students adapt to their environment, working together toward a common goal.[33] Typically, accommodation is expected only from the students, contributing to a deficit perspective that demands the disenfranchised assimilate to community norms. Mutual accommodation, in contrast, promotes collaboration between the teachers and students, whereby the community builds upon their assets and dispositions in a manner that creates democracy and stronger interpersonal relationships.

Build compassionate communities

At the heart of compassionate classroom communities is the perception of mutual care.[34] The dynamic interactions between teachers, students, and classroom context highlight an opportunity to examine and prioritize relationships ahead of rigor.[35] Recent initiatives in music education centered on social-emotional learning reflect a renewed focus on the importance of relationship building in the classroom.[36] To move toward culturally responsive approaches to classroom management and compassionate classroom communities, ensemble directors and their students might consider the following questions, exploring their collective relationship to the classroom context together:

- What are our classroom rules? Why these rules?
- Whom do these rules serve? Whom do they oppress?[37]
- What implicit expectations in our classroom can be made explicit?[38] How can we decode the classroom experience?
- When do we expect students to adapt and accommodate? In what ways might the teacher adapt and accommodate?

Curiosity versus Control

The process toward cultivating a culturally responsive approach classroom management is a multifaceted marathon; change will not happen overnight. However, it is possible to implement small changes from the get-go. Those changes begin with embracing a sense of curiosity about the classroom rather than forcing control over student behavior.

Music education researcher Steven Morrison discusses how "discovering the motivation behind a student's actions" is a fundamental step in building relationships and establishing an effective classroom environment.[39] For example, if a student is not actively engaged in ensemble musicking, understanding the "why" behind that nonpar-

ticipation helps the teacher develop an appropriate plan of action. Perhaps the student is disengaged because he or she is overwhelmed by the content or task. Knowing this, the teacher can provide a differentiated approach that makes the information or skill more accessible or relatable.

Discovering the "why" behind various classroom environment challenges and events can highlight opportunities to create meaningful, lasting change in a manner that favors thoughtful reframing over discipline, consequences, and related manifestations of power structures. When experiencing challenges in the classroom, it is natural to feel frustrated. However, sometimes feelings of frustration can trigger reactive responses that do not allow for full consideration of the range of nuance embedded in a given circumstance. This frustration often translates to hastily shutting down a situation with a "because I said so"–type rationale or even blaming students.[40] Instead, teachers might explore the following questions, approaching the ensemble environment with curiosity rather than control:

1.How does the situation appear? What do you notice about what is happening? When describing the situation, be as objective as possible, removing judgment, generalizations, and emotion from your description. In other words, the judgment-laden, absolutist statement, "The class is being disrespectful," becomes "A few students are talking while I'm giving instruction." The former statement triggers powerful emotions, while the latter statement provides a cleaner canvas for curiosity and change.

2.What is/could be the reality of/reason behind the situation? Why is this happening? Our initial impressions are shaped by biases, past experiences, mood, and other factors. If we approach challenges with a sense of wonderment about what is happening, rather than tapping into assumptions, we gain a richer understanding of our students, our classroom, and our school community. In the same scenario, a teacher might wonder, "Is there something going on in our school community or in the students' social circle that has captured their attention? Is this perhaps the only class these students have with their friends, therefore their only opportunity to connect during the school day?" Another approach could be to look inward, with teachers asking themselves what they may have done to contribute to the circumstance.[41] Ask yourself, "Did I clearly communicate the task at hand? Did I make important instructional information adequately visible/audible/relatable?" Consider various angles and possibilities in your investigation.

3.Why does this situation stand out? Is it important to address the situation, and if so, when? How is the situation impacting student engagement, learning, safety, or well-being? Our classrooms are dynamic communities with complex people and infinite interactions. Though teachers work toward consistency in the classroom, it is impossible to attend to every event. By pausing to consider why a particular instance draws attention or concern, teachers can begin to step away from a subconscious need to control everything and instead work toward addressing what is necessary.[42] In doing so, teacher authority moves from a power-focused position to a place of prioritized, positive leadership.

4.How can students and I work together to build a relationship that effects and maintains positive change moving forward? As mentioned earlier, classroom management includes both proactive and reactive elements. Kohn notes that in well-managed classrooms, reactive elements (e.g., discipline) are seldom evident when effective proactive efforts are in place.[43] Considering the same example, the teacher might notice the disengaged students, and instead of calling those students out in front of the rest of the class—which can lead to shame, embarrassment, or a defensive response (and consequently, a breakdown of the interpersonal relationship between teacher and student)—the teacher could instead make a note to check in with the students in a quiet space after class, creating an opportunity to generate deeper understanding. In the meantime, the teacher can offer the group a redirect that reinforces a sense of community and gives students space to self-direct reengagement: "Let's try this at measure 10, shall we? We are going to need everyone in on this!" Such an approach circumvents an unnecessary demonstration of power while supporting diversity and multicultural experts Sandra Nieto and Patty Bode's concept of mutual accommodation in the classroom.

Although this reflective practice can be useful, it is impractical to engage in each of the aforementioned steps every time a challenge arises in the classroom. Teachers

might find it more workable to first identify patterns of behavior across time—both their own behaviors and those of their students—and then engage in a deeper reflection on repeated events. In identifying these patterns, teachers might consider video-recording ensemble activities or surveying students on their perspectives. For day-to-day challenges, embracing curiosity over reactivity can be a critical attitudinal shift. Furthermore, it can be valuable practice to assume students are coming from a place of positive intention with their actions. Chatty students might really need that social connection with each other in a given moment; their disengagement from rehearsal does not necessarily reflect apathy or intentional defiance. Classrooms are places where a range of student needs should be met, and welcoming that charge is foundational to establishing positive, reciprocal relationships.[44]

Moving Forward

Classroom contexts are deeply complex. Establishing a healthy learning environment in the face of these complexities is heavy, messy, and nuanced work. Effective ensemble communities are built through persistent connection, communication, and compassion. In a field that often emphasizes passive behavioral expectations, ensemble directors must determine the ways in which their classrooms build community or stipulate compliance, so as to move toward a more just and supportive environment. By honestly naming our biases, understanding student backgrounds, acknowledging systemic barriers, and embracing curiosity, teachers can reevaluate traditional approaches to classroom management, setting the stage for improved interpersonal relationships and mutual regard.

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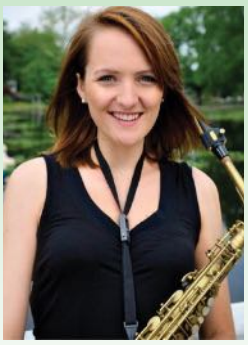
Backward Design and Repertoire Selection: Finding Full Expression



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Jocelyn W. Gallagher

The repertoire you select for your ensembles can promote students' lifelong engagement in music when deliberately aligned to broader curricular goals.

> The art of yoga lies in how well you play your edges, how delicately you flirt with your limitations, how well you lure yourself deeper into the postures, how sensitively you balance the desire to achieve results with the relaxation of nondesire and surrender, and how thoroughly you immerse yourself in the process and enjoy what you are doing.[1]

At first glance, yoga and music education may appear to have little in common. Yet, both share a rich history of competing visions and values that are translated into instruction. Both use curricular frameworks and a specific repertoire to achieve their goals. Most important, both music education and yoga aspire to enrich the lives of students through lifelong engagement. After nearly ten years of practicing both, these parallels gradually emerged in my mind. For example, in the quote that opens this article, Erich Schiffmann, a highly regarded American yoga master, alludes to enduring educational theories such as psychologist Lev Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development and psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's flow theory, which posit that learning occurs and is fulfilling when students face challenge with an equal measure of skill. I experienced this phenomenon firsthand when I began practicing yoga, hopeful that mindful exercise would counter the all-consuming nature of being the sole music teacher in a large, rural high school. Initially, I enjoyed the challenge and the mental clarity I felt after each class. Over time, I learned of dozens of poses and gradually shifted my focus from technical mastery to the external events in the room. I noticed the artful way that instructors worked toward a "peak pose" by building cumulatively on sequences. The best instructors appeared to create sequences by beginning with the peak pose and building the sequences backward. When I discovered this, I considered how I might use this design strategy in my own teaching practice and how selecting repertoire that "played the edge" of technical or artistic challenge might help students reach their own peak pose as musicians. This strategy is hardly novel to my own thinking. It is the curricular design method by education scholars Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe known in general education as backward design.[2] Backward design is a method for designing curriculum that begins with the instructor selecting a learning objective and creating instruction toward attainment of the objective. Using yoga practice as an extended metaphor, I explore current practices and demonstrate how backward design provides music educators of ensembles with a coherent framework for aligning repertoire to curricular goals.

Instructional Design Practices

> Keep in mind that the poses are not destinations, nor are they strange contortions to force yourself into for some esoteric purpose. Immersing yourself in the process is the important thing. That's what's interesting, not the achievement of elaborate postures.[3]

At the root of any practice is a philosophical orientation. Yoga is the physical expression of a set of philosophical goals expressed by performing poses in rhythm with breath. The poses, or asanas, do not exist for their own sake. While they may be objectively beneficial to practice, their value is achieved by linking them thoughtfully to one another. The practitioner achieves "full expression," or a peak experience, when there are no barriers between technical understanding and executing the poses. The process of teaching ensembles is similarly guided by a philosophical orientation. Music educators often profess that lifelong engagement with music is one of the most

important outcomes of a music education. If this outcome is central to the profession's philosophical orientation, then the curricular choices and actions that follow should align. These curricular choices, like the poses in yoga, are the manifest expressions of philosophical values. Repertoire selection is arguably the process central to curricular design in musical ensembles and an example of one of the most frequent curricular choices music educators make. Yet, there are competing methodologies for repertoire selection, many of which are not fundamentally aligned to an outcome of lifelong engagement in music.

Music educators have sustained a robust discussion of the importance of selecting high-quality repertoire, starting with the 2000 article by University of Southern California wind ensemble conductor H. Robert Reynolds, "Repertoire Is the Curriculum."[4] As the title suggests, Reynolds argued that "the music you choose becomes, in large part, the curriculum that you and your students follow toward a sound music education."[5] Reynolds suggested using state lists as a way to find literature, creating a list of previously played literature, and using networking opportunities to source quality literature. Core to his argument was his belief that "[if] a music education means much more than the improvement of technical skills, then the quality of the music played will be essential to the education of your students."[6] Other authors subsequently explored standards for discerning if repertoire is of high quality,[7] argued for repertoire's moral imperative as the center of curriculum,[8] advocated for repertoire and standards-based curriculum,[9] and noted connections between learning and motivational theory and repertoire selection.[10] This literature-centered approach to curriculum design is also prominently featured in online professional forums such as the Band Director's Group, where educators ask peers for repertoire recommendations daily.

This eclectic mixture of arguments contains competing philosophical values and fails to clearly define what "high-quality" music is; subjective descriptors such as technical difficulty, musicality, expressiveness, or aesthetic value are often used to approximate quality. These arguments begin from the premise that the repertoire should define the learning outcome rather than the learning outcome defining the repertoire. This becomes a challenge when devising instructional goals. Instructional goals are often stated as readily observable and measurable phenomena, often reading as "students will know how to . . . " or "students will understand . . . " But, what does it really mean to say students will know or understand something? The distinction between knowing and understanding is the essence of instructional design. To know something is to hold a collection of facts or skills, but to understand it is to see how it functions in relation to other things or apply it in novel contexts. How can instructors determine that students know or understand music through repertoire? Perhaps one answer is to select repertoire that fits within a larger plan of curricular design.

Backward Design

> Where you are in the pose will vary each time you practice. The idea is to start calmly wherever you are and progressively work toward deeper movements by practicing the intermediary steps that lead you to the final pose.[11]

Backward design is a method for designing curriculum described by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe in their general education textbook Understanding by Design. Backward design is hardly a novel concept in general education circles but marks a paradigm shift for thinking about curriculum in music education. Rather than devising activities or selecting materials as ends in themselves, backward design requires the instructor to set an intention for learning and build curriculum that meets those goals. The sequences of poses selected in a yoga class are an example of backward design. The instructor selects a goal, such as increasing balance in standing poses, and then constructs a sequence toward a peak pose. In the context of a music classroom, the instructor selects an instructional goal, determines what constitutes evidence of mastery, and then selects materials and activities that align to the instructional goal.

Music ensemble instructors should find backward design a natural fit for curriculum planning and repertoire selection. Whereas music educators have traditionally used repertoire to define the learning outcome, backward design uses the learning outcome to define the repertoire. Wiggins and McTighe argued that the traditional, literature-centered approach to curriculum design promotes "hands on" but not "minds on" learning because the approach "lack[s] an explicit focus on important ideas and appropriate evidence of learning, especially in the minds of the learners."[12] Backward design allows the instructor to focus simultaneously on short- and long-term learning goals. Short-term learning goals can be shared and accomplished in the span of a lesson and embedded in

the long-term context of a unit. This alignment continually reinforces the learning goal. Furthermore, asking students to reflect on their learning in relation to a concrete goal through the repertoire empowers students to be accountable for their learning and engagement. Wiggins and McTighe suggested this focused approach to designing curriculum does not leave learning to chance or talent as a coverage-based approach to curriculum may.

Backward design does not reduce the quality or importance of repertoire in the curriculum; it renders repertoire a powerful tool because backward design focuses the educator's attention on selecting the most relevant and appropriate repertoire for achieving learning outcomes. A music education is more than the acquisition and refinement of technical skills. High-quality music in the service of purposeful instruction allows the experience of music learning to transcend mere skill acquisition. Backward design aligns philosophical and instructional goals and allows music instructors to select quality repertoire and materials as means to an end. Like the poses used in a yoga practice, the repertoire is a tool used to achieve a broader aim and is not as valuable to the learner when elevated above or disconnected from the learning context.

Starting a New Practice

The most difficult part of any practice is the beginning. Committing to a yoga practice requires the diligence to attend regularly, submit to the poses and breath, and give the process sufficient time to work. The goal of yoga is not to master individual postures but for the practitioner to transfer his or her personal understanding of postures to disciplined and mindful movements.

This example holds true in music education. Following a fourteen-year longitudinal study of children's engagement in music, McPherson cautioned that "skills can only continue to beget skills when they are valued for their deeply personal significance by the owner."[13] A product-centered curriculum is ultimately demotivating because students are led to believe that technique is an end in itself rather than a means to a musical end; consequently, students lose interest in school music.[14] When students acquire technical proficiency in a piecemeal fashion, the opportunity for transferable understanding is lost. Students become dependent on the instructor to continually reteach skills in subsequent repertoire or find other ways to be stimulated in the classroom. A product-oriented model of curriculum design may leave learning to chance or natural disposition.[15] This is not to say that technical mastery is at odds with transferable understanding or artistic expression. Just as in a yoga practice, a basic level of proficiency is required to access the value of the poses. Backward design facilitates technical and artistic development through musical repertoire selected for alignment to specific learning outcomes. Such alignment provides students with opportunities to reflect about their learning.

Applying backward design to repertoire selection does not require reinvention but merely a shift in thinking about curriculum and repertoire. Figure 1 outlines four steps to implementing backward design as a method for repertoire selection. These steps are adapted from Wiggins and McTighe's three steps and account for the diversity of musical backgrounds and experiences that students bring to ensemble classrooms. Ideally, a music educator should undertake these steps prior to designing each curricular unit. These four steps are discussed in greater detail in the following.

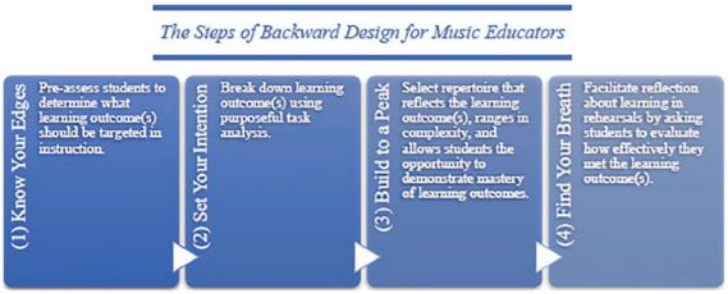

Figure 1 The Steps of Backward Design for Music Educators

Know Your Edges

As Schiffmann alluded to in the opening quote, yoga plays the edge between comfort and discomfort or old understanding versus new learning. This metaphor is analogous to Vygotsky's zone of proximal development.[16] A novice yoga practitioner is comparatively advantaged to a novice student musician. For the student musician, all things are new, difficult, and must be approached with attention to fundamental form. For music educators, this creates a challenge. Student musicians bring varying levels of experience in music and varying levels of interest. It is not sufficient to assess students only at the ensemble level because their individual contributions are obscured. It is critical to know where each student's edge is before selecting repertoire. Instructors cannot create sufficiently detailed instructional goals without knowing what stu-

dents already know; therefore, assessment is a critical component of backward design. It is not enough to say, "Students will be able to sing expressively," or "Students will be able to articulate staccato passages." These are well-intentioned goals, but they do not convey the means (breath support, arch of the tongue, proper posture) or degree (dynamic range, tone color, tempo) required to reach the instructional goal. Preassessments can begin with a generalized goal but should aim to refine understanding of the skills and knowledge students already possess and will need to develop through the learning process.

Preassessing students may be difficult when dealing with new student groups as many ensemble directors may attest, or when faced with extremely large ensembles. While not always feasible, it is advisable to consult students' prior instructors or devise novel ways of presenting a broad range of repertoire and narrowing in on what the most important learning outcomes should become. For example, when dealing with student musicians new to a music program (e.g., sixth- and ninth-grade music students), devote time in warm-ups, technical studies, and repertoire to sight-reading a variety of leveled materials and select a unifying goal as the focus of each session. The focus of one learning cycle may be devoted to determining the rhythm-reading abilities of the ensemble, and the materials selected should focus on a variety of skill levels with rhythm. By stating the focus to the students, selecting a variety of materials that attend to assessing rhythmic ability, and using assessment strategies between student groups (e.g., "Altos, how well did the tenors perform the rhythm at measure seventeen?"), the instructor can efficiently evaluate the ensemble and form preliminary goals for instruction. It is critical that students know what the purpose of instruction is—that is, why they are performing the task—and that the materials used to assess students are aligned to the stated goal.

Set Your Intention

At the beginning of a yoga class, instructors frequently share their goals for the practice and ask students to set a personal intention for the class. The purpose of setting an intention is to break down tasks and devise means to attaining them. In backward design, this is called purposeful task analysis. Once preassessments are completed,

purposeful task analysis of the learning goals will allow instructors to devise specific and relevant learning outcomes and assessments. These outcomes are skill-based, not repertoire- or product-based. For example, if preassessments revealed that students lack understanding of various articulations, an instructor using purposeful task analysis could break down "improve articulation" into components such as attack, decay, sustain, and release at various dynamic ranges and tempi. These goals are more conducive to transferrable understanding than "students will be able to articulate the eighth notes in this passage at quarter note = 120" because at the end of instruction, students should be able to transfer understanding of articulation to multiple contexts. If the instructional goal is to develop students' palate of articulations, then the selected repertoire must be aligned to this goal, provide a variety of contexts in order to be transferable, and be communicated to students as a purpose of instruction throughout the learning cycle.

Build to a Peak

Most yoga practices build to a peak pose. All of the preceding postures are meant to prepare the body for the peak pose and transition in incremental levels of difficulty or intensity. In this way, poses are like the repertoire. The instructor must select repertoire that reflects the instructional goals of the class rather than selecting repertoire to dictate the goals. If the objective is to improve a freshman choir's ability to sing music based on pentatonic scales with accurate intonation, the repertoire and supplemental materials (e.g., warming up on pentatonic scales and solfège, selecting folk songs from various traditions) should challenge students to work on and improve their intervals, audiation, tonal awareness, use of solfège, and melodic line, perhaps while keeping homophonic harmonic and technical considerations at a more basic or previously mastered level.

Alternatively, the repertoire might also reflect a range of complexity that allows all students the opportunity to meet the instructional goal, not simply the principal players or stereotypically melodic voices. Repertoire difficulty is highly contextual depending on the learning objective, and ratings systems do not always accurately reflect the difficulty of a composition. Familiarize yourself with the various rating systems publishers and vendors use and use them as guidelines rather than hard-and-fast evaluations of the difficulty and complexity of music. The best rater of music difficulty is the educator who has done the legwork of assessing students. In this sense, beyond artistic or aesthetic merit, the value and quality of the music becomes apparent because of the instructional goal it meets. Connections to the instructional goal can be made across the repertoire chosen for a single concert unit or multiple units; a single piece of repertoire need not address every conceivable instructional goal derived from backward curricular design at a single point in time, no more than a single piece of literature would be expected to do so in an English class.

Find Your Breath

The most challenging habit to cultivate in yoga is breathing. At first, this sounds counterintuitive; breathing is an obvious prerequisite to all activity. A beginning yoga practitioner must focus on connecting the breath to the poses and transitions, requiring tremendous conscious effort to regulate the length and intensity of inhales and exhales. Over time, this way of breathing becomes associated with the poses and is no longer a conscious effort. This frees the practitioner to think about how each pose feels in the moment, how the following poses should occur, or why the poses are building toward the set intention. This seemingly complex but effortless habit—thinking about thinking—allows the practitioner to develop personal associations with breath, the poses, and how both feel in his or her body. In a music rehearsal, conditioning students to think about their personal contribution to the stated goal in the context of the repertoire places an active, measurable responsibility on them. This is why selecting repertoire that aligns to the learning outcome is critical. Any additional challenges, whether technical or artistic, obscure the alignment of the repertoire to the instructional goal.

For example, if developing lyrical expression is the learning objective for an eighth-grade band ensemble, both Shaker Variants by Elliot Del Borgo and Ammerland by Jacob de Haan appear to be comparable selections. Both compositions are well crafted and lyrical, develop the central theme in smaller chamber groups throughout the ensemble before presenting the melody in a modulated key with grandiose tutti instrumentation, and are rated 2 or 2.5, depending on the publisher. However, students would be considerably more challenged by the de Haan composition, which modulates from C minor to C major and features fairly independent euphonium and French

horn lines. These features could pose a potential instructional barrier to achieving the learning objective because focus would shift to learning unfamiliar keys or technical passages in instruments that usually double other sections. Thus, the more appropriate repertoire choice of the two would be the Del Borgo because it more closely aligns with the objective. This alignment minimizes impediments to the objective and allows students to develop a relationship to the music. Cultivating this disposition is one of the most important goals for all learning because it allows students to become independent musicians.

Find Full Expression

In a yoga practice, an instructor may ask students to find "full expression" in a pose. Full expression is yogic shorthand for kinesthetic understanding of how a pose feels. If a music educator asked the students in their ensemble to find full expression, the analog experience would be understanding the technical demands of their respective parts, how the parts fit together as a whole, and executing them fluently. Selecting the poses is part of the curriculum design process for yoga. Selecting repertoire is part of the curriculum design process for music educators.

To lead students to full expression, music educators should approach repertoire selection with the same intention as yoga instructors. An additional benefit of the backward design approach is that the benefits are cumulative and transferable over time. Over time, a yoga practitioner acquires gradual mastery and ease in poses when they are thoughtfully presented. While a first-time yogi might attempt a challenging pose, and certainly should not be dissuaded from aspiring to or playfully engaging in challenging poses, it is more meaningful to learn poses as part of a broader sequence that scaffolds the most informed expression of each pose. The same is true for selecting repertoire in a music curriculum; when intentionally conceived as a component of curriculum design, repertoire has a positive, cumulative effect on student musicianship over time. Furthermore, using backward design allows instructors to conceive of broader curricular goals, which Wiggins and McTighe suggested can be stated as essential questions or enduring understandings, and align units and lessons to them. While any one piece of repertoire may have objective artistic merit, learning and performing repertoire is most meaningful when the repertoire is aligned to an appropriate learning outcome.

Backward design allows music educators to create curriculum that matches the individual and contextual needs of their ensembles. In a yoga class, it is understood that there is no objective "right" way to hold a pose; every practitioner experiences each pose differently. Finding full expression is about reaching the furthest edge possible. Every pose can be "the hardest" or "most famous" pose for every person depending on the intention set for practice. The same is possible for music education and repertoire selection. Purposeful repertoire selection promotes full expression for music educators and students by approaching instruction with deliberation. In yoga, students learn to play the edge to make more space in the body for change. If lifelong engagement with music is one of the goals of learning, music educators must learn to do the same within their practice.

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