



The purpose of Music EdVentures is to search for and practice ways of making music and interacting with people that preserve and celebrate the dignity of both. As a guiding principle, this purpose will focus our work on:

1. Practices that foster interactive, facilitative learning environments.
2. Strategies that empower the learner within the context of music experience and study.
3. Networks that encourage collaboration between diverse disciplines, professionals, and interest groups.

Are you interested in hosting a workshop or class in your area? Send requests to the email address shown above, to be routed to the appropriate presenters/coordinators.

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News and Notes

November 2009

From Our President Deb Eikenbary, Indiana

November already! I hope your year is rolling along nicely, friends.

We have had only a little feedback about my questions to you, MEI membership concerning the use of recording of our sessions. I thought I should let you know what I will be presenting to the board, based on the response I've received and my strong personal feeling of what is appropriate. I will be recommending to the board that we consider the question of restricting the recording of our sessions in the future unless a request has been received in ample time to have the full consent of all involved. That would mean presenters, children, and participants alike. Our sessions involve a fair amount of being able to step outside your comfort zone and become a tree, a ship, or the like. In order to insure our participants that they can feel free to engage in such exploration, we need to provide an environment that is free from concerns of being recorded while stepping out of our comfort zone. This is not an idea that comes without its drawbacks. It is useful to the organization to have some pictures of our activities and some of us enjoy documenting our experiences with photos. Again, I invite your comments and input as we struggle with the awkward, but important issue.

- Deb

Note from a satisfied reader...

I continue to use many Music EdVentures and ETM song games in my 1st grade classroom and to guide elementary ed students from UM Western as they learn how to teach music. I also find the website to be a great resource for the teacher candidates. We read and discuss the article, "The Right Answer Game" which always leads to a lively discussion.

Thank you to those who put together this wonderful website.

Carolyn Wareham
Butte, Montana

News and Notes is the monthly communication of Music EdVentures, Inc. (MEI). Regular features will keep members and friends up to date on coming events and the latest teaching techniques, tips and strategies. Submissions are due on the 15th of the month prior to publication and may be submitted months in advance, indicating the month in which they are to be published. The committee reserves the right to select material to be published according to length and appropriateness. Articles should be 200-325 words. Visuals should be scanned and submitted as PDF or jpeg files. Submissions may be sent to PamBridgehouse@hughes.net and may be edited to accommodate space limitations.

Scholarships available for the Conference.

Send your letter of application to Deb Eikenbary at eikenbary@bcremc.net by Dec.15. Your request should include your name and contact information, as well as information about your teaching position, and the amount requested. Scholarships may be applied to registration and/or travel expenses.

***NOTE: There is no registration fee for students.
Students are welcome to apply for a travel grant.***

Notifications of scholarships awarded will be sent in January.

Plan now to attend Conference 2010

***March 5 & 6 in Portland, Oregon
(Update for returning members on March 4)***

***Connections Between Educational Philosophies with Dr. Peggy Bennett
Healthy Voices with Dr. Anna Langness
Potpourri of Puzzles for Reading
Four Faces of a Song
Dancing, Song Games, and Singing in the Education of Children
plus
Teaching English with Music by our friends from Japan***

Philosophy, History, Tradition: The Why, What, and How of MEI

Featuring wisdom, and history that are foundational to MEI

***Visit some of the links on the web page to find out more
about the philosophy, history and tradition
of excellent teaching by MEI educators.***

Watch this space for future contributions from our founders and mentors.

Is your membership up to date? Regular - \$35 Sustaining - \$50 Patron - \$100 Student - \$10

Send check payable to MEI (US funds) to: Paige Macklin

Please include your name, address, phone and email address.

***23021 Woodland Rd.
Lakeville, MN 55044***

The Power of Brevity: Two-Word Cues

Peggy D. Bennett, PhD
Professor of Music Education
Oberlin Conservatory of Music

Cooper and I were in class together: dog behavior class! When my little cairn terrier (a Toto dog, but wheat colored) was about six months old, I decided that I needed help knowing how to train him to have good manners. So, each week for six weeks, we traveled way out into the Ohio farmlands to a dog trainer who had come highly recommended. Cooper absolutely loved it because he received treats for every little thing he accomplished. The classes made him highly hyper-active, and they made me exhausted.

As the two of us progressed through the several “dog exercises,” I couldn’t help but compare our training to classroom management. I may have wanted to say, “Cooper, please stop licking that stuff on the floor. It makes me gag to see you do that, and you should instead be healing at my ankle. We want to do well in this class and show our teacher how well we learn.” Of course, if I said this, I would be saying it *for* and *to* myself! For Cooper, all he needed to hear was, “Stop licking!” or just “No.”

In classrooms, we could all do well to remember that many of our words are unnecessary. And, not only are they not needed, sometimes they deflect attention from what we really want to convey. Haven’t we all had the experience that someone is using so many words to tell us something that we lose the incentive, the discipline, or the interest in listening? What if that someone is us??

“Voices ready.” What a concise, direct, and specific cue! “Eyes here, Sitting tall, Lips closed, Hands quiet, Ears ready, Breath energy, No sound, Sticks down, Not now.” No matter the age, these kinds of cues are clear and brief. Even if repetition of the two-word directive is needed, in my classes, the brevity still feels efficient: “No sound. No sound. Marcus, no sound.”

When your students are accustomed to hearing you give brief instructions, a one word direction can work just as well: “Ears..., Eyes..., Hands..., Tall..., Breath...” Of course, with this economy of language, we could acknowledge the bi-products: fewer words mean

- more rest for our voices during a busy teaching day,
- more focus on the music rather than our voices,
- more moments of attentive silence during our classes,
- more assistance for those children struggling with English as a second language or language processing disorders.

Sometimes, our two-word cues are assertive and commanding in order to get children’s attention. The intonation and inflection we use with these two-word or one-word directives, however, need not be commanding or scolding: in fact they are sometimes more effective when they are not. Spoken with the intonation of a reminder, a simple statement, or a cordial request, two-word cues can give the message of courteous elicitation. With brevity and intonation, we are able to “scoop up” children’s attention and place it on the sound of music.

During our daily walks, Cooper believes that each tree is a treasure trove of compelling odors. Often times, he has ended up on the other side of the tree, so the leash is wrapped around the tree, and we have a little tug-of-war to see who is willing to give in and walk to the other side. Now, however, at three years old, Cooper understands “This way” means to backtrack and come to the side I am on. Each time he reroutes and comes to my side of the tree, I am amazed: he listens for what to do and he understands the command. And, the same is true now in my classes.

The power of brevity is a simple, yet profound idea that can yield big returns in focusing our students. Try it! Show focus! Watch kids! Have fun!

Something November-ish from Pam Bridgehouse

Note: I learned this song about 20 years ago from a music series but I can't remember which one...

Turkey Song

as sung by Pam Bridgehouse

Folk Song

Soprano

As I went o-ver yon-der hill I spied a mighty turkey. He

flapped his wings and he spread his tail and his feet looked aw-ful dir-ty. Fol- link- a - ti -dy,

Fol - de - link a - ti -dy - o, Fol - link - a - ti- dy. and his feet looked awful dirty.

Children enjoy acting the part of the turkey in this song, flapping wings, spreading the big turkey tail, and on the refrain words, walking like a turkey with very dirty feet.

Creative writing extension: Children might imagine where the turkey had been and why his feet were so dirty, what was he doing over the hill, what made him do the things he did? What happened next?

My introduction to this song (a true story):

One cold fall morning I was driving to North Howell School to teach music to the children there, when something very unusual happened. I was just driving along when I came around a curve and over the hill, and I had to put on my brakes really fast because there was something in the road just ahead.

You'll never guess what it was - a flock of wild turkeys, standing right there in the middle of the road just as big as you please! I stopped my car just in time and, you know, those old turkeys just stood there in the road looking at me. I looked at them and they looked at me. Pretty soon the biggest one who seemed to be in charge just flapped his wings as big as he could and he spread out his big turkey tail right there in the middle of the road.

Then I sing the song. We discuss the nonsense words – they fill up the music while the turkey is walking around with his dirty feet. Enjoy!