

## **Chapter 3**

### **What do you need to know and do as a music teacher?**

#### ***Instructor Insights***

#### **Chapter Overview**

Chapter 3 introduces readers to the knowledge, skills, and dispositions (KSD) typified by effective professional music educators. The goal of the chapter is to present the complex blend of KSD that informs teacher decision-making and teacher action in a palatable fashion so that young pre-service teachers can begin to organize their thinking on the subject. We accomplish this by presenting separate models for music teacher knowledge, music teacher skills, and music teacher dispositions throughout the chapter. After examining each dimension separately, we encourage the readers to consider how a change in any one of these dimensions can affect a change or a need to change in another.

Music teacher knowledge is presented in a model that was first developed by Lee Shulman (1987) and later adapted by Si Millican (2012). This model suggests that teacher knowledge can be separated into four domains: (a) content knowledge, (b) general pedagogical knowledge, (c) knowledge of learners and how they learn, and (d) curricular knowledge. Within the chapter, each domain is described in detail and related to typical music teaching decisions. The model also describes the concept of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). The definition of PCK has been elusive for many. We, however, adopt Millian's (2012) idea that PCK is represented by the intersection of the other four knowledge domains. Thus, when a teacher's knowledge of

the content intersects with her understanding of how to teach the content and that intersection is informed by the teacher's knowledge of her students and the appropriateness and availability of necessary materials for teaching the content, the teacher is making use of her PCK.

Music teacher skills are presented as those things that a music teacher must be able to do. These skills are organized into three general categories: (a) personal skills, (b) teaching skills, and (c) musical skills. Personal skills include motivational skills, communication skills, organizational skills, leadership skills and social skills. Teaching skills include classroom management, diagnostic skills, delivery skills, administrative skills, and modelling skills. Musical skills include aural skills, performance skills, sight reading, conducting and music creativity. We note that these skills are not independent of the others and there are many interactions between these skills. That is supported by the graphic on page 52. We also note that not all music teaching requires the use of all these skills. For example, some musical practices do not require sight reading and others do not require conducting skills. There are skills that are exclusive to a singular musical practice, and we do not mean to exclude them from this list. This is simply an example of what we mean when we discuss teaching skills. The most important aspect of this discussion is to delineate the differences between music knowledge and music skill.

Discussion of effective music teacher dispositions begins with an admission that the concept of disposition is difficult to define. Recent research has framed definitions of dispositions for effective music teaching, and we make use of both these studies (Popow, 2017; Smith , 217)). Smith (2017) has defined five effective dispositions for

teachers. These include reflection, caring, responsibility, authenticity, and responsiveness. Each of these are defined clearly and allows class members to self-assess their readiness in each of these areas. Popow (2017), developed a dispositional model for music teaching based upon how elements of teaching are perceived in relation to self, others, and the purpose of the teaching. These perceptions are considered along continua that are anchored in the extremes of each perception.

At the conclusion of the chapter, we encourage the reader to consider how a change in disposition might affect a necessary change in both knowledge and skill. For example, should a teacher's dispositions concerning a certain genre of music (i.e., Hip-Hop) change to be more accepting of its place within the music curriculum, it will likely be necessary for this teacher to develop new content knowledge and new pedagogical skills so he or she can teach the genre effectively. This is one of several examples in the chapter.

The concepts and ideas in this chapter are very complex and we understand that this text only presents the very basics of each. However, we believe that pre-service teachers will benefit from being introduced to these ideas very early in their professional education. We encourage pre-service teachers to continue growing their understandings throughout their time as a music educator. With each new visit to the ideas within this chapter, the teacher's understandings and abilities to put those understandings into action will improve.

### **Chapter Activities – General Descriptions**

Chapter 3 includes five activities.

- a. Class Activity 3.1: *What if you were to teach a skill?* (pp. 44/62)
- b. Blog on... *Knowledge, skills, and dispositions* (p. 45)
- c. Class Activity 3.2: *What do you need to know and do?* (pp. 46/62-63)
- d. Discussion Board: *Knowledge and skills of music teaching* (p. 54)
- e. Blog on... *Dispositions* (p. 60)

The opening Class Activity, associated with sidebar 3.1, is the first Micro-Teaching Episode. As such, it creates the 'need to know' in class members about knowledge, skills and dispositions (KSD) needed for teaching. The remainder of the activities in the chapter addresses in one way or another the KSD needed to be an effective music teacher.

### **Class Activity 3.1: *What if you were to teach a skill?* (pp. 44/62)**

**Instructions in the text:** The following are instructions for completing a short (i.e., 5-7 minute) teaching episode that we call a 'Micro-Teaching Episode' (MTE). A MTE can be accomplished by an individual or in pairs. For this activity, you should complete the following steps:

- Decide on your 'subject matter'- **what you will teach** - make it a simple skill that you can teach in 5 minutes. People have taught how to tie shoes, make a PB&J sandwich, etc. BE CREATIVE!
- Write an initial step-by-step plan for **how you will teach** this skill.
- Decide if this plan is appropriate for your learners (classmates) and **how they might learn best**.

- Assess, as best you can, if your learners will have the prerequisite **knowledge and skills** to reach the objective of your plan.
- Based on **what** you are teaching, how you believe your **learners learn best**, the amount pre-existing **knowledge and skills** you believe your learners to possess, and **how** you plan to teach this skill, assess your plan and make any adjustments you think to be necessary.
- Gather your materials. Make sure that you have enough materials for all your learners to be ACTIVELY engaged in your lesson.
- Practice delivering your lesson. You will have 5 minutes to present your lesson. This should be plenty of time. If you are working in pairs, make sure that each partner has the opportunity to be the lead instructor at some time in the lesson.
- On the day you are to teach, bring two copies of your lesson plan to class: One for you and one for your instructor.
- Present your lesson. If at all possible, video record your teaching so you can review the episode after class.
- **Before you watch your session**, make an entry in your blog on the planning procedure, what your thoughts were before you taught and how it felt to teach.
- Watch the video of your session.
- **After you watch your session**, make another blog entry and address what you saw and heard in your video. Make special note of the things you did that were effective. You should also note areas you believe could be more

effective. Finally, describe any surprises (i.e., anything you noticed on the video that you did not notice during or after your teaching).

**Goal:** This is designed as a 'discovery' exercise. As students engage in this activity, they will uncover several moments where their KSD will affect their instructional decision-making. With an opportunity for class and faculty feedback, teachers can note places where KSD may have affected their instructional decisions. The instructor should make attempts to highlight places where knowledge, skill or disposition was demonstrated during the instruction. The blog prompts at the end of the instructions are also intended to help class members reflect on these concepts.

**Procedure:** It works best to present this assignment a session or two before the students present their MTE. We believe it is important that the content for these episodes NOT be music related. We would like for students to focus on the instruction more than the content of the lesson. Most of these students are still getting to know each other and identities are being defined. Because they are music majors, many class members' identities are strongly linked to their musicianship. It is not uncommon for class members to struggle with presenting these MTEs, as they often begin to realize the teacher knowledge or skill that is necessary for effective instruction while teaching. Should a class member be presenting musical content and struggle, this could adversely affect the formation of their music teacher identity.

It may be best to set aside an entire class session devoted to the presentation of these MTEs. We suggest that each session is video recorded and made available to the class members for viewing and reflection.

## **Blog on... *Knowledge, skills and Dispositions* (p. 45)**

**Instructions in the text:** Imagine a place where you would like to be teaching. Consider the makeup of the student population in your learning environment. Consider the community in which this environment resides. Consider what you are teaching (e.g., general music, band, orchestra, choir, mariachi, guitar, popular music ensemble class, etc.). What do you think you will need to know and be able to do so you are an effective music educator in this environment? What attitudes will help you become an effective teacher? Start a list in your blog of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions you believe you will need. Remember where this list is in your blog so you can refer to it often.

**Goal:** One of the primary ideas throughout this text is a charge to the preservice teachers concerning their responsibility to take ownership of their individual professional development. This blog asks each class member to start a list of KSD that will be necessary for their future success. While the lists at this stage in their teacher development maybe incomplete or even superficial, the goal is that class members consider that what is done now, what is learned now, and what ideas are developed now, influence what they will accomplish as professional music educators in the future. The foundations for a disposition of learning for the benefit of future students is laid in this blog entry and can be nurtured through focused feedback on this entry.

**Procedure:** Whatever standard blog/journal procedure established in your class should be followed for this entry. We have found it works best to review blog/journal entries about once a month. It helps class members if the instructor places comments or questions in the blog/journal for further consideration.

### **Class Activity 3.2: *What do you need to know and do?* (pp. 46/62-63)**

**Instructions in the text:** In small groups (3-4 people) take a poster-sized sheet of paper and a marker and make a list of the things ALL music teachers need to **know** to be effective professional music educators. After you have made this list, turn the paper over and make a list of the things that ALL music teachers need to **be able to do** to be effective professional music educators. After this list is complete, go back to your first list and discuss ways that you could categorize music teacher knowledge. With your second list, discuss how you might categorize music teacher skills. Be prepared to share your thoughts with the class.

**Goal:** When one begins to consider the knowledge and skills necessary to be an effective professional music educator, it can become overwhelming. Preservice teachers often have trouble understanding how to begin organizing all this information. Such feeling of uncertainty about what needs to be known can effectively undermine these young teachers' identity formations as they feel that there is too much to learn. Some may even express feelings that they may not be 'cut out' to teach because they have are not accustomed to the cognitive dissonance they are experiencing. The activity described above is designed to help class members organize their thoughts about teacher knowledge and skill into manageable and understandable categories. Should class members understand the larger categories of teacher knowledge and skills, they will have a tool for organizing their thoughts about what they need to know and be able to do. It has been our experience, that the anxiety concerning the amount of knowledge and skills that need to be acquired is dissipated when class members can effectively organize their thinking on the matter.



During the class discussion, the instructor can lead categorization in terms of those categories (e.g., content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, etc.) that are described in the chapter. When students ‘discover’ these categories in the process of this activity they have context for understanding the definitions in the chapter more clearly than if they simply read these from the text.

**Procedure:** If possible, it is most effective to have the classroom set up in small groups as the students enter. In each group of chairs, place a sheet of Postit® chart paper with a marker. Write the instructions on a board or have them on a projected slide. As students enter the room, ask them to gather in groups and start their discussions while making their list. We have found it to be most effective to allow class members to brainstorm ideas in both categories (i.e., teacher knowledge, teacher skills) first and then organize the ideas expressed into categories. Depending upon the size of the groups, this activity should take no more than 10 to 12 minutes. The instructor should move between groups as they discuss and prompt ideas or provide clarifications when necessary. During the report out, the instructor can start a list of categories on the board that can lead into the next section of the chapter on teacher knowledge and skills.

#### **Discussion board: Knowledge and Skills of Music Teaching (p. 54)**

**Instructions in the text:** Within the descriptions of teacher knowledge and skills, were there aspects that surprised you? If so, what surprised you and why do think you may not have considered these before now? If not, how did you come to understand that these would be required of you as a professional music educator?

Read your colleagues' posts and comment on how their perceptions are similar or dissimilar from yours.

**Goal:** This is an additional process to help class members take charge of identifying the knowledge and skills necessary for them to become the teachers they desire to become. As a discussion board activity, class members will be afforded time to read and think about posts from their colleagues and to compose their own thoughts on the subject. There are often students who will not speak up much in class that have much to share. The discussion board allows these students to enter the community differently than speaking out in class.

**Procedure:** This discussion board should follow the same protocol as those previous in the text. As always a small but evident instructor presence on the discussion board is helpful. This may be a particularly effective time to comment more on class members' replies to their colleagues than on their initial responses. Encouragement for thoughtful replies may help others in the class to do the same.

### **Blog on... Dispositions (p. 60)**

**Instructions in the text:** What dispositions did your *most influential teacher* model for you? Where these evident to you at the time you were in his or her classroom or studio? What dispositions do you believe will be most difficult for you to develop? Why?

**Goal:** Development of dispositions that support effective music teaching is often a very personal journey. Moving this blog entry from thoughts about an influential teacher to a personal examination is likely to highlight some differences. If class

members are honest in their self-assessment of what dispositions will be difficult to develop, some personal information may be expressed. For these reasons, we believe a blog/journal entry for this topic is best. Should class members explore these ideas thoughtfully, they will uncover areas that will need to be developed over time. They may find dispositions that they wrestle with in terms of political views, religious views, or even general worldviews. Allowing for a personal discussion of these issues may help young pre-service teachers identity formation in very powerful ways.

**Procedure:** Whatever standard blog/journal procedure established in your class should be followed for this entry. We have found it works best to review blog/journal entries about once a month. It helps class members if the instructor places comments or questions in the blog/journal for further consideration.

#### References

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- Popow, K. J. (2017). Examining the dispositions of music educators: A perceptual psychology theory. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Syracuse University.
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