

## REFRESH, REJUVENATE, RETHINK: HOLISTIC TEACHING FOR CHILDREN'S STUDY OF MUSIC

Peggy D. Bennett, Ph.D.  
The University of Texas at Arlington

### ELICITING ENGAGEMENT, INTRIGUE & FOCUS THROUGH SONG & PLAY

When we are **engaged**, we are more than participating, more than involved. We are "hooked up" to that on which we are focusing. When we are **Intrigued**, we are more than interested. We approach a topic with eagerness and wonder, a magnified curiosity. When we are **focused**, our attention is funneled into a mental spotlight, concentrating our senses (eyes, ears, and body) toward the object of our focus. The **listening** that we are aiming for is active and focused. Meaning can come from recognition, intrigue, imagination, accomplishment, and social context.

Our teaching settings are critical to selecting and shaping learning activities for our students that are **context appropriate**. Context appropriateness can be affected by

<b>Physical Attributes:</b>	Size of room, size of class, temperature in room, equipment in room, shape of room, seating arrangement, who brings students to music room
<b>Temporal Attributes:</b>	Time of day, time of year, frequency of class meeting, length of class, time interval between classes, what preceded class, special events
<b>Teacher Attributes:</b>	Familiarity with students, number of classes/subjects taught per day, length of time in same school, length of time in teaching, access to training, freedom to explore/create vs follow prescribed standards
<b>Student Attributes:</b>	Familiarity with classmates, mix of gender, ethnicity, language, economic, cultural backgrounds, age, developmental levels, abilities: physical, mental, social, disabilities, background experiences, view of schooling
<b>Community Attributes:</b>	Administrative support, support of colleagues, expectations for public performance, parental participation, community activities that shape or support teaching expectations

(Bennett & Bartholomew, 1992, p. 163)

Taking into account all the factors affecting our teaching settings can help us realize our most important achievements. This occurs when we have **accurate perspectives**, from when we make **informed choices**, in order to offer our student **appropriate learning opportunities** that match their needs as well as ours.

(Bennett & Bartholomew, 1992, p. 162)



## MEANINGFUL MANAGING FOR STUDENTS' BEHAVIOR GROWTH

**Managing** others means that we play a role in bringing out the best of them. Meaningful managing happens when we do so with respect as we combine compassion, firmness, and principled behavior.

**Students deserve to be informed, educated, and reminded regarding the behavior that is expected of them.**

(Bennett & Bartholomew, 1992, p. 172)

When others are given a "**moment of grace**" for their behavior, it means that we have stepped back momentarily to consider what a behavior or comment could be **other** than one that is offensive, intrusive or "misbehaving."

Being a **teacher-manager** means being organized, knowledgeable, consistent, fair, respectful, decisive and democratic so that students can function at their best in the classroom.

(Bennett & Bartholomew, 1992, p. 169)

Good classroom managing "facilitates learning; fosters socialization, permits democracy, fills a psychological need, and promotes a sense of joy in learning."

(Charles, p. 6)

Four inescapable facts of **human nature**:

1. We resist doing what others try to make us do.
2. It remains eternally fashionable to denigrate authority.
3. Individuals have differing needs, values, interest, and abilities (markedly differing views of authority).
4. As students grow older they must go through psychological weaning (establishing their psychological independence).

(Charles, p. 10-11)

What is **misbehavior**? Misbehavior is willingly and knowingly obstructing the activity/learning/lesson.

(Charles, p. 4)

If a student does not know he/she is "misbehaving," can it be considered "misbehavior?" Many "misbehaviors" are normal behaviors outside the classroom or school setting.

**Behavior = Actions    Misbehavior = Judgment of Actions**

"Be certain that you are teaching students to avoid certain behaviors, not to avoid you."

"Children need to know that they are valued for themselves, not merely for the degree to which they meet our expectations or follow our rules."

"Create an environment where failure is not fatal." (McGinnis)

The goals of **discipline management** in the classroom are a student's:  
**awareness** of his or her behavior and its effect on self and others;  
**respect** for him or herself and others; and  
**ability** to monitor and control his or her behavior.

It is desirable to allow a student to "grow into" this **awareness, respect, and ability**, and growth rarely happens instantaneously. Plan to see students' education about their own behavior as an on-going process that is necessary to their development as a mature person.

(Bennett & Bartholomew, 1992, p. 172)



## MAINTAINING VITALITY & MUSICALITY IN OUR TEACHING BEHAVIORS

**"The musicality that is critical in music performance is equally important in music study."**

What makes music musical? Although the words are inadequate, musicality can be described as the spirit, flow, life, shape, and grace that is inherent in music. If music study is hard work without the grace and charm that musicality brings, it can have disastrous effects:

- it can desensitize young children to the flow and beauty of music;
- it can cause resistance and animosity toward studying music;
- It can stunt young people's musical growth; and
- it can construct barriers between experiencing music and studying music.

**Musicality** results most easily in rich contexts when all musical elements are present – a holistic context.

(Bennett & Bartholomew, 1993, 16-17)

When discipline problems begin to surface during your lesson, look first (a) to your own **energy level**, then (b) to the **clarity** of behavior expectations for the activity, (c) to the level of **intrigue** that the activity holds for the students, and (d) to the **potential for success** that students feel toward the activity.

**Animation** is the extent to which we use the various categories of non-verbal communication: posture, body language, facial expression, eye contact, tone of voice, and use of space. Too much or too little animation can have undesirable effects on students' behaviors.

**Be aware of the perils and profits of praise.** "Praise can have potentially negative rather than positive effects on a student's learning, motivation, and self-concept." Feelings of embarrassment, manipulation, inferiority, and superiority can be generated when a teacher uses lavish and indiscriminate praise in the classroom.

(Bennett, 1989)

**Be aware of the perils and profits of rewards.** "Once good habits are established, it is harmful to praise a person every time." "It is possible to erode a person's love of something (such as learning) by handing out too much reward at the end." "If people find internal reward in a task, too much external reward will weaken the internal motivation."

(McGinnis)

Through

- songs and singing games that are engaging;
- listening activities that are intriguing;
- management strategies that are respectful; and
- behaviors and attitudes toward students that help us enjoy and delight in their responses,

**this workshop aims to revitalize the "enjoyment factor" for Children's Study of Music.**



## REFERENCES

1. Bennett, P. D. and Bartholomew, D. R. (1993). *SongWorks 2: Studying and Teaching Music Through Singing* (A Working Manuscript) SongWorks: Bozeman, MT.
2. Bennett, P. D. and Bartholomew, D. R. (1992). *SongWorks: Valuing Singing in Education* (A Pilot Book). SongWorks: Bozeman, MT...
3. Bennett, P. D. (1989). Is praise always positive? *TMEC/MENC Connection*, 3(2), 12-13.
4. Bennett, P. D. (1988). The perils and profits of praise. *Music Educators Journal*, 75 (1), 22-24.
5. Bennett, P. D. (1986). Confessions on classroom management. *ETM News*. 3 (4).
6. Charles, C.M. (1985). *Building classroom discipline: from models to practice*. New York: Longman.
7. Gordon, T. (1974). *Teacher effectiveness training*. New York: P. H. Wyden.
8. Jones, F. H. (1987). *Positive classroom discipline*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
9. Jones, F. H. (1987). *Positive classroom instruction*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
10. McGinnis, A. L. (1985). *Bringing out the best in people*. Minneapolis: Augsburg.
11. Nelson, J. (1987). *Positive discipline*. New York: Ballantine.

For further information or future **workshops or courses**, please feel free to contact

Dr. Peggy D. Bennett  
Music Department Box 19105  
University of Texas at Arlington  
Arlington TX 76019  
817-273-2434 O 817-561-0377 H

## 1994 SUMMER COURSES SCHEDULED

Peggy Bennett, University of Central Oklahoma (Edmond). Jun 08-10.  
Peggy Bennett, Montana State University (Bozeman). Jun 27-29  
Anna Langness, Montana State University (Bozeman). Jun 22-24

### *Please Note*

*SongWorks* books to be published in 1994 (price range between \$25 and \$35) can be ordered from Douglas Bartholomew, 124 S. Aylsworth, Bozeman MT 59715.  
Your order will be held and your invoice sent when the books are ready.