

Jim Novak Response 5.27.20
WALKER & SOLTIS, Chapter 1 - 3

What are your initial thoughts and feelings about K-12 Music Education Curriculum?

K-12 Music Education Curriculum is important for a number of reasons. It helps the individual teacher to gauge their efficacy and pacing. It helps teachers to teach consistently with their counterparts in larger school districts. It helps to bridge transitional times in students' educations, like when moving from one building to another. It also is beneficial to view a larger picture of the students' music education, and gain perspective as to areas that are being neglected.

Do you know what a curriculum is?

Curriculum is central to what we do as educators. It is what we want our students to learn and come away with. It is what guides our instruction, and gives us direction. It helps us to organize ourselves both in portions of our school year, and in the year as a whole.

Does your school have a written curriculum for each subject (all subjects, music, etc.)?

To the best of my knowledge, every subject has a written curriculum. For my middle school band program, we have benchmarks and objectives for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students, with corresponding exercises in our current method book that address these benchmarks.

What do you know about the music curriculum in your school?

Our curriculum covers the materials that we find to be valuable and beneficial to our band students, building upon what they learn in 5th grade, while at the same preparing them to make the transition from middle school to high school.

Who should be making/writing the curriculum?

Ideally, the curriculum should be written by teachers, administrators, curriculum directors, and independent experts collectively. In my experience, for the sake of practicality, we would start with a curriculum developed by independent experts, evaluate it as a staff, and determine how to use it to suit the district objectives.

How specific should a curriculum be?

Earlier in my career, I would have been much more comfortable with a more specific curriculum, as it would have guided me more clearly. At this point, I feel like a more general curriculum serves me better, as it gives me more freedom and flexibility to cover the prescribed material. Ideally, a curriculum should include the subjects and materials that need to be covered, and have some suggestions as to how to teach them, but give the teachers freedom to use their professional judgement to teach to their expertise.

Philosophy

Western civilization education was formed largely by the ideas of three philosophers. Plato's *Republic* discussed how education and government helped to create the just state. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Emile* connected education and freedom. John Dewey's *Democracy and Education* described how education would promote individual growth and a democratic society.

Psychology

Ancient Greeks believed that, in addition to bodies, human beings also had souls (i.e. a three-part psyche). First, the appetitive part expressed desires and needs that needed to be met. Next, the spirited part emphasized self-protection and survival. Lastly, the rational part overruled the first two parts, and focussed on logic and reason.

Student Centered vs. Society Centered vs. Subject-Area Centered

The subject-centered perspective is the oldest idea of general education, and focuses on sharing knowledge with each new generation. Student-centered supporters advocate for literacy, command of basic skills, mastery of basic facts and theories in fundamental subjects, critical thinking, problem-solving, good study skills and work habits, and desire to learn. The society-centered perspective's goal is to disseminate information to improve society. Society-centered supporters advocate for: civic responsibility, vocational preparation, development of democratic attitudes, health, personal and social adjustment, ethical values and behavior, concern for the welfare of others, and critique and transformation of society. The student-based perspective focuses on freedom of the individual. Student-centered supporters advocate for: self-realization, self-esteem, emotional stability, mental health, creative expression, cultivation of personal talents and interest, wise use of leisure time, preparation for contemporary life, and health and safety.