

THE ENCOUNTER

The Journal of the Kodály Educators of Texas



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

President's Update p. 1
Teaching from the Inside Out p. 2
Culturally Responsive Music Curriculum Design p. 6
KET Open Board Positions p. 7

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

by **Becky Knox, KET President**



I hope all our members had a fantastic start to the school year!

KET has been busy with our "Dance Themed" fall workshop series. I personally attended the Central Texas workshop with Devereaux Stone on the origins of drill team and how to incorporate those ideas in the classroom. Also in the Central Texas area, our secondary workshop was presented by former board member Sarah Martinez, who as usual delivered great insight into infusing secondary choral classrooms with Kodály inspired thinking. The Latin themed North Texas workshop with Mike Elizondo was well attended and looked like an amazing time. Our last in person workshop was in the Houston area with culture bearer Shira Moses, who lead Israeli Folk Dance.

In February, we will have two virtual do-not-miss workshops with Lynsey Callaghan and Manju Durairaj, so be on the lookout for those registrations after the new year.

Our General TMEA Meeting will take place on Friday, February 10 from 10:00-11:00AM with a performance from the Fort Bend ISD Honor Choir led by Rica Goldyn. Additionally, we are in the planning stages of our TMEA social event and believe me, you will want to be in attendance. That will tentatively take place on Thursday, February 9 from 8:00-10:00PM.

Finally, don't forget about the OAKE Conference in Jacksonville March 16-19. We have quite a few KET members presenting, which is sure to be an exciting time.



OAKE
2023

Kodály for a Bold New World
March 16-19 | Jacksonville, FL



Share Your Work and Inspire Other Educators in *The Encounter*

Articles are accepted on a rolling basis. For consideration for our spring edition, please email your article to Dillon Downey at ddowney2@dentonisd.org by **January 13, 2023!**

Interested in Presenting?

Please fill out the Google Form to join the KET Clinician Database at <https://forms.gle/Pe5hfmnwFZ56eQVy8>.



TEACHING FROM THE INSIDE OUT

by Kristen Suciadi, North Texas Co-Representative

We are born makers. We move what we're learning from our heads to our hearts through our hands. - Daring Greatly, Brené Brown

A group of 28 or so 9 and 10 year olds walk into a room with no desks, no chairs, and no plastic dividers; just color dot spots on the floor. Music is playing with a lively beat and the teacher is standing at the front of the room tapping her shoulders, her head, her elbows ... she changes where she taps often. As the children figure out where to stand, they also begin to follow what the teacher is doing tapping, patting, flicking ... and changing every time she changes. After 2-3 minutes, the music stops and the teacher sits down. The students continue to follow what the teacher does. Finally, she sings to the tune of Frère Jacques: "Are you 5th Grade?" The students sing back: This is 5th Grade. "Welcome back" Welcome back. "I'm so glad to see you." I'm so glad to see you. "Ready to learn." Ready to learn.

If you have been anywhere within a stone's throw of a Kodály-inspired approach to teaching and learning in Music, then the scene described above looks so familiar that you probably did a speed read through most of it. Good for you! Efficiency is key and scanning another article for the "good stuff" will do you a lot of good in most all situations.

Suciadi, cont.

Before we move on, I invite you to pause. I want you to think about your thinking here (metacognition, we do it in our sleep at this point, usually the night before the first day of school or a concert). While you were scanning the Prepare or Intro part of the lesson above, did you start to find all of the holes or missteps? Did you begin to think about your own students and how that kind of process will “never work with my kids”? Or, maybe you scanned so quickly you’re already thinking “Yeah, yeah, yeah, another article about how to engage 5th grade students at the beginning of the year”.

Pause again. Now, write it down. Seriously. Grab your phone or a sticky note and meta-dump.

As we go on this short journey together, I invite you to take 2 minutes and Prepare yourself for some new Practices by doing the following steps:

1. Brain Dump: Get out as many of your to-dos, ideas, and worries on to paper or in a note on your phone in 1 minutes or less.
2. What do you hope to get out of reading this?
3. What do you need to let go of/what is blocking you from getting what you want?
4. How is this for you right now?

Now, let’s jump in.

Start with heart. It’s what got us here in the first place. It’s why even as we recover from post-pandemic resignations and learn how to do school again, we will have hope that the reasons we love creating musical learning opportunities for students are still within us. One of the tricky parts about these moments of uncertainty, transformation, or, some say, chaos, is that fear sets in. And before we know it, the energy we are spending on showing up every day doesn’t feel like enough.



Additional Information

Check our website for updated information concerning workshops, meetings, and the latest news! Go to www.kodalytexas.com.

“Like” us on Facebook! Search for “Kodály Educators of Texas” page and press “like.” You can also join our discussion group; search for “Kodály Educators of Texas” group and ask to join.

Questions or comments? Email our president, Becky Knox, at president.ket@gmail.com.

Suciadi, cont.

Burnout is around the corner from the next schedule change that is dropped on you for state testing or the disruption of school pictures or, to put it bluntly, someone else's priorities. So here's a proactive way for you to be able to continue when there is chaos. When everything seems turned upside down and you're trying to sort through it all, at the same time there is opportunity for leadership, for being a role model, for creativity. How can you stay good at what you do, be better for those who need you most and do your best for yourself?

Author, high performance coach, and one of the most watched motivational speakers in history, Brendon Burchard highlights three different kinds of fear and points out what is on the other side of fear should we face the fear:

1. We fear loss - the pain from loss, that we may lose our health, income, relationship, steady work, comforts or certainties we count on, etc.

On the other side: Gain - There is something to gain when there is something to lose - it is the reminder to check on your diet, your exercise, stress routines, budget, communication practices, etc.

2. We fear hardship - the difficulties of the emotion we will feel and our capabilities when it comes to emotion.

On the other side: Honor the struggle as something that is true and that we can engage with; something from which we can grow and become stronger.

3. We fear outcome - the end result, worst case scenario, ruin/death.

On the other side: Engage to do everything possible, to give everything you can, to give perspective and know that at the end of it, you did give your best and try.

"The Kodály-inspired approach to Music Education as we know it today is the other side of Kodály's fears..."

A practical way to Prepare before that next thing that feels like it might break you, is to ask yourself the following question: "Why is ____ important right now?" When you answer this question for yourself, you are creating a connection between your Present circumstance and your purpose. Making this connection adds value to the task or challenge of your present circumstance. *Teacher talk: Is it possible that this Process of thinking may also help your students? In addition to the SEL practices that you are trying out, could this process of thinking be helpful when Preparing for a new concept? Why is practicing steady beat important right now? Why is figuring out the form of this piece important right now?*

One of the most profound mind shifts that I hope also serves you in these moments is instead of saying "I don't have time right now", to say "It's not a priority right now." This gives us a solid foundation so that we are the ones who are strong and steady in the midst of chaos and uncertainty during transformations in the landscape of education at the moment.

Suciadi, cont.

It keeps us tethered to our purpose. When everyone else's priorities are coming your way and you find that you are saying "No" so often (you are saying "No", right? If not, check out *Boundary Boss* by Terri Cole), try out "It's not a priority right now" and see how it affects your mindset.

Part of being able to stay close to purpose is to know the signs of burnout. Do you stay later at school than necessary to get ready for the next day of instruction? Are you finding that you are isolating from your colleagues when you are typically strengthened by social interaction? Do you spend more time giving lectures to your students about how disappointed you are in their behavior than actively making music? Recognize when your energy is depleted and when you aren't your absolute best. Recognize it and then do something to set yourself up for rejuvenation. While self-care has become overused and for many of us is paired with an eye roll big enough to be seen across the cafeteria during a staff meeting, another mindset shift I want you to try out is to think of it as self-knowledge paired with inner-care. A bubble bath might not wipe away frustration from your students missing a rehearsal just before a concert due to an all-school assembly meant to pep the students up before state testing. You have to know the kind of burnout you are experiencing so that the care you pursue will be matched accordingly.

Stay with me as we make a little intellectual leap here: We can only imagine the level of frustration, potential for overwhelm and also deep sense of purpose that Kodály experienced in his early years.

On the other hand, we don't have to imagine at all. The Kodály-inspired approach to Music Education as we know it today is the other side of Kodály's fears - a fear that the standard for children's singing would continue to decline, that a nation would lose its roots and that there would be no joy in music making.

To go a bit further, take a look at the timing of when Kodály first became interested in the music education of children (appx. 1925) to when his methodologies were implemented in Hungary nationwide (appx. 1945). Not only were there 20 years before Kodály's ideologies were realized, but 1945 was also at the end of World War II as chaos, trauma, and uncertainty were at an all-time high, to summarize respectfully.

Look at that again. In 1945, when the world wasn't sure what was up and what was down, there was suffering, loss, pain, fear, Kodály emerged. He was an influencer of his time. He stayed focused on his purpose and he wasn't quiet about it. He wrote numerous controversial articles, essays and columns about the need to shake up the status of Music Education. While we may not know how many bubble baths Kodály took to release his frustration with the status of "the world", what we can know for certain is that as an influencer, he made an impact, he did not stay in the zone of fear for long. What we know is that he took action and started with where he was - with his community, his people, the children of his own heritage.



Make Music Matter: Fundamentals of Culturally Responsive Music Curriculum Design



Suciadi, cont.

Our methods of teaching and learning Music exist today because one person continued through chaos. Our students today in 2022 are experiencing joy in music making, are developing their singing voices and are sharing their individual cultural heritage that strengthens all of us - that makes us ALL better. As you go back to your Brain Dump, take a look at the things you may have listed as fears - they sometimes hide in our worries - and consider what could be on the other side when you face them. What influence can you have on your community, your people, your children when you live with the purpose inside of you?

Good, better, best

Never take a rest

'Til your good is better and your

Better is your best.

***"Our students today in 2022
are experiencing joy in
music making, are
developing their singing
voices and are sharing their
individual cultural heritage
that strengthens all of us -
that makes us ALL better."***

Ashley Cuthbertson is hosting a 3-part professional development masterclass about Culturally Responsive Music Curriculum Design. Sign up to learn more about designing your curriculum and lessons from a culturally responsive lens.

Please visit

**<https://ashleycuthbertson.com/masterclass/> to
register.**

The teacher prompts the students to read the poem in their heads and to place their hand on top of their head when they are finished reading. As the last student shows that they are done, the teacher invites the students to read the poem with a speaking voice if they are able. "Start when you are ready. When you are finished place your hand on your head." The students read the poem aloud and begin and end at various times. The teacher invites the students to read the poem again with a speaking voice if they are able, and this time the goal is to begin together and end together. "Start when you are ready, without my help." Almost immediately, one student says in a loud voice: "1, 2, ready go!" The students read the poem and after a second try, are able to speak in unison and have reached the goal. The teacher guides the students to reflect: "You were successful at starting and ending together without my help. What happened to help you find success?" As the students share ideas they note the importance of a leader, that they could hear each other, that they knew when to speed up, slow down and when to pause. "You are becoming thoughtful musicians" The teacher sings to the students "Goodbye 5th grade. I'll see you all next week."

FINAL THOUGHTS

by Dillon Downey, KET Vice President

This is such a special and needed time to be a music educator. I am not sure about you, but I certainly can get overwhelmed when I consider the importance of what we do for each of our students. I am grateful to my fellow music educators and organizations like KET that help us keep our love for our kids and the infectious joy of music education at the heart of our work.

As we approach the winter break, the holiday season, and the excitement

—
“My hope... is that you can have joyful and connective moments with your students. Added bonus if those moments are musical!”
—

around the new year, I hope that you are able to take a reflective pause from your all school sing or winter orchestra concert to think about what students get to experience through their music education with you. Since you are reading this journal, I know that you are a committed educator who cares about your students' learning experiences.

I have been granted to privilege of being the music teacher at a brand new campus this year. It is so hard not to get bogged down in every single detail that deserves my attention and I know I am not alone in that feeling. My hope for you as we close out 2022 is that you can have joyful and connective moments with your students. Added bonus if those moments are musical! We have the best jobs in the world and my hope is that connecting professionally will help you to foster connections with your students and to empower each one of them through music! Happy New Year and thank you for reading!

Interested in Serving on the KET Board of Directors?

KET is looking for people to serve in the following positions:

President Elect

Treasurer

Member Advocate

Secondary Representative

Higher Learning

Social Media

Region Representatives (Each Region)

President Elect must be a member who has previously served on the KET board. Every region now has two region representatives! Serving as a region representative is the perfect opportunity to bring unique and amazing professional development to your region of the state. If you are interested in running for one of these positions or have questions about an opening, contact Jason Mincy at Jasonmincy1@gmail.com