

Responsive Classroom and Elementary Music = A Perfect Match

Workshop Presented by Matthew Stensrud

*Indiana MEA Annual Conference
Ft. Wayne, IN --- January 16th, 2016*

Responsive Classroom (RC) Philosophy

- An approach to elementary education that leads to greater teacher effectiveness, higher student achievement, and improved school climate by creating engaging academics, inspiring a positive community, ensuring effective management, and encouraging developmental awareness.¹
- Studies have shown that Responsive Classroom increases student engagement, improves academic achievement, decreases discipline problems and leads to more high-quality teaching.²
- Music has an active and essential role in the RC approach through its use in morning activities and games, transitions, and student-created presentations.

Guiding Principles of Responsive Classroom³

1. The social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum.
2. How children learn is as important as what they learn.
3. The greatest cognitive growth occurs through social interaction.
4. To be successful academically and socially, children need to learn and practice specific social skills: *cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control.*
5. We must know our children individually, culturally, and developmentally.
6. Knowing the families of the children we teach is as important as knowing the children.
7. Teachers and administrators must model the social and academic skills they wish to teach their students.

Special Thanks to...

Westmusic

...for sponsoring today's session! Find resources used today at their booth!

¹ Visit www.responsiveclassroom.org for more information.

² Visit <http://curry.virginia.edu/research/centers/castl/project/responsive-classroom-efficacy-study> for more information.

³ Visit www.responsiveclassroom.org/principles-and-practices-responsive-classroom to learn more about the RC Guiding Principles.

Responsive Classroom and Elementary Music = A Perfect Match

Opening Routines

- Consistency in routines instills confidence and helps students feel safe
- Some steps in opening routines can include: orderly entrance, greeting, message, simple starting activity, effective transition to next class activity

Morning Meeting

- In the general classroom, a twenty-minute active gathering to start the day.
- In specials, simply including a brief message or activity to start the class.
- Includes greetings, group activities, and a morning message (*like the one below!*).

Dear Teachers,

Clapping and chanting and stomping, oh my!

Today we are going to learn about Responsive Classroom and how it can be used in the elementary music classroom. When you leave today's session, you will be ready to use new ideas, understand the basic principles of Responsive Classroom, and better communicate with colleagues and administrators on our own classroom approach! Think about your time at IMEA this year. What is something you've learned in this session, something you've learned at IMEA, or something you hope to learn in this session? Now, let's play!

Sincerely, Matthew

The Parts of a Morning Meeting

Orderly Entrance: Teacher-Led Mirroring⁴

- Scattered around the room
- Teacher-led → student-led
- Could grow to wall facings, partners, diamonds

Greeting: Gilly Gilly Gilly Good Morning

- Teacher-led singing of song
 - Gilly gilly gilly good morning
 - Good morning, good morning
 - Gilly gilly gilly good morning
 - Good morning to you
- Adding eye-contact and waving
- Add partner interaction
 - A: Hello, B: Hello
 - A: Goodbye, B: Goodbye

⁴ Music used for this activity: Curumin (Bossa Nova Style), It Moves Me: World Music Warmups for Dance, Danai Gagne, 2007.

Group Learning: Find a Spot!

- From the morning message:
 - *Something you've learned in this session*
 - *Something you've learned at IMEA*
 - *Something you hope to learn in this session*
- Song = walking/traveling; end of song = find shoulder partner
- How else could we travel?
- In the classroom: add polyspots to ensure partners, vary colors with specific questions

Activity: Double This, Double That⁵

Double double this this
Double double that that
Double this double that
Double this that

- Everyone in a circle, hands in front
- Silent mirroring
 - Double = palms forward
 - This = back of the hand forward
 - That = fist
 - Explore location: air, lap, neighbor's back
- Adding words
 - 'Double' 'this' and 'that' individually
 - Teacher = 'double'; Everyone else = 'this' and 'that'
 - Split, switch
- Face a partner
- Turn = a new partner!
- What else could we say?
 - Animal sounds
 - Foods
 - States
 - What is the rule to pick a word?

Guided Discovery

- Focused, purposeful, and playful technique to introduce materials and concepts to students.
- Students explore an object, figure out what it can do, and then answer directed questions to discover its best purpose.
- “Guided experiences in spontaneous exploration of the materials under focus”⁶ is a playful opportunity to explore new concepts in the classroom.
- In the general classroom: crayons
 - What do you think this is?

⁵ This energizer can also be found in *Energizers! 88 Quick Movement Activities That Refresh and Refocus*, by Susan Lattanzi Roser, #20. Some process steps for my approach and other great lessons can be found in *Intery Mintery* by Doug Goodkin.

⁶ American Orff-Schulwerk Association (AOSA), visit www.aosa.org for more information.

Responsive Classroom and Elementary Music = A Perfect Match

- What do they do?
- What else could we do?
- Explore, Share and Care
- In the music classroom: xylophone bars
 - What do you think this is?
 - What do they do?
 - What else could we do?
 - Explore, Share and Care
- How else could we do this in the general music classroom?

Academic Choice

- Student-created final product, project, or presentation showcasing student learning.
- Incorporates natural cycle of learning: student-initiated goal planning, active working, and reflection on experience.
- We do this each and every day when students choose an unpitched percussion instrument for part of a sound story, improvise a B section on the xylophone, or create a rhythm from a selection of building bricks. As music educators, we often take it a step further when we ask groups of students to create an 8-measure creative movement piece or compose an ABA melody on the recorder with an unpitched percussion ostinato.

La Bastringue⁷

- Process: Begin in a circle
- Aural cues
 - Explore forward and back
 - End with in 4, out 4
 - Explore left and right
 - End with left 8, out 8
 - Combine
 - In 4, Out 4
 - In 4, Out 4
 - Circle left 8
 - Circle right 8
 - Add holding hands
- Partner Steps
 - Partner dominoes
 - Dosido for 8
 - Add to previous steps
 - Two hand turn for 8
 - Add to previous steps
 - Promenade counterclockwise for 16
 - Think how it transitions from two hand turn
 - Add to previous steps
- Partner Composition

⁷ From “Chimes of Dunkirk: Great Dances of Children” by New England Dancing Masters. Track on accompanying CD.

Responsive Classroom and Elementary Music = A Perfect Match

- What if you and your partner could create something in your space instead of the promenade? How long do you have? What are some examples?
- Final Form
 - A: In and out 2x (16)
 - B: Circle L and R (16)
 - C: Dosido and Two hand turn (16)
 - D: Promenade or Composition (16)
- Extension of Form
 - 1st D: Promenade, 2nd D: Composition, Repeat
- Reflecting on Responsive Classroom
 - Where did you see *guided discovery* in this folk dance? Where did you see *academic choice*?

Interactive Learning Structures

- Student-centered partner, small group, and whole class activities
- Allows opportunities for students to collaborate, socialize, create and move
- Giving students unique ways to share their thoughts – *often through action* – allows the opportunity for deeper understanding while keeping the classroom environment fun and uplifting
- Rely on the feedback, thoughts, actions and decisions of our students rather than ourselves, the teachers.
- Maître d' Interactive Learning Structure (ILS)
 - RC Structure: Teacher calls out for a 'table of ___'. Students form groups of that number and discuss a prompt, question, or activity. Next, teacher calls out new table, students must form new group and repeat.
 - Orff Structure: For a movement lesson, teacher calls out for a 'table of ___' and students form groups of that number and create a shape using positive and negative space. The teacher then takes a tour of the 'statues', noticing different shapes, and begins to play an instrument (drum, piano, temple blocks) as students travel around the room (walking, skipping, galloping, crawling, etc based upon the students). Teacher stops playing, calls out a new number, groups form and create a new shape. For an extension, add movement cards to give students more focused ideas.

Use of Energizers

- An energizer is a quick and exciting activity that engages the entire class simultaneously.
- They allow for fun, build community, and instill safety and comfort in the classroom.
- Energizers are most often used to:
 - Re-focus and re-engage students that are distracted by outside stimuli or plain boredom.
 - Aid transitions such as between lessons or from one part of the room to another.
 - Offer a mental and physical break when working on difficult material. Studies show that movement stimulates the brain and can increase student productivity.⁸
 - Review content of previously learned material in an engaging way.
- More energizers? **Come to today's session at 1:15!**

⁸ Visit www.creativitypost.com/education/the_benefits_of_movement_in_schools for more information on movement and student learning.

Responsive Classroom and Elementary Music = A Perfect Match

Closing Routines

- Spend the time ending the class smoothly.
- Consistency with putting instruments away, lining up, grabbing jackets, other steps
- Brief energizers to keep the class focused while in line, waiting, etc
- Closing energizer example:
 - Make A Motion: 1 2 3 __ , 5 6 7 __ , A B C __ , E F G __ , Make a motion with your...

What Have We Experienced Today?

- Take a moment and look back on what we've done today. How much of it felt comfortable in the general music classroom? How much of it *was* general music? A final component of Responsive Classroom is the importance of teacher language. Think about the language used today. Student-centered or teacher-centered? Encouraging or dismissive?
- Teacher language should reinforce, remind, be open-ended, and occasionally redirect.
 - Reinforcing language
 - Concrete, professional, encouraging, class-centered
 - I notice...
 - We did...
 - Reminding language
 - Brief, to the point, clear, calm
 - Who can show us...
 - Who remembers...
 - Remind us how...
 - Open-ended language
 - Helps students explore and experience
 - Student-centered questions value student input
 - Allows further insight into student understanding

Additional Materials

99 Activities and Greetings by Melissa Correa-Connolly

The Morning Meeting Book by Roxann Kriete

The First Six Weeks of School by Paula Denton and Roxann Kriete

A Complementary Combination: Responsive Classroom and Orff Schulwerk, "*The Orff Echo*", Spring 2014, by Matthew Stensrud

"5 Simple Ways to Incorporate Responsive Classroom Ideas into Orff Schulwerk," *Reverberations*, January 2015, by Matthew Stensrud

Matthew Stensrud
3006 Landover Street
Alexandria, VA 22305
mstensrud@gmail.com --- 513.703.8012

Matthew Stensrud (MM, George Mason University; BM, University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music) teaches kindergarten through fifth grade music at Annandale Terrace Elementary School in Fairfax County, Virginia. He completed his Orff Schulwerk certification at the San Francisco International Orff Course in the summer of 2013. He also completed his Level I training in Responsive Classroom and has presented on the combination of Orff and Responsive Classroom in the general and music classrooms. He lives in Alexandria, Virginia.