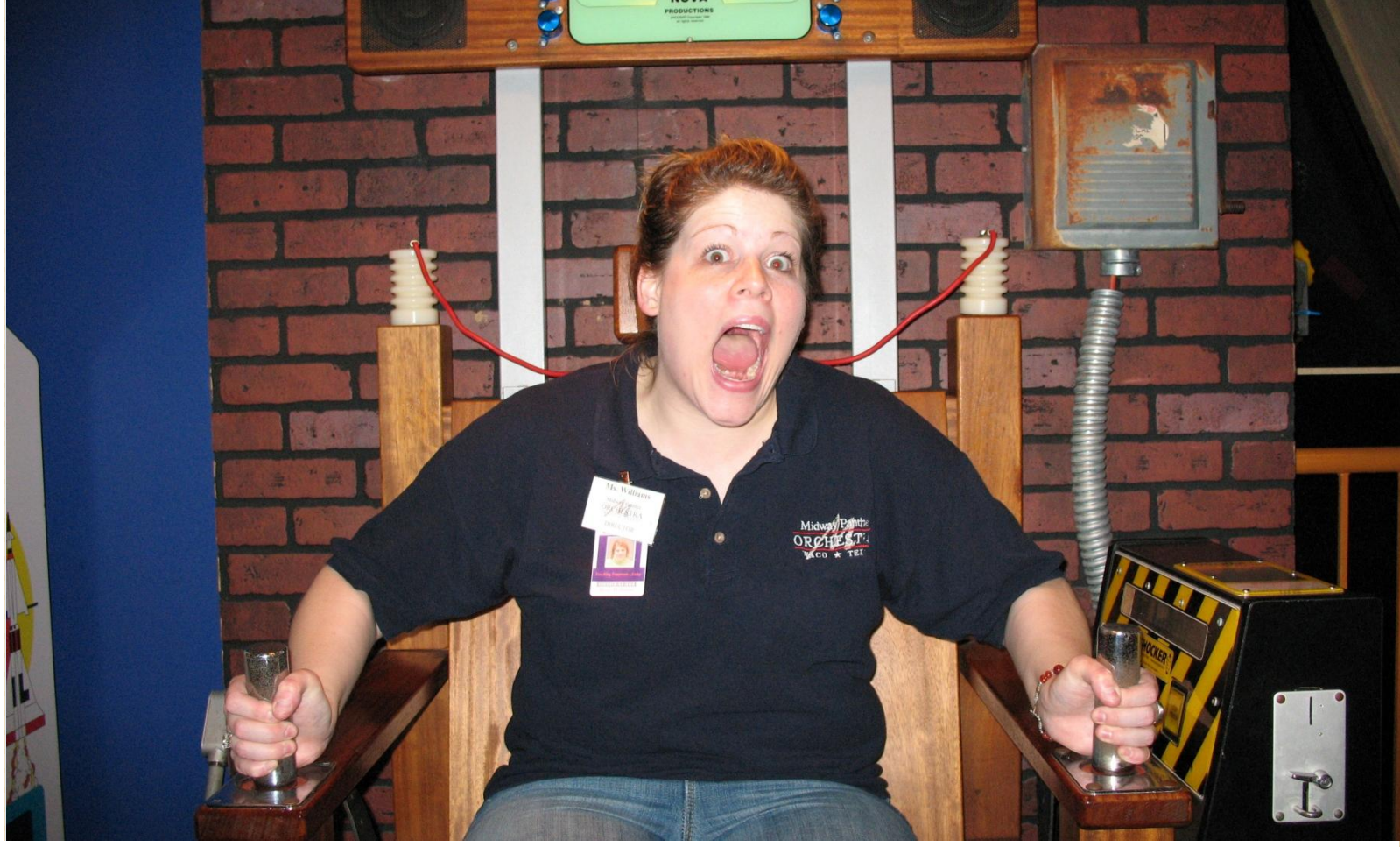


I'VE INHERITED A STRING PROGRAM...NOW WHAT?

K-State CMENC presentation

10 October 2011



Before you SCREAM...

Think reasonably...

Reasonable thoughts...

Breathe

Breathe

Breathe

Breathe

Breathe

Breathe

- I can teach.
- This is simply a new subject-and it is actually linked to my primary teaching subject! (At least they didn't assign me to shop or remedial sciences)
- I have some string background (Thank you KSU!)-but I most definitely need to brush up my skills.



Ok...you are feeling a little more calm...

How should I plan for this class?

The “Stuff”

What do I have, where is it, what do I need, and how can I get it...

Band/Choir Room DITTO

- Everything that you do to prepare for your upcoming year in band/choir—you also do for strings.
 - ▣ Instrument/Supplies inventory
 - What do I have on my campus(es)? Is there a printed inventory? Check with the finance office about records submitted to them—even if outdated, it's a start.
 - ORGANIZE! You are going to have to be a multi-tasker in your new position which means things need to be organized and easily accessible. Redo that old inventory and already begin assigning lockers, etc., before it all begins.
 - Do I have a roster with instrumentation given? Do I have instruments for these students?
 - Find the local string dealer and ask string colleagues about the instruments they have and their rental guidelines. Are they comparable? Do they provide fast service? Did you trust them when you walked in the front door?

What is wrong with this instrument?



Ditto, 2

- Rock stops, rosin, bows (that match the length of the instrument), shoulder rests, mutes, peg dope, straws, corn pads, auto detailing tape, powder pads, rags, chair straps (boards), rubber bands, medical tubing, electrical tape, strings, paper clips.
- Music Library
 - What do you have?
 - Are there printed programs anywhere? Compare the literature that they have played and use that as your starting point.
 - Lucksmusic.com
 - Jwpepper.com
 - Fjhmusic.com
 - Lorenz.com (Latham String Publications)
 - Etc.

Ditto, 3

- ▣ Talk to your campus principals
 - What do they expect from the string program? Where could the strings be better used in the campus community?
 - Basketball games
 - School Board functions
 - School Foundation benefits
 - Strolling Strings
- ▣ Contact a few parents on the roster (perhaps ask the principal for recommendations)
 - Ask them to meet at a local coffee shop to introduce yourself, discuss the traditions of the program, and to see where they see the program going.

Ditto, 4

- ▣ Talk to your other music teachers in the district!
 - What counting system is taught at the elementary level?
 - Scheduling (class day and outside of the class day)
 - Combination Concerts?

- ▣ What musical ensembles and other school activities do your students also participate in?
 - Is there a Youth Symphony?
 - Are church activities the norm?
 - Are all of your cellists on the Varsity Football team?
 - Are all of your 2nd violins in color guard?



I'm starting to feel a little bit better...

Umm...but I now need to think about curriculum

A horizontal bar at the top of the slide, divided into an orange section on the left and a blue section on the right.

Now you get to TEACH it!

Get excited!

Kids are kids...whether they play violin, sing tenor, or march the tuba...



Levels of String Teaching

□ **Level One-Beginners (Late Elementary or Early Middle School)**

- YOU need to be able to play these instruments better than your students.
- YOU must feel comfortable demonstrating
- Don't try to finish the whole method book in one night before classes start—stay a few pages ahead of your students (on each instrument)—and maybe start in June, too!
- Choose/locate your method book and PRACTICE! (Essential Elements, Book 1 or Orchestral Expressions, Book 1)
- Also, Rhythm A Day, Anne Witt (Belwin)
- Encourage private lessons as soon as possible! Nothing beats one on one instruction.

□ **Level Two-Intermediate (Middle School)**

- YOU STILL need to be able to play at least ONE of these instruments better than your students. They should be developing problem solving skills by now and should also start to see the relationships between the instruments—and if they don't—teach them!
- Use a supplemental method book (Like Essential Elements Book 2, Essential Elements Techniques, Orchestral Expressions Book 2, Expressive Techniques for Orchestra (Tempo Press))
- Bow strokes should begin to develop, scales expand, additional FPs added, vibrato, shifting, etc.

Levels of String Teaching, cont.

□ **Level Three (Early High School)**

- Continue use of many of the method books listed in the MS section. Add Daily Warm-ups by Michael Allen (also available in Full Orchestra version)
- At least two scales should be at three octaves (basses at least at 2 if not in private lessons).
- Continue to fine tune RH and LH techniques
 - RH: spiccato, portato/loure, marcato, martele, sautille, etc. Full rectangle bows, not two triangles. Long tones
 - LH: FPs on all strings, begin FPs in new positions, vibrato, shifting gracefulness,
- Region, State Ensembles
- Fine tune, fine tune, fine tune

□ **Level Four (Late High School)**

- Fine tune, fine tune, fine tune
- Prep students for college auditions-whether a music major or not!

Curriculum

Sample curriculum from Midway ISD, Waco, TX

More tools

- Begin solo and ensemble opportunities early!
- Sight-read DAILY!
- Finger Patterns!
- Practice full body warm-ups. Stretch for no injuries!
- Insist on full bow (more air!)
- Weight, Speed, Placement
- Bow from your arms and your back (your elbow CAN move without moving your shoulder), steer from your wrist and your fingers
- LH-Close doesn't cut it. Start with tapes for 1, (3, 4, 4), 4 (4th pos, 3rd pos + 4) (not the full fingerboard tapes) and switch them to black after year one. Fully remove them about 6 months after that.
- Know how to tune instruments and restring them.
- Rotational seating-all important and matter to the overall sound of the ensemble. Circle ensembles/rehearsals.
- Ensemble critiques from recording of rehearsals
- Student conductors (lead warm-ups, etc.)
- Encourage string music camps
- Bring in guests! Performances, demonstrations, clinicians, etc.
- As your classes get older, do not be afraid to demonstrate using your primary instrument.



...And watch the numbers grow!