THE IMPORTANCE OF JOURNAL WRITING AMONG MUSIC EDUCATORS

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Teaching music, like any other profession, demands for continuing growth and development (Flohr, 2006). No music teacher, at any point of his/her career, can say that he/she has already reached the zenith of music teaching (Abrahams, 2005). The room for improvement is always open. And as music teachers satisfy that desire to bring their music teaching into a higher level, the desire on the contrary becomes even broader. It is a desire -a need- that is satiated only by desire itself.

This desire is first satisfied during the internship of music education students. Through this period of guided practice, would-be music teachers are able to concretize the theories they have discussed inside the classroom (Abrahams, 2005). And in the application of these theories, they are exposed to reality. Sometimes, the excitement and enthusiasm are immediately suspended as they ascertain that theory is far different from practice except that the former is first known to them (Abrahams, Bowers, Head, Jordan, Liebergen, & Porterfield, 2011). As they apply all the principles of music pedagogy during their internship, they learn to accept that utopia is a myth. The relief, however, comes when they, through their profound understanding of the philosophy of their preferred course, realize that their profession necessitates continuous development (McPherson & Hendricks, 2010).

For a profession so delicate and wide-encompassing like music education, organization is the name of the game. It is therefore true to say that when music teachers are organized with all their activities, they have finished half of the job already. Through organization, they are always reminded. And part of organization as a virtue is journal writing (Colwell, 2003). Others might think that this is very elementary a concept. But its impact is proven effective. Organization, particularly journal writing, must begin on the very first time that music education students are given the opportunity to handle a class (Fisher, 2008). Unlike filling out an observation form, journal writing is a sort of a reflection (Edmund, Birkner, Burcham, & Heffner, 2008). Implied therefore is the fact that it is not merely a chronicle of what occurred in the previous teaching. Instead, journal writing is reflecting upon and assessing the story behind the story.

In writing a journal, it is important that would-be music teachers evaluate themselves objectively assessing their performance using the yardstick they set for themselves (Edmund et al.,
This yardstick must be anchored on the objectives they have for that particular teaching. This is no easy task. All angles must be looked into including the efficiency of instruction and classroom management (Fisher, 2008). As they reflect on their performance, they also identify whether there are improvements from their previous teachings (Colwell, 2003). In other words, journal writing is writing a history, own history of the music education students that will remind them from time to time of their mistakes in the past which will surely ameliorate their teaching.

The high level of reflective thinking that journal writing demands is a skill that every music educator must possess if they are to raise the bar of music pedagogy.

References


