

THE VAULT

MSOE Weekly Newsletter-Dr. Erik Johnson, Director Heather Ewer- Editor

March 28th, 2018

Your Students Know More than You May Think....

Hello everyone! I have a quick story to tell you today! This is something that inspired me when I really needed it, and it reminded me that I learn more from my students than they learn from me. So: This week has been hard for me, and for a variety of reasons I came into my sectional this week with a need for connection - between my students and myself, the students and each other, and the students and the music. We did some thinking on the "why" of the music, not just the technical performance of it, and to that end I gave my kids prompts for sharing on each song we worked on. For *Simple Gifts*, I asked: "What's the best gift you've ever been given?" I do not know what I expected - "I got an Xbox for Christmas," maybe - but what I got were the kind of responses that take a lot more self-reflection and emotional maturity to produce. "The greatest gift I've ever received is to be able to travel." "My dad took me on a trip to D.C. for my birthday and we spent time together and went to all the cool museums." "I was given the gift of life." "My family went on vacation and got to spend lots of time together." No prodding, no nudging toward "deeper" answers.

Later in the lesson we talked about the meaning behind *Song of Hope*, and how it was written after a great tragedy. I asked that they consider a time that someone was kind to them when they were in need, and I asked that they give me a minute of their attention so that I could tell them a story of when someone was there for me. They genuinely listened, then immediately started volunteering their own stories without prompting. Again, honest and emotionally mature. "My friend group always takes the time to help me when I'm confused about x subject." "My band director helped me through a hard time."

Moral of the story: your students know what's up. Treat them like mature, emotionally conscious people (because they are), and they will reflect that in their words and actions. Be vulnerable first. Authenticity is in every single person - all we have to do is lead it out.

-Kelci Hartz, Tuba Teaching Artist



Come one come all!

Saturday April 7th from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.— MSOE is hosting the best event of the season, the **MSOE Carnival!** This is a **FREE** event open to all 6th through 8th students—they do not have to be in MSOE to come to the Carnival. It is a day of musical excellence, with workshops and performances by the MSOE teachers and students for all to enjoy! **Registration begins at 8 a.m. in the UCA Lobby.** Workshops are from 9 a.m. and 12 p.m. and performances will be from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. Please tell your students— they will learn so much and will have a great time! Students may bring their instruments.

UCA— 1400 Remington St.
Fort Collins, CO 80524

See you there!

Feedback– It Does Not Just Come from You!

Recently in our lessons, Mr. Hildebrandt and I have started incorporating an extra level of individual feedback that we do not normally get during our sectional teaching sessions. Instead of trying to get inside the mind of a middle school student by guessing or making inferences about what resonates and what doesn't, we decided to ask them. Since there are two of us, one of us has been taking students one by one out into the hall and asking them some questions for feedback:

How is your MSOE experience so far?

How do you feel about the culture of our section? Do you feel everyone gets along? Are there any major distractions?

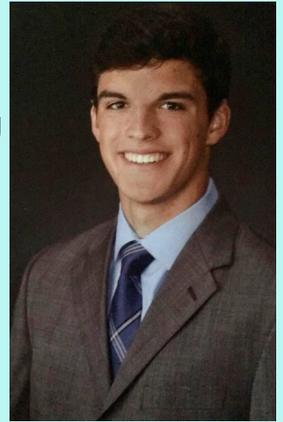
What do you like/dislike about our lesson structure and content?

What more can I do to help you to learn as much as possible? What do you want to see from me moving forward?

Then we finished off each short interview with some individual feedback for each student on what they are doing well and what they could improve upon moving forward.

During these interviews it was surprising how much honest feedback these students provided in order to help our teaching. I found that there are weaknesses in my teaching that I was not aware of at all, but were clear to the students. I also learned more about where their mind is at when they enter MSOE. A few students said that they spend all day at school being quiet. When they get to MSOE, they are sick of being quiet and want to release all of the energy that they have accumulated throughout the day. This was very eye opening for Mr. Hildebrandt and I because we often get so caught up in our own heads that we forget where the students are coming from. The school day starts for us when these students come to MSOE, but it is important to remember that they do not come to MSOE with the same attitude that they go to school with. They come to MSOE to play music and have fun, and in my opinion, that is something that has to be emphasized above all in our lessons. In reality, all that means is reframing the presentation of how you teach concepts. The students are there to learn and improve. It is our job to make them better musicians, but it is even more important to make sure they are engaged. Keeping them engaged involves sympathizing with what mindset they may be in and using it to your advantage.

Although this concept may seem simple, I think many of us treat all of our teaching opportunities as if we were in a school setting, and since these kids have spent an entire day at school there may be more success in reframing the way you present your lesson in order to find a way to resonate more effectively with your students. -Matt Shiley, Percussion Teaching Artist



Our Musical Language!

"It's rare that I meet a musician that doesn't agree that music is a language. But it is very rare that I find a musician that really treats it like one." ~Victor Wooten

There are a lot of ideas we can draw from learning our first language that could be beneficial when applied to learning and teaching music. As infants, we are immersed in a world where a vast majority of individuals have a high level grasp of the language that they speak. How difficult would it be for us to grasp the facets of communication if we had to start in 6th grade, in the beginner language class, with one proficient speaker in the room dictating our actions. While not impossible, it would take a large amount of time and effort to reach the level of proficiency that we have achieved today, through immersion. Continued on page 3....

Trivia is my favorite thing!

Welcome to the trivia column of the MSOE 2018 Vault! Each week, there will be at least two questions. Sometimes they will be multiple choice! Submit your answers to heather.ewer@colostate.edu, and correct answers will earn you a raffle slip in the hat for a prize! Drawings will be held during our Wednesday night meetings!

Trivia Week #8:

- 1. Hypothetical Situation: Your class just got a new mascot– a stuffed pig! Say you want to honor amazing composer Elliot Del Borgo by naming the pig after him. What do you name the pig??**
- 2. What are Aaron Copland's birth and death dates?**
- 3. Give me your best rock band name!**

How to say “No” and Feel GREAT!

I have something to think about. If you know me at all, which I hope you do, you know that I am really good at getting overwhelmed with school and ensembles. There are so many opportunities here at CSU! I simply want to say yes to everything. Saying no feels virtually impossible! Anyway, in my lesson last week, Dr. McGuire (the horn professor) said something very wise. I told him what I was doing and how I felt like I could never get anything done, but there was nothing I could say no to. Everything I am doing is so important to my education and me! He told me something along the lines of “You’re right. You do need all of these experiences while you are an undergraduate. However, you have four years to do them. You do not need to be doing everything in one semester.” That is when I realized that saying no is ok and healthy. Setting yourself up for long-term success is not just saying yes to every opportunity that presents itself. It is prioritizing things and making a plan so you can do everything you want to do while you are in college, you just are not saying yes to everything all at once. You do not have to feel like you are drowning in all of your classes and ensembles!



I think it is crucial to know your limits and to go just beyond them, so that you may continue to grow as a musician and teacher throughout your time at CSU. However, just beyond your limits is not the same as saying yes to everything and turning into Elastigirl in order to reach everything that you have agreed to! We are in school to learn and grow. In order to grow we need to push ourselves, but there is no reason to feel the need to say yes to everything. Sometimes in order to grow and get better, you need to have fewer commitments so that you can devote more time to each thing you wish to pursue. All of this is easier said than done, but it is just something to think about (especially since we are getting close to registering for fall classes). –Isabel Waterbury, Horn Teaching Artist

Our Musical Language- Continued

In a perfect world, we could teach music like a language. Every young musician would have an instrument in their hand, and the experts that get put up on pedestals would be able to reach down, and pull them up to the same level. Unfortunately, the society that we live in is not a utopia. However, we as educators can put some of these ideas into effect. Every student has something to “say.” Let them say it, and whether right or wrong, they can build and improve upon that in order to grow as “speakers”. Sometimes, we get too caught up in what the student is *supposed* to say. But, we learn the alphabet after we learn our first words, after we are already putting phrases and sentences together. We learn grammar after many of us have a functional understanding of the structure of the words we speak. So why then would we not treat music in the same way? -Austin Lowder, Horn Teaching Artist



Letter from the Editor-

Do you ever feel the burning desire to ask your teacher a question about how they explained something, or why the lesson they taught worked (or did not work) for you? But... were you too shy to ask it? Or perhaps you felt too awkward? Sometimes I shuffle my feet when I feel awkward about a conversation I am about to have. But then I remember that what I am asking will give me great insight into the education profession, so I go for it! It is okay to feel shy, but do not let that stop you from talking to teachers and asking for their valuable input. Build relationships with your colleagues and mentors, just like you are building relationships with your students. It is never too late to ask a teacher you have for a class right now about their practices. Just be polite, and make sure you go to class. That always helps you to get that student-teacher relationship off on the right foot!

Stay excellent everyone!

-Heather Ewer, Associate Program Director



Contact Us-

Please send submissions via the Google Form found in the MSOE Ecosystem! Questions?

Email-
heather.ewer@colostate.edu

Go MSOE!!!!!!!



Great Minds...

MSOE is a wonderful community for both the students and the teachers! Sometimes they even dress alike! From left to right: Teaching Artists Nicky Tisdall, Tabitha Lindahl, Gavin Milburn, Kelci Hartz, and Anna Varosy take a moment to enjoy their coincidental matching. Not pictured but still matching: Corban Green.