

Heather Shouldice's Workshop/In-Service/Conference Session Titles & Descriptions

"The ABCs of MLT: An Introduction to Gordon's Music Learning Theory"

This session/workshop will provide an overview of the major ideas of Gordon's Music Learning Theory and audiation. Video examples will be used to show what MLT looks like in the music classroom. Discover how MLT can enhance your students' musicianship!

"Advocating the Importance of Elementary General Music!"

Given the current economic climate, we live in fear of the possibility that our music programs will be cut, especially at the elementary level. Rather than throwing our hands up in helpless despair, now is the time to be proactive! This session will address ways in which elementary general music teachers can advocate for their programs and their students by educating parents, administrators, and other stakeholders about the importance of what we do. Come learn how you can take action now!

"Assessment in the Elementary Music Classroom"

This session will provide an overview of assessment practices in the elementary general music program. Focus will be on building rating scales for use in measuring children's musical skill development within the context of authentic classroom activities. Ways of using assessment to guide instruction and strategies for translating assessments into evaluations (i.e., grades) will also be explored.

"Beyond Major and Minor: Expanding Musical Experiences through Varied Tonalities"

Just as life is more exciting in color than black and white, the musical environment we provide our students is richer if we include tonalities beyond major and minor. This session will share repertoire in a variety of tonalities (including folk songs and popular music) as well as corresponding activities that can be used to teach a variety of skills in the elementary music classroom, such as singing games, movement, steady beat, form, ostinati, basslines, and rounds.

"Composing from the Inside Out: Steps to Meaningful Composition in Elementary General Music"

Have you wondered what students are capable of creating when they compose using the musical ideas inside of themselves? This session will focus on composition units and the step-by-step processes that enable students to develop and express their musicianship. Examples of student work will be shared along with practical ideas you can take back to your classroom to help students unlock their inner Mozart.

"Don't Stop Believing!": Nurturing Musical Ability in ALL of our Students!"

Who do we believe can be successful in our music classrooms? Who has musical ability? Who has the potential to develop musical skills and what is needed to do so? Our answers to these questions can have a powerful impact on the musical development of our students. Contrary to popular belief that one must have innate "talent" in order to be good at music, this session will focus on what is possible when we truly believe in the musical potential of every student who walks into our classrooms.

“Fostering Vocal Creativity and Improvisation in Elementary Music”

Want to help your students create and improvise vocally but not sure how to start? This session is for you! The presenter will share strategies for using Gordon’s Music Learning Theory to help students develop the musical “vocabulary” and independence needed to create and improvise. These playful and engaging activities, using practical application of MLT, can help build students’ musical confidence and get them on their way to vocally improvising in no time!

“Hearing the Notes on the Page: How to Help Kids Make Sense of Music Notation”

The session will focus on helping students develop the ability to read and write music notation with comprehension- by associating musical sounds with the notation they see. Using concepts from language and literacy development, the presenter will share ideas for helping students develop musical skills and understanding that will enable them to read and write notation in a musically meaningful way, beginning with informal notation awareness and progressing to notation skills and even composition.

“Improvisation Is Elementary: It’s All About Readiness!”

The first step to improvisation is developing the readiness to improvise. This session will share activities and ideas to help elementary music students develop the tonal and rhythm “vocabulary” and skills that will enable them to be successful improvisers, as well as strategies for how to approach creating and improvising with young children. Connections between improvisation and composition will also be explored through examples of improvisation replication and revision.

“Individual Musicking: Developing Elementary Students’ Musical Independence”

If we want students to become lifelong music-makers, we need to help them develop musical independence as early as possible. Individual response can be a natural part of the elementary music classroom that will help students develop independent musical skills, as well as provide an opportunity for assessment and individualization of instruction. From brief individual response to creating and improvising, elementary general music can lay the foundation for a lifetime of independent musicking!

“More Bang for your Buck: Extending Lessons and Making Connections in Elementary General Music”

Elementary music can easily become a disjunct “grab bag” of activities. This session will enable elementary music teachers to help students make connections, continuously develop skills, and encourage deep understanding by extension and spiraling of concepts and repertoire through and across grade levels. Many national standards, including improvisation and composition, will be incorporated.

“A Playful Approach to Teaching Preschool and Kindergarten Music”

Discover developmentally appropriate and musically rich activities for harnessing the energy of young children through “music play” and using it to lay the foundation for a lifetime of music making. See how even improvisation can begin at age five!

“Research-to-Practice: The Invisible Power of Teacher Beliefs”

As music teachers, we are so busy that we rarely have a chance to sit down and reflect on our beliefs about teaching and learning. However, research suggests that teachers’ beliefs have a tremendous impact on what they do in the classroom and the experiences of their students, whether they are aware of it or not. This session will give you an opportunity to reflect on your own beliefs, explore the beliefs of others, and examine ways in which these beliefs might manifest in the classroom.

“Research to ‘Real Life’: Applications of Recent Research for Elementary General Music”

That research stuff only matters in the “ivory tower” and has nothing to do with me, right? Wrong! This session will share findings of recent research studies that are relevant for elementary general music teachers and can inform our teaching practice. Instead of focusing on jargon and statistics, we will look at how these research findings can be applied in practical ways to improve the experiences we provide our students, including sample activities and other ideas for the classroom.

“Responding to the Musical Needs of Young Children”

This presentation will focus on how young children learn and develop musical skills and understanding and the ways in which we, as music teachers, can use this knowledge to provide sequential and developmentally appropriate music-learning experiences for our young students.

“Teaching Harmony Step-by-Step: A Sequential Approach to Developing Harmonic Audiation”

Helping your students understand and sing in harmony can be a snap! The key is to think about readiness. Using ideas drawn from Gordon’s Music Learning Theory, this session will share practical activities and strategies for developing students’ harmonic skills in a sequential way.

“When Worlds Collide: Incorporating Vernacular Music into the Elementary Classroom”

Our students often live in two musical worlds: that of school music and that of music outside of school. Unfortunately, these worlds may seldom intersect. Incorporation of vernacular music styles (pop, rock, rap, blues, etc.) can be engaging for students and helps them make connections between music class and “the real world.” From movement to harmony to songwriting, this session will share ways to help students further develop their own musical skills and understanding through “their” music.