

Reflecting on the three components, my Professional Growth Experiences (PGE) both directly and indirectly impacted student learning. When technology was the focus of the PGE, student gains were directly affected; however, when collaboration was at the core of the PGE, impact on student learning was indirect.

PGE 2 and PGE 3 directly impacted student learning as a result of the training I received in the implementation of technology in the music classroom. As a result, students with little or no prerequisite musical skill were able to create compositions and perform instruments using tablet technology. Likewise, students using specific notation and sequencing software were able to compose, edit and publish their work in a standardized format and listen to a synthesized performance (sequencing) of their work. The technology these PGEs provided gave students the tools for early success, which generated immediate and lasting interest in the activity. As a result of these two experiences, I was able to instruct students in relevant musical techniques in the context of real-world application, which can now be replicated outside the classroom.

Through collaboration with teachers, artists and community, I implemented PGE 1 and PGE 4 with an indirect impact on student learning. In the organization of the Black History Month celebration, I collaborated with teachers of multiple disciplines, to create instruction that was inclusive of the entire student body. All students who attended the performance were engaged in the celebration of cultural heritage and recognition of local history. Music students gained content knowledge in preparing two musical selections of contrasting styles and forms for performance. Similarly, the visiting artist activity and the instrument grant program were products of collaboration with the local arts community. The experience deepened my content knowledge in chamber music and sparked changes in my pedagogy. In addition to collaborating on instruction, artists interacted closely with students, generating the potential for deeper impact.

In the cases of two specific individuals, the events were transformative. One experience left a lasting legacy of instrument ownership, and the other experience changed the trajectory of a student's education and career.

In analyzing the connections and patterns between the components from my perspective as an educator, I began to uncover a common theme in the focus of my teaching—to create lasting influence beyond the classroom, through the capacity to foster life-long learners.

Reflecting on the progress of PGE 1, I hope to continue collaborating with colleagues to develop new and interactive programs, which promote greater cultural understanding among diverse learners at my school. Some next steps for PGE 2 & 3 in my professional growth would be for me to continue the music technology training and remain current in new innovations, which may be applicable to my content area. Specifically, I would like to deepen my knowledge of Garage Band and Sibelius software programs and expand my current course offerings to include composition and recording classes. Perhaps merging these classes might just be the natural evolution. A next step in the visiting artist collaboration would be for me to connect my class with a composer (national or international via Skype) to mentor and facilitate a student-generated composition to be performed in concert.

Reflecting on the current National Board Music Standards, that which has presented the most challenge for me since certification is Standard III—Planning and Implementing Assessment. In a creative discipline such as music, assessment can be subjective because it contains many moving parts and layers of complexity, which can be difficult to quantify. In order to address this challenge, I completed a graduate level class titled, “Measurement and Evaluation of Musical Behaviors” (2008), in which I learned skills in music test construction. Additionally, I attended a daylong evaluation workshop (2010), sponsored by our state music

educators association and for three years (2011-2013), served on the team to write standardized state assessments to measure student growth in music. As much as I believe I have grown in this area, I feel there is still more to accomplish. I annually review my rubrics and revise as needed, to reflect needs of student assessment. Sometimes I add or delete a criterion, change the weighting, or even develop a new rubric. Regardless, the goal is always how to best assess student growth, collect formative and summative data and provide feedback for student reflection and revision of work, while meeting the requirements of state and district educational initiatives. I view this challenge as ongoing, evolving and requiring due diligence.

In reflecting on my professional growth since certification, there are several themes that emerge as I seek to define myself as an educator. I have come to acknowledge my teaching role as less a deliverer of content and more a facilitator of learning. In the past ten years, my teaching has evolved to be more student-centered, and my instruction is more individualized. I now understand *how* students learn—by ‘doing’ and constructing their own knowledge. The classroom is a social laboratory, where peer-to-peer interactions act as a catalyst to model and motivate learning. Therefore, the teaching environment must foster student ownership of learning. Content must be meaningful and relatable to students while still stretching the limits of intellectual development.

The evolution of my teaching values has created a shift in my pedagogical practices. I have come to view planning and preparation with a different emphasis, which highlights the overall structure that guides teaching activities and sets up an environment that supports student inquiry and fosters risk-taking, but still leaves room for individuality and divergent thinking. In the end, it is the students who provide the richness of inspiration, and through their inquiry and self-expression, continually serve to challenge me as an educator and life-long learner.