



Teaching Without Words: Exploring Innovative Teaching in Elementary Music

Presented by Matthew Stensrud

Florida Music Educators Association
January 2020 Conference

Stop losing your voice, teachers! With instruments, sound cues, unique vocal sounds, and more, we can conquer the lost voice. Let's explore how to present classroom procedures, learn a dance, teach a xylophone piece, and play unpitched percussion—all with as few words as possible.

Coming Together as a Group Without Words

- Opening Routine and Procedure
 - How do you and your students enter your classroom?
 - How can you enter the space musically and without words?
- Class mirroring and movement with a recording from *It Moves Me*

Learning a Folk Dance Without Words

- Discovering Together
 - “Dansons sous la pluie” and “Tango Romantico” from *Petits sauts délicats avec grand ecart* by René Aubry, 2018.
- Things to Explore in a Circle
 - In and out
 - Left and right
 - Body percussion: pat, clap, R in the air, L in the air, together in the air
 - Finding a partner...
 - Do-si-do
 - Two-hand turn
 - Promenade (shake hands, have fun with it!)
- Folk Dance → La Bastringue from *Chimes of Dunkirk* by New England Dancing Masters
 - A: In and out 2x (16)
 - B: Circle L and R (16)
 - C: Dosido and Two hand turn (16)
 - D: Promenade or Hand Clapping Pattern (16)
- We just learned an entire folk dance without any words!
- Let's take it a step further...with just a few words 😊
- Composition
 - What if you and your partner could create something in your space? See if you can make it fit with our music! Let's use this for the promenade.

Special Thanks to...

Westmusic

...for sponsoring today's session! Find resources used today at their booth!

- Discovering A New Dance
 - What if we two-hand turn with our opposite?
 - What if we do-si-do with our opposite?
 - What if our do-si-do turns into an allemande?
 - What if we try to add an allemande at the end as well?
 - Do-si-do, two-hand turn → allemande opposite, two-hand turn, allemande opposite
- Folk Dance → Comment ça va from *Sashay the Donut* by New England Dancing Masters
 - A: In and out 2x (16)
 - B: Circle L and R (16)
 - C: Allemande opposite, two-hand turn partner, allemande opposite (16)
 - D: Promenade or Composition (16)

Playing Unpitched Percussion Without Words

- Egg Shakers
 - Keeping the silence alive while...
 - Passing out
 - Picking up
 - Silence to sound (of the egg shaker)
 - Start and stop
 - Isolating body parts
 - Steady beat
 - Movement with a Partner
 - One person: egg shaker; one person: following with hand
 - What if we considered around, through, above, below, curve, straight, zig zag?
 - What if we explored other body parts to follow the egg shaker?
 - Sound cue = change roles
 - We just learned how to take care of and play the egg shaker without any words!

Learning Classroom Procedures Without Words

- Having a clear, student-centered way to follow routines and master skills with independence and observation leads to a positive classroom environment for all
- To do so, students...
 - Watch teacher model behavior
 - Share what they notice
 - Then model it themselves and
 - Practice it as an entire class
- This process is similar to Interactive Modeling from Responsive Classroom, an approach to elementary education and classroom management that increases teacher effectiveness, improves student achievement, and creates a positive school climate
- Ensuring consistency in routines such as heading to the xylophone instills confidence and helps students feel safe
- We just learned a classroom procedure with just a few words!

Playing the Xylophone Without Words

- Use polyspots to mirror your xylophone
- Set polyspots up in three's and two's → match C Pentatonic!
- Stepping on the polyspots to show when to play each bar, can you follow along?
- Learn a melody from *Discovering Keetman*, a step-wise piece by Gunild Keetman, by following the feet of a teacher
 - C-D-E-G
 - C-D-E-G
 - C-D-E-G
 - E-D-C-Rest
 - A piece using all-steps is a great way to dive into the xylophone
 - Colors – yellow, blue, red – can be really helpful for teaching the bass drone to students!
- What if a student could become the leader?

Materials – look for them in the Exhibit Hall!

Responsive Classroom for Music, Art, PE and Other Special Areas, Center for Responsive Schools, 2016.

The Power of Our Words: Teacher Language that Helps Students Learn by Paula Denton

Petits sauts délicats avec grand ecart, by René Aubry, CD, 2018

It Moves Me: World Music Warmups, by Danai Gagne, CD, 2007

Chimes of Dunkirk, by New England Dancing Masters

Discovering Keetman by Jane Frazee

My Bio and Contact Info

Matthew Stensrud is an award-winning Elementary Music and Movement Teacher and currently teaching PK-4 music and movement at Sidwell Friends Lower School in Washington, DC. He received his Master of Music Education from George Mason University and Bachelor of Music Education from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, is an Orff Schulwerk approved Teacher Educator of Movement, and teaches Movement Levels in South Carolina and Oregon. Matthew is also on *The Orff Echo* Editorial Board and was a key content contributor to the book *Responsive Classroom for Music, Art, PE and Other Special Areas*. He is available for workshops for music chapters, districts, schools, specials teachers, and more. He lives in Alexandria, Virginia. Visit his website: www.matthewstensrud.com to sign up for his newsletter with lesson plans, articles, and more, or contact him via email at mstensrud@gmail.com or phone/text at 513-703-8012. He is also well-known on social media as @MisterSOrrf on Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube.