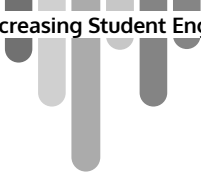


Cooperative Learning in the Elementary Music Classroom

Increasing Student Engagement



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Erin Cushing, Oak Hall School, Gainesville, FL



Music educator since 2004

- Elementary: 11 years of general music, chorus, grade level shows
- Secondary: 5 years of band, chorus, music theater

Bachelors and Masters in Music (UF)
 Kagan Cooperative Learning
 Habits of Musicianship (UT at Austin)
 Carnegie Hall Musical Explorers Teacher Workshop
 Feierabend Conversational Solfege Levels 1 & 2



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Workshop Goals

- Focus on your relationships in your classroom without taking time away from curriculum.
- Learn structures you can take back to your program and immediately apply.
- Give students tools to authentically engage in content and ownership over their learning.

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Myths and Misconceptions

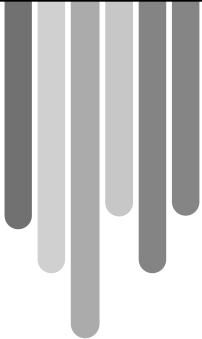
01	02	03	04
Only the strongest students will be participating.	It's just another fad curriculum that costs a lot of money.	It's too much prep work and requires too many materials.	I just don't have time between prep, concerts, and other responsibilities.

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Cooperative Learning Pillars

01	02	03	04
Positive Interdependence – they have to have each other for the activity (structure) to work.	Individual Accountability – they take turns being the student and the teacher. Students who have not yet mastered the content cannot hide.	Equal Participation – it's not one student answering every question. Everyone has a chance to answer and participate.	Simultaneous Interaction – instead of one student answering at a time, many students can be answering at the same time!

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Take Off, Touch Down

- This is one of my favorite cooperative learning structures
- Great for quick checks for understanding and to get students moving – especially after introducing something new
- Think airplanes, not football
- Students stand up (take off) if the answer is true and sit down (touch down) if it's false
- The general goal is to have a state change for every 10-15 minutes of teaching
- Let's give try this cooperative learning structure!

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Small Group Musical Opportunity Examples

Different ways I use this classroom set-up:


- Small group singing before solo singing (i.e. all my number 4s stand up to echo sing *No More Pie*).
- Turn to your shoulder partner and Rally Robin all the instruments you can identify from that song.
- Face partners will Rally Coach the xylophone ostinato for *Pitter Patter*. A plays, B watches/listens. After sharing feedback, switch!
- Shoulder Partners will Rally Read two lines of music – each partner reads one line out loud.
- Green team, you are on maracas. Blue, on tambourines. Red, on triangle.

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Cooperative Learning Structures

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The Basics

Stand-Up, Hand-Up, Pair-Up

- Helpful for making random pairs
- What to do with odd numbers
- Establish/practice your refocus signal
- Ways to show you have a partner:
 - Sticky high fives, air high fives, fist bumps, wave hellos, tap feet together


Share your name.

Name one thing you DIDN'T do during winter break.

Two thumbs up when you're done 

(You may continue to quietly talk with your partner, but watch/listen for my refocus signal)

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The Basics

Rally Robin

This is great for making lists and a great starting point for cooperative learning structures.

- Rally** – talking turns
- Robin** – talking

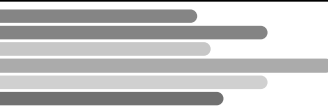
Determine Partner A and B.
Always give think time after the question.
Don't stop until you hear the beep!



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Make a list of all the wind instruments you can think of!

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Framing Questions

Rally Robin


Great for making lists, quick back and forth talking.
Put on a timer as students take turns.
No one student dominates the activity.

Timed-Pair-Share

Great for more in-depth, open-ended answers. Students will still take turns, but it will be for EQUAL amounts of time (ex. each person in the room will get 20 seconds to answer).
No one student dominates the activity.

BOTH STRUCTURES REQUIRE 3-5 SECONDS THINKING TIME

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Somewhere to Start - Question Ideas

Kindergarten – 2nd Grade

- Name as many things you can think of that have a steady beat.
- Using arioso (singing improvisation), describe your favorite dessert to your partner.
- Jelis from Mali play the kora and share stories and lessons from their culture. What is an important story you want to share? What instrument would you choose?


3rd – 5th Grade

- Describe (or show) how you write a quarter note and a pair of eighth notes. Write a 4-beat pattern for your partner to perform.
- What does flat and sharp mean? How do you fix out-of-tune singing or playing?
- We just listened to excerpts of *Nutcracker* arrangements by Duke Ellington, Pentatonix, and Black Violin. Which one was your favorite and why?

Secondary Music & Ensembles

- In *x* piece, why do you think the composer changes the tempo at measure 72? What about at measure 90?
- Describe the role percussion instruments have in Bomba and Plena music from Puerto Rico and Cumbia music for Colombia. What is similar? What is different?
- Is it ever okay to make copies of a piece of music if you can't find the originals?

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Flashcards and Manipulatives

- I love flashcards – both premade and student made.
- Cut up worksheets! Make each question into a flashcard.
- Other manipulatives like beat strips, craft sticks and bingo chips, dry erase boards and markers are easy to incorporate
- Extend beyond reading rhythms and melody – use to define musical terms, explore the elements of music, questions about music genres, etc.

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Quiz-Quiz-Trade



- This is my favorite structure in the classroom!
- Perks: Students are walking and talking, lots of engagement, students work at a pace they set, you can use premade materials or have students create their own flashcards
- Assessment:
 - T walks around room taking notes
 - Student-created cards
 - Ss read you their card before sitting down

Video Summary: Students are reading quarter notes and paired eighth notes rhythms. Students had to both read the correct rhythms in time AND evaluate if their partner was correctly performing their rhythm.

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Let's try Quiz-Quiz-Trade!


- Stand-Up, Hand-Up, Pair-Up
- Determine A/B Partner
- Partner A quizzes
- Partner B answers
- Partner A coaches or praises
- Switch roles
- Partners trade cards
- Hand up, find new partner
- When time runs out, go back to your seat.

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Supporting Students & Relationships

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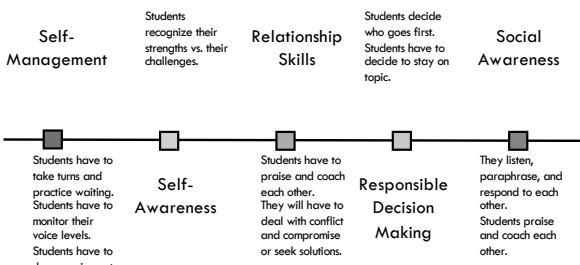


Student-Student Relationships

- Shy students more likely to participate when they only have to perform in front of one other person.
- Students who love the spotlight get so many more opportunities to perform as well as opportunities to be the leader.
- Students who currently struggle with a concept get to practice skills with other students before any kind of formal assessment. This also gives higher performing students a chance to teach the material.

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Embedded Interpersonal Skills



Self- Management	Students recognize their strengths vs. their challenges.	Relationship Skills	Students decide who goes first. Students have to decide to stay on topic.	Social Awareness
Students have to take turns and practice waiting. Students have to monitor their voice levels. Students have to share equipment.	Self-Awareness	Students have to praise and coach each other. They will have to deal with conflict and compromise or seek solutions.	Responsible Decision Making	They listen, paraphrase, and respond to each other. Students praise and coach each other.

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Student and Teacher Relationships

Q: What if you have a student who doesn't want to participate?

A: Students who don't have to have a partner. Let them work by themselves – this is a power struggle you won't win. This, in turn, let's a student know you will honor their choices.

Q: What if there is off-topic talking and/or playing around?

A: More engagement in class does mean it's louder. However, in my experience, set boundaries before the structure starts. This may mean having extension questions/activities ready to go.

Q: What about students who haven't yet developed the social skills needed for certain structures?

A: All students are given assigned teams – just like everyone else. In my room, teams change every quarter, so students have a chance to work with a variety of classmates.

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Teaching Tips

- Separate students who won't be successful together. If they have to be on the same team, make them 1s and 4s – this means they will never be shoulder or face partners.
- Spread your strong musicians throughout teams – that way every team has an anchor. Do the same with your less experienced musicians. No one team will dominate or struggle.
- Students who need/want to be alone can have that. Do NOT force partner/team work.
- Start small! I did not start using all of these structures on Day 1.

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Application to your classroom!

SU, HU, PU
(Don't forget to introduce yourself!)

QUESTION
Think of one structure you want to try with your students next week - include as many specifics you can think of!

TIMED-PAIR-SHARE
Share your thoughts with your partner. If there is still time, keep talking by giving more specifics. You each have 30 seconds to share.

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Ultimately, cooperative learning allows students to take ownership over their learning.

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Thank you!

While this workshop is a reflection of what I have learned from Kagan workshops, I am not a certified Kagan trainer. You can learn more and find trainings at www.kaganonline.com.

Please feel free to reach out to me at ecushing@oakhall.org

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