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MOTIVATING AND MAINTAINING INTEREST
IN MUSIC

A Paper
Presented to
the Faculty of
Eastern Illinois State College

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science in Education

by
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PREFACE

The success or failure of a music program in any school depends very much upon the development and maintainance of musical interest in the school and the community. The teacher of music will succeed or fail providing he is technically capable and that a proper balance of interest has been developed in the community and school.

Usually music teachers are specialists in their field. There are the orchestra teachers, band teachers, choral teachers and the elementary classroom music teachers. Music teachers are sometimes assigned in various teaching combinations, such as; choral-band teachers, band-orchestra teachers. Generally these teachers are classified as instrumental or vocal teachers and, because of their background of experience, excel in one phase more than the other. This paper places special emphasis on the work of the instrumental teacher; however, the subject of interest is vital to all teachers of music. That which applies to the instrumental teacher may also apply to the vocal teacher and the classroom teacher.

From teaching experience and observation of the teaching of others, this writer has observed that the absence or presence of interest was an important factor in the progress of the individual and the musical group. The apparent unawareness of the interest factor by some teachers and the little attention given it by others, induced this writer to make an investigation of interest and its influence upon music education.

PART I
INTEREST AND ITS FORCES

It has been shown by Edward L. Thorndike and other psychologists, that people learn faster and retain the learning longer in subjects of interest than in subjects of non-interest.¹ They have also shown that children are less able to learn non-interesting materials than are adults.² Adults, since they have a definite purpose in mind, are willing to learn non-interesting subject matter in order to reach their objectives. A skill is an example of this sort of learning. Children, generally, do not set definite goals and therefore attach no importance to subjects which do not interest them. Hence, it is necessary to motivate them and interest them in the subjects for which they may have no immediate interest.

Most everyone has experienced the drudgery of learning facts which were of no interest to him. Most everyone, too, has experienced the delight of learning facts which were in themselves of intense interest.

1. Edward L. Thorndike, Adult Interests (New York, 1936), p. 50.

2. Ibid., p. 54.

Even subjects which are interesting to a person may contain some phases of drill or facts which are uninteresting. Adults are often cognizant of the necessity of learning these isolated facts or of doing the necessary distasteful drill in order to reach desired ultimate goals. Teachers must realize that children cannot be expected to accept this responsibility consistently, even at the secondary school level.

Why are some people interested in an object or a subject and other people upon contact with the same object or subject have no interest? What is interest? Charles DeGarmo states the following concerning these questions:

It might be thought that the presence of objects is enough to arouse interest in them. Yet if this were true it is difficult to see why the same objects should arouse interest in some and aversion in others, while still others may remain indifferent.³

Lester and Alice Crow concur with DeGarmo.⁴ They state that interests vary because of the emotional element. It is their opinion that

3. Charles DeGarmo, Interest and Education, (New York, 1903), p. 12.

4. Lester Crow and Alice Crow, Mental Hygiene and the Individual, (New York, 1951), p. 20.

an individuals degree of emotion is contingent upon body glands, the nervous system and past experiences.

DeGarmo disposes of the instinct of survival as being the determining factor of interest in modern man but leaves the impression that it might be in primitive man and in beasts. He also disposes of the thought that the mind through its own activity creates ideals of objects and then becomes interested in them. He believes these factors to be too one-sided. He says:

A more adequate conception of the group of psychical states known as impulse, desire, interests, volition, is that the self is seeking through its own activity to express or realize itself. At first this effort at self-expression is, as we have seen, merely a doing of things that lead to physical survival. But as life broadens, and something more than food and clothing becomes necessary for those forms of survival that we prize, the field for self-active expression constantly widens, so that, with the growth of new ideals, new motives to action appear, new interests absorb the mind. In other words, the interest that was once instinctive becomes conscious, and is directed by intelligence.⁵

In summation one might say that (a) interests vary because of the variance of environment on

5. DeGarmo, op. cit., p. 12.

people; (b) people differ from one another in their self-expression and; (c) hereditary instincts and traits in conjunction with the learning of the individual.

"We may say in general that interest is a feeling that accompanies the idea of self-expression."⁶ It is obvious then, that self-expression of music students should be rewarded with a feeling of personal success, or, an acknowledgment of value by the music teacher, parents, school and community. If the student is to have successful self-expression, then the music material must be such that it is technically and expressively attainable by the student with the help of the music teacher or the result is frustration and loss of interest.

"Interest is a feeling. This, like all feelings is not to be defined. It is only to be felt. More precisely, it is a feeling of the worth, to the self, of an end to be attained."⁷
The subjective side of the music student's interest

6. Ibid., p. 18.

7. Ibid., p. 28.

is the constant feeling that self-expression in the form of his playing or singing is of value to him.

The interests which an individual possesses are the result of inheritance and environment.⁸

The individual inherits a certain degree of intellect, muscle coordination and temperament.⁹

The measure of these inherent qualities exert considerable force on the formation of an interest and will influence the individual to choose activities in which he is equipped by birth to excel.

The individual is influenced to certain interests by the environment in which he lives. He is influenced more in his early years than in later life.¹⁰ Psychologists have observed that development of the physical and mental growth follow certain patterns and they have divided these growth stages and labeled them. Because of individual differences of growth, the psychologists have been careful not to set absolute boundaries for these stages but rather average boundaries. These stages are: Later

8. Florence Greenhoe Robbins, Educational Sociology, (New York, 1953), p. 16.

9. Ibid., p. 16.

10. Edward L. Thorndike, The Psychology of Wants, Interests and Attitudes, (New York, 1935), p. 109.

infancy (3 to 6 years of age), Early childhood (6 to 9 years of age), Middle childhood (9 to 11 years of age), Later childhood (11 to 13 years of age), Early adolescence (13 to 14 years of age), and Middle adolescence (14 to 16 years of age).

The effect of training during these early years of the individuals life is very important. It is a time of life when habits are formed easily because there are fewer old habits to be eliminated. It is also the time when the individual is most expressive of his emotions.

An individual may become interested in something in two ways; Immediate interest and Mediate interest.¹¹ Immediate interest is a natural interest for something. Mediate interest is interest for something only when connecting interests cause the shift in interest to something more attractive. One would have mediate interest for something if that something would not appeal by itself but is interesting for some other reason, and is the result of selection

11. Lester Crow and Alice Crow, op. cit., pp. 46-75.

or rejection.

In all cases of immediate interest, there is no break between the end of self-expression and the act of self-expression, for the act is the end and the end is the act. In the case of a band this cycle is an ever starting and ending one, with simply the media of self-expression changing as all-around proficiency increases. As proficiency increases interest also increases.

In the case of immediate interest there is a coincidence of the ends and the means. Immediate interest may also be limited by time. After a certain length of time interest begins to diminish. This may result from either boredom or better understanding and evaluation. Such a case may be observed in the band when the initial playing of an inferior piece of music is liked very much but through continued playing the students find the real value of the music lacking and become disinterested. The opposite experience develops at times with the playing of superior music. DeGarmo had this sort of situation in mind when

he said: "In most cases, especially in educational activities, the ends and the means do not coincide in time."¹²

Percy C. Buck presented the same ideas as DeGarmo and Thorndike on the subject of interest. Buck says: "It is possible to be born with an interest for a certain subject. It is possible to have a natural interest destroyed. It is possible to acquire new interests."¹³

Youth is interested mainly in concrete things but as he grows up he becomes more interested in ideas.¹⁴

The mind must have some sort of interest in the thought of realizing itself, or expressing itself by attaining a certain end, whether that end pertains to physical well-being, aesthetic satisfaction or intellectual attainment. But the object to be attained being only an idea, it is evident that self-expression requires a series of intervening activities. If interest in the end alone remains and no interest attaches to

12. DeGarmo, op. cit., p. 30.

13. Percy Buck, Psychology for Musicians, (Oxford University Press, New York-London, 1945), p. 41.

14. Loc. cit.

the means, then we have drudgery. If, however, interest is attached to the end, and also is present in the means for reaching the end, then there is enjoyable work. It is conceivable that the workman may have a great interest in the dollar he is to receive for his day's wages and yet be indifferent to or detest the labor itself, which is the means for reaching the dollar. In this case we may have a form of drudgery. Many forms of routine work conform to this procedure. In the same way, a pupil may have a direct or indirect interest in learning to play a difficult scale. Drawing an analogy to the case of the workman, the same attitude may be found with many music students in our schools in the practice of certain scales.

It is possible to have interest if interest naturally attaches itself to the end of self-expression and is carried over into the means for reaching the end. For example, the means and the end coincide in play. Work may be as enjoyable as play, but the quality of the enjoyment in the

work is different from that in play, because of the separation of means and end. There are those people for whom interest in the end is attached equally to the means for reaching the end. The artist and sculptor are such people. Such people do not consider their work as drudgery. The teacher should consider the daily routine of work toward certain musical goals as an artist working toward a finished product; every new experience will be a stimulus to renew effort. The good music teacher should have this interest in his work. To enable the pupil to approximate the artistic attitude toward his music, even for brief intermittent periods, is an accomplishment of the few; yet it should be the attitude of all.¹⁵

It is in the modification of interests that the music teacher can assume his most important function. It is important that the music teacher remember that no matter what the state of interest may be for a certain subject, that interest can be modified. Edward L. Thorndike has listed the following forces which modify interest. These

15. DeGarmo, op. cit., pp. 28-38.

are: Contiguity, suggestion imitation, conditioning and selection by rewards and punishments.¹⁶

Contiguity is an association of interesting things with uninteresting things, with the aim of influencing the person to interest in the uninteresting thing.

Suggestion is simply the opposite of compulsion, argument and persuasion. Suggestion of an activity subject or object is more readily acceptable than a demand for an activity, subject or object consideration.

The force of imitation is exemplified in such things as style changes, doing the same things a group leader does, etc. Imitation of a person is dependent upon approval or admiration. The music teacher who shows his approval of something a student has done may influence others to be interested sufficiently to imitate the successful student.

Conditioning may modify interest in two ways. Interest may be modified by reflex response: by striking a tuning bar the students may become more interested in their intonation. The second way of modifying by conditioning is associative shifting. An example: Practicing a concert program with some selections that students like more than others. By alternating practice of the selections and by proper order in the concert, interest can be increased in the numbers which were less interesting at the beginning of practice.

16. Edward L. Thorndike, The Psychology of Wants, Interests and Attitudes, (New York, 1935), p. 141.

PART II

CREATING AN INTEREST IN MUSIC

Reflecting upon the foregoing discussion of interest and its forces, the importance of the fields of psychology and especially an understanding of the psychology of the individual is evident. Even with a background in psychology, the teacher of music cannot use the same teaching techniques each time. James Mursell has this to say about teaching procedure:

Psychology can never tell a teacher that he must follow certain definite procedures in a certain absolutely definite order. As a matter of fact, it can do much better than this. It can formulate the principles upon which any good teaching procedure must depend. Methods in music are often a snare and a delusion. Many school music teachers suppose that there is a fixed method of doing everything. That is absolutely false. But there are right ways and wrong ways, distinctions which psychology, and psychology alone can make clear. The right procedure varies with the situation, with the child, and with the teacher.¹

1. James Mursell, The Psychology of School Music Teaching, (New York, 1932), p. 3.

Music is generally an elective subject above the eighth grade. Instrumental music at all levels must, of necessity, be on an elective basis. The teacher is, therefore, confronted with the problem of arousing and maintaining interest in music, if the group is to grow. It is the music teachers job to maintain this interest once it has been aroused.

Teaching is most enjoyable when one is working with students who are interested in their work. Very few teachers on the high school level develop these ideal conditions. The music teacher is among those fortunate few because it is rare that any student elects music who has no initial interest in the subject. The music teacher is expected to make music so interesting that students will desire to participate in the various music activities. Teachers of all elective courses must make their work interesting and valuable. The music teacher with a backlog of past experience in teaching under such conditions should be in

a far better position to adjust to these modern trends than will those teachers of academic subjects who have in some instances made very little effort to make their classes interesting enough to be a success without the requirement of attendance. The music teacher will do well to consider the elective "tag" placed on his courses as a challenge to his teaching ability, and also as added assurance that his work will be more interesting than it would be if labeled as a required subject.

From the above discussion, it is obvious that the music instructor, by the virtue of his subject matter has many advantages. It only remains for him to exploit these advantages and to maintain a positive situation once it is established.

The necessity for arousing interest in music among the student body has been shown. Experience has shown that it is necessary to arouse interest in the community too. This may seem unusual since it is not necessary to do so for other areas in the curriculum, with the possible exception of

athletics. Music must be "sold" to the community because the financial support of the community is needed for the program of instrumental music. Parents must buy instruments; they must be convinced of the importance and value of music if they are to purchase these instruments.

When students become aroused or interested, they discuss these questions at home, and their parents become interested and project these questions to members of the community. The logical first step in putting over a music program, is, therefore, the arousal of interest in the student body. This may be done in the following ways:

1. Make participation in musical activities an enjoyable experience.

If the student who elects music finds it gives him real enjoyment; that there is work as well as play; that he is more capable today than he was last week; that the music period emphasizes personal expression of the type that brings a pleasing emotional release; that the music used is more interesting than he thought it would be; then the

matter of interest will take care of itself. The interested participant will advertize to the non-participating student the joy of music.

2. Organize a series of projects which will motivate the work; performing groups must work toward some specific objective. Participation is enjoyable and the knowledge that there is a definite event to look forward to will create additional enthusiasm.

Some good projects for the musical organizations are: public concerts, assembly programs, club concerts, operettas, minstrel shows, football shows, music contests and music festivals.

3. Make music a vital force in the life of the school. It should not be necessary to to to the music room in order to come in contact with music. The student body can be brought into contact with music through all the school activities such as: plays, shows, athletic events, assembly and radio programs, concerts, etc.

4. Use the school paper to publicize the music department. Make music activities, school activities.
5. Use bulletin boards throughout the school. In this way all the students may be brought face to face with musical news.
6. Use the school library for the display of musical periodicals.
7. Use the band in co-operation with the cheering section at athletic events.
8. Correlate music with literature, social science, art, physics and many other areas. The classroom teacher can use the assistance of music students and teachers of music.
9. Make the music room an attraction which pupils will like to visit. The music room, housing as it does aesthetic experiences which appeal to the ear, the intellect and the emotions, should also appeal to visual sensitivities. The room should provide a restful relief from the usually bare and unattractive classroom.

The music teacher should encourage pupil visits to the music department. The habit of dropping in to the music room to hear recordings, or to visit with the teacher is a good one. Those students who are not in any musical organization should feel perfectly free to use the record library. Musical enjoyment in any form at any time should be encouraged. Schools should provide a record lending library. All schools and public libraries should have record collections comparable to their present array of books and should provide adequate listening opportunities.

10. Students in the upper grades of the elementary school should be given the opportunity of developing skills in instrumental music; players from the high school can help in arousing interest in these grades by playing for them at all opportune times. Photos of players, instruments, and organizations should be displayed in the classrooms. At least once a term each child

in the elementary school should be given the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the instrument of his choice. Music-talent tests may be used to arouse interest in conjunction with practical exploration and experimentation.

The music conductor at work in the school is an educator. His principal duty is to educate children. Often the music teacher is too intent in promoting his own interests and loses sight of his responsibility to the child. "Sometimes we as music educators must remind ourselves that we should teach children first and music second."²

The music teacher, if he is to be respected as an educator by the community and is to be an effective teacher, must be careful not to become too narrow in his perspective.

There may be times when the educational opportunities of the student in music are so curtailed by lack of funds that the teacher may be forced to assume a responsibility which belongs to the Board of Education; that of raising funds. A great

2. Herman F. Smith, "The Business of Building Citizens", The Instrumentalist, (March-April 1949), p. 6.

deal of attention should be given to the problem and a thorough discussion with the legal representative of the Board of Education is advisable before certain steps are taken.

The following may be used in creating musical interest in the community:

1. Interest the student body in music. The advantages of indirect contacts with the parents has been discussed.
2. Public performance by the music teacher. The teacher who is a good performer should perform in public.
3. Students should perform for community functions as individuals as well as in groups.

School organizations will usually contain several students capable and in need of individual experience. These pupils should perform before audiences. Civic groups are always in need of entertainment. These groups should be furnished with a list of available soloists and ensembles.

4. Demonstrations and lectures in the community by the music teacher and his students.

The music teacher should appear before clubs and civic groups to explain and discuss the work being done in the music department of the school. An outline should be made of what is needed to make the department function more successfully. Talks of this nature may often be arranged by school officials who are usually associated with various civic groups.

5. Use of local newspapers and radio stations as public relations outlets.

A continuous supply of well written articles concerning the music activities of the school build up public interest.

6. Organize and direct adult or post-school music organizations.

If the music teacher furnishes trained musicians in the community the opportunity to play, sing and enjoy music he will certainly build public support and interest in the school music program

7. Demonstrate leadership in developing community concert programs.

PART III

MAINTAINING INTEREST IN MUSIC

It is not wise for the music teacher to relax and enjoy the fruits of his labor once he has created interest within the students, the public and the administrators of his school. Actually his task now becomes even more difficult. Interest must be maintained throughout the whole community if he is to retain the goals he has attained.

Once again the first consideration of the teacher must be the students. Without their continued interest it will be impossible to maintain the interest, and support for the music department. To gain and retain interest, the band must continually "sell" itself. The band, or other musical organizations must be of a relatively high level themselves. This realization will not accrue if the students are not interested in their immediate efforts.

If interest is to be maintained in the musical organization it is important to recognize some of the causes of lack of, or of the deterioration of

interest. Also it is of equal importance to know what to do about such situations.

Activities

The activities of the musical organization are most important. These activities must be desirable to the student; hence, the students must be included in the planning and the working of these activities. Too many activities may be as harmful as too few. The students may become bored, or careless in their performance, if there are too many; or, being denied as many as he would like, may dislike or resent doing the ones scheduled.

Not only is the right balance of activities important but the manner in which they are handled is important. The teacher should not allow the continuance of an activity if a reasonable amount of work toward attaining a good degree of performance is not forthcoming from the students. But he must not expect perfection either. The students' satisfaction in doing something as well as he can will maintain interest; over-emphasis may destroy it.

Activities of the music department to be of greatest benefit must be considered as activities of the whole student-body, the intent of the administration, the community, the fellow teachers. The interest of all the community will be maintained in music if the music teacher consciously tries to interest them. The following was said about the general curriculum and it could be applied to the area of music as well. "The character of the school and the content of it's curriculum are determined by the society it serves. It's influence upon society is reciprocal."¹ The music department should be the social as well as the musically intellectual center of the community.

When planning musical activities the principal and teachers of the school should have a part. Everyone in the school system should be concerned. With such a policy the music teacher is sure to have the interest and support which is so necessary to a progressive and happy school. Another reward of such planning will be a balanced schedule of activities throughout the school.

1. Harry Wilson, "Relations With The Community," Music in the High School, p. 339.

Music teachers who have become principals seem to understand the problem of the music teacher very well. In their roll as administrators they have been most outspoken in pointing out some of the mistakes of music teachers in public relations. Merle J. Isaac, principal of the Talcott Elementary School in Chicago, offers this advice:

One of the first things to consider about the principal, and this applies to the superintendent as well, is that he is not merely an official representing the board of education but that he is a human being. Furthermore, he has been a teacher and probably still considers himself a teacher. It should, therefore, not be too difficult to understand him and to work out plans for mutual cooperation.

When we speak of principals and superintendents, we are speaking of individual human beings, and it is not safe to generalize to any great extent about their personal likes and dislikes. However it is reasonably safe to assume that most principals like to know what is going on in their schools.

Undoubtedly the principal will take more interest in a department about which he is fully informed and it is to the music teachers advantage to have his full cooperation in planning a program for the year as school activities must be well spaced to achieve success. If members of the music department are to make a special appearance, the principal should be informed well in advance. Better still, ask his advice, or even his permission, beforehand.

Here again the point of view which the principal holds may be different from that held by the teacher. Possible disadvantages arising from certain activities are more likely to be seen by the principal, who can be more objective in the matter since he is somewhat removed from the spontaneous enthusiasm of youth.

From the principal's point of view, music is just one part of the educational program that is offered in the school.

Principals like to have effective, functioning music departments in their school. They do not like to have any department feel, however, that it is the center about which the rest of the school revolves. When the tail wags the dog, it is as bad for the tail as it is for the dog. Music is important but children are more important. Let us bring children and music together with the emphasis on the children, giving them vital music experiences so that they will love music in school and out of school and even after graduation.²

The school band or chorus which sound and looks good will certainly do much to maintain good will, and interest in the community toward the school. The music teacher will usually have excellent support from his administrator if he has been successful in pleasing the public with his group performances. The Board of Education, as well as the principal will be pleased to have any department of the school winning public approval.

2. Merle J. Isaac, "Memo To Teachers", The Instrumentalist, Jan.-Feb., 1953, p. 14.

An increasing number of principals are approving and praising music in education. A typical statement is this one by Howard Eckel: "The band has done a great deal to bring out people closer to the school and its problems. It is probably the leading exponent of a good school-public relation program. This is true because even though there is much good education present in other phases of our school, the good educational values of an activity such as band are more readily seen and appreciated by the people."³

Those activities which are listed in the second section of this paper are also activities which can be used for the maintaining of interest. Those forces set forth in the first section for modifying interest are also applicable to maintaining interest. It is the careful use of these features along with other activities which will enable the music teacher to maintain interest in music. When to use which force - - the point at which to shift, are the crucial decisions which the music teacher must make wisely. Without a

3. Howard C. Eckel, "Band Education and the Community," The Instrumentalist, (Nov.-Dec., 1948), p. 4.

doubt, the music teacher is required by the emotional and drill aspects of his subject to use and understand psychology of teaching more than teachers of other subjects.

One of the major problems which the music teacher faces is that of maintaining interest in the advanced players, while coping with the less capable or inexperienced student. Each organization contains those individuals who are neglected in rehearsals because the teacher is occupied with the musically average student in the organization. Charles Boardman Righter, director of bands at the University of Iowa, suggests that in order to prevent "coasting" of musicians during their last two years in high school, the advanced players be given more challenging music through use of ensembles. He also suggests "doubling" on other instruments.⁴

The music teacher should have a good balance of materials for his rehearsals and concerts. There should be music ranging from very easy to difficult. Such a balance of material will

4. Charles B. Righter, "Dear Joe", The Instrumentalist April 1954 p. 8.

insure that no musician in the group feel himself a failure. On the other hand, using difficult materials presents a challenge to the advanced player. Materials selected with the consideration of not boring the organization nor setting unattainable goals will help maintain interest. A majority of the music should be that which will be challenging enough to the majority to insure continuous advancement musically.

Many of the fundamentals necessary for good performance of more advanced music can be taught through the musical approach. Teaching through the use of thematic materials is an example of this musical approach. It is not necessary to disregard the method approach all the time.

To maintain interest during the rehearsal the music teacher should try to adopt a pleasant approach, a pleasing personality and use techniques which are stimulating. The teacher must be prepared to shift approach when the situation changes; as it may from day to day.

Too long a rehearsal period may diminish interest. Work and then rest, and work again,

is one way of avoiding a diminishing return of interest. In striving to improve parts in the music, tensions build up, and these need to be eliminated or enjoyment in doing will be lost.

Enjoyment of the music and of the group activities are essential in maintaining interest.

The music teacher must not become repetitious with words, anecdotes and stories. If he does, he may become boring. The music teacher must have a wide vocabulary and a great number of "tricks-of-the-trade" on hand to maintain interest.

Changing the set-up of the organization will help maintain interest. Individuals may eventually get tired of sitting near the same person and hearing the same sounds. A change in seating is always stimulating.

Competition for positions in the band is stimulating. Whenever interest is waning, an election for officers will re-vitalize interest. It is customary for "first chairs" in a section of an organization to be "prized". This is usually

carried on down the line throughout the sections. Challenging for position in the section is fun and will stimulate practice. The competitive interest for advancement in the group can be exploited for the good of the organization and the individual.

Day to day progress can be focussed to the attention of the group. The successful member of an organization will be an interested one.

The director must inject interest into the group. He must seek ways to maintain his own interest as well as that of the group. He must continually analyze and ask himself this question, "Are my students showing interest or lack of interest?"

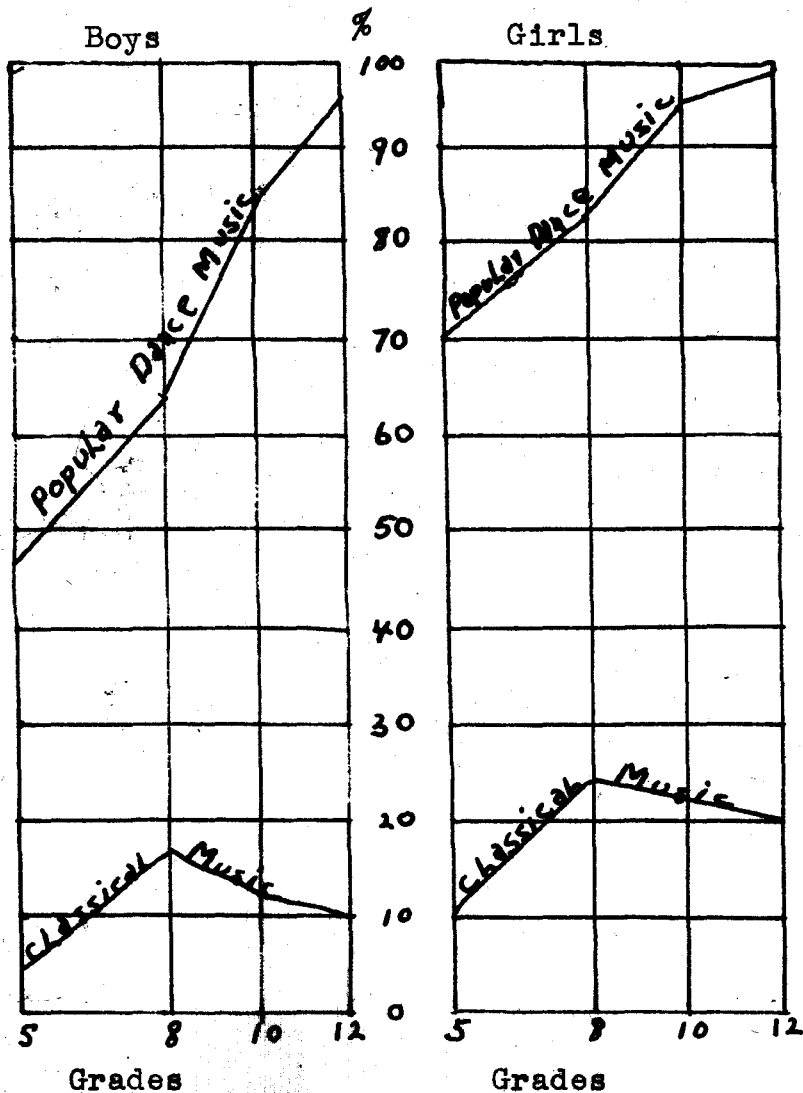
The music teacher must face facts. It may be that what is popular to the children will not be popular to him. Nevertheless, he cannot ignore the interests of the children. He must try to blend what he thinks should be in the culture of our society with what he finds is already there. He must try to lift the cultural

level but he cannot do it if he is "highbrow".

The chart on the following page will demonstrate a fact which the music teacher cannot deny; yet he must do something about it. A small percentage of students like classical music and a large percentage like popular dance music. A second fact presented graphically is: The interest in classical music increases until a certain age and then decreases, but popular dance music continues in increase.

TABLE I
PREFERENCE FOR CLASSICAL MUSIC AND POPULAR DANCE MUSIC

PERCENT PREFERENCE FOR CLASSICAL MUSIC AND POPULAR DANCE MUSIC BY 2500 BOYS AND GIRLS IN GRADES 5, 8, 10 and 12



The table on page 33 was compiled by C. W. Brown after a survey of twenty-five hundred boys and girls in grades 5, 8, 10 and 12. The boys and girls were asked to check the types of radio programs they liked best.⁵

Whatever technic the music teacher turns to in his efforts to maintain interest, he must call upon all of his knowledge of psychology. He must ever seek new psychological concepts and give sufficient thought to their application. Knowing psychological approaches is not enough, planned application must be coupled with this knowledge.

5. Arthur J. Klein, *Psychology and the New Education*, (New York, 1944), p. 136.

PART IV

PERSONALITY AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE MUSIC TEACHER

There are no two personalities exactly alike. There are, however, certain personal criteria which may be necessary for a music teacher to possess. Personality is dependent upon one's philosophy of music education. Both personality and philosophy can be modified. The music teacher's philosophy of music education is simply his ideas and ideals. Philosophy reflects itself in personality and personality reflects itself in philosophy. It is impossible to consider one without the other if there is to be drawn any conclusions about desirable traits in the music teacher.

Personality Traits

Enthusiasm is a desirable trait in the teacher's personality. It is infectious to children and adults. Enthusiasm will often create and maintain interest where knowledge alone will fail. James Mursell believes this about enthusiasm. "A teacher's conviction and

enthusiasm are worth more than all the methodologies ever invented and all the devices for classroom management ever hatched."⁶

A neat and attractive appearance is a desirable personality trait. Anyone would rather associate himself with a neat and attractive person than one of the opposite appearance. This is a natural outgrowth of the individual's love for beauty. A neat and attractive appearance is admired by the whole community, as well as the students.

Friendliness is a desirable trait in the personality. Friendliness causes others to trust and return friendship. Many students become interested in a subject for no other reason than that they like the teacher.

Human understanding is another desirable personality trait. Adolescent youth so often considers the adult as nonunderstanding. The teacher who can convince any age group that he understands them has won an ally and can become instrumental in guiding them.

6. James Mursell, Music And The Classroom Teacher, (Chicago, 1951), p. 2.

Expressiveness is another desirable trait of the music teacher. No one likes the "Wooden Indian" or a stoic type of person. Children of elementary school age are and should be expressive. The expressive person stimulates expression in others. This is especially important to the music teacher for music is expression.

Leadership is a most desirable trait for the music teacher's personality. Most people are followers and look to someone to tell them or demonstrate to them what to do. The music teacher must be a leader in the school and in the community.

The criteria used in selecting teachers by school administrators includes good personality traits. A pleasing personality is desirable in all teachers but it is especially so in the school music teacher because of the aesthetic and social qualities inherent in his field. School administrators seem to share in the view of Percy C. Buck, that: "Education does not imply knowing a lot of things but being a certain person. One may be a technical master but still not be interesting."⁷

7. Percy C. Buck, op. cit., p. 41.

The importance of the personality of the music teacher is discussed considerably by all leading writers in the field of music. These are some typical quotations from musicians and administrators.

I am inclined to consider a magnetic personality as important to a conductor as is scholarship, and much more essential than either perfect pitch or a photographic memory.

In addition to possessing certain personality traits, the teacher of music must be an integrated and well adjusted individual. He must have the emotional stability and character necessary to lead children in the cooperative effort which is requisite for successful musical organizations. Personality in the teacher may be described as personal adequacy. It includes proper attitudes in regard to work, students, fellow teachers, administrators, and the community as a whole. Such attitudes are dependent upon sincerity of purpose. Only such a person is qualified to be a teacher of music in the public schools.⁹

If moral and spiritual values are to be found in music education, they must be found in the character, personality and life of the music educator.¹⁰

8. David Ewin, Dictators of the Baton, (Chicago, 1944), p. 9.

9. Robert Wilson, Music in the High School, (Chicago, 1941), p. 366.

10. Earl Enyeart Harper, "Moral and Spiritual Values in Music Education," Music Educators Journal, (June-July, 1954), p. 13.

The music teacher should analyze himself for desirable and undesirable personality traits. As perviously stated, the personality can be modified. The important thing is to really try to improve one's personality.

An educational philosophy for the music teacher is of necessity a product of personal growth. One cannot have a philosophy unless he holds it with conviction. Conviction will come with testing and proving. Philosophies presented by other people as worthwhile should be adopted temporarily. That is, they should be held until the inexperienced teacher has the opportunity to put them to test.

In the preface to this paper this writer listed his present philosophy of music education. This writer does not claim that ten years hence his philosophy will be exactly the same as now. A music teacher must be flexible; his philosophy must also be flexible.

In perusing the music educational philosophy of some of this country's most esteemed music educators this writer found these men and women to hold very much the same ideas about

public school music.

Moral and spiritual values are emphasized by Earl Harper, director of the School of Fine Arts at the University of Iowa; Raymond R. Reed supervisor of the department of music in the Arlington, Virginia, Public Schools; Charles B. Richter, director of bands at the University of Iowa; Percy C. Buck, professor of music at Oxford University, England; Beatrice Krone, James Mursell, Peter Dykema, Robert Wilson and Authur Ward. Many of the quotations in this paper contain the implication of this belief in the importance of spiritual values.

The summation of the philosophies of music education by these writers, mentioned in the foregoing paragraph, are:

1. There are individual differences in abilities and these individual differences should be served and satisfied.
2. Social adjustments are more important than the skills and knowledge of music taught.
3. Moral and spiritual development are of prime importance.
4. Music should be taught for all children and not just the gifted or intelligent.

5. Enrichment of the environment during physical and mental growth.

6. The teaching of beneficial effects for life after school years.

Charles A. Henzie of Butler University, Indianapolis, Indiana, evaluates the need for a democratic concept in education in this statement:

The need for music and the cultural and emotional values derived from participation in music is greater for the average student than the talented and above average student. The music teacher must learn to work with all types of students. Selection is not desirable at the elementary and secondary levels in public education; it is undemocratic.¹¹

11. Charles A. Henzie, "Music Education of Education Through Music" Educational Music Magazine April-May 1954 p. 25.

SUMMARY

It has been the purpose of this paper to investigate the general forces which affect interest, and to present some motivating techniques for developing interest; also, to show causes for lack of interest. It is believed that such information will provide a positive approach for the teacher of music.

This writer believes that teachers can do a much better job of teaching children music if they recognize and understand the forces which act upon interest. Teachers must be able to use these forces in their teaching. They must also have a wide variety of techniques for activation of these forces.

Interest cannot be motivated exclusively by the possession of psychology but is contingent upon teacher personality, philosophy and the nature of physical and social surroundings.

Every music teacher should not only make use of his knowledge of interest, psychology and human behavior but should make daily reappraisals of individual students. Awareness of the importance of interest is of great importance. Observance of daily attitudes and receptiveness is of great

importance, too.

There are some specific causes for lack of interest among music students. These are:

1. Music which is not aesthetically attractive
2. Emphasis on the process instead of the music
3. Too much emphasis on the teaching of technique
4. Overemphasis on drill
5. Overemphasis on sight-reading
6. Lack of proper conduct on the part of students
7. Lack of incentives
8. Lack of group or "team" feeling.

This writer believes that the music teacher may have greater success if he will give more consideration to the attitudes and interests of his students and try to use the knowledge and techniques suggested in this paper to improve his music class approach.

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