

## ***El Sistema* principles, teaching strategies, and national standards explored throughout *The Power of Music***

### **EL SISTEMA PRINCIPLES**

- Programs both serve and respond to the needs of a community, as well as build on the assets of a community.
- Ensemble music-making is at the heart of all learning — both musical and social.
- Parents are involved throughout the program.
- No student is too young to be a vital contributing member of a musical ensemble.
- Musicians have a responsibility to share their skills or knowledge with others who are still learning.
- Performance should happen every day at every occasion, rather than only at special events.

### **TEACHING STRATEGIES**

#### **UNIT 1**

- Bringing together musicians with different skill levels from multiple sites for a *seminario*, an intensive session of rehearsal, performance, and community-building.
- Helping preschoolers learn how to hold a violin by practicing with a book
- Using movement when introducing notes on a scale
- Creating paper violins to use before real instruments

#### **UNIT 2**

- Empowering students to serve as leaders/mentors
- Singing melodies correctly before playing them on instruments
- Engaging students through movement, emotion, relevance, novelty, and pattern or familiarity
- Adapting songs with movement to build strength and skills for playing violin
- Finding patterns in music
- Supporting memorization of music in scaffolded steps
- Motivating students using levels of mastery

#### **UNIT 3**

- Peer mentoring
- Promoting self-assessment and goal-setting with a CYMPhony Card

#### **UNIT 4**

- Organizing sectionals into teams according to learning needs
- Encouraging orchestra players to sing and *solfege* their parts (and the melody) as well as play them on their instruments
- Recording learning in ungraded personal notebooks

- Using and encouraging students to use positive reinforcement language
- Playing a game to promote memorization of musical facts
- Giving back to the community through performances large and small

#### UNIT 5

- Using a single piece of repertoire (in this case *Finlandia*) to drive an entire curriculum unit and to serve as a centerpiece for a large-scale performance
- Using boomwhackers to enable youngsters who can't read music to play together in an ensemble
- Playing team-building games during “buddy time,” which brings together older and younger students
- Discussing how to be a helpful mentor
- Bringing together a large group of musicians with different skill levels to perform for the community.

#### UNIT 6

- Using voice and body as first instruments
- Bringing together students of different ages and skills
- Separating melody from text in choral music-learning stages
- Ear training through *sofège*, even with very young students
- Using songs or chants with positive messages important to social as well as musical learning
- Promoting musical expression through physical movement
- Making music that reflects cultural relevance to the school community

#### UNIT 7

- Engaging students through movement, emotion, relevance, novelty, and pattern or familiarity
- Using story to make abstract symbols concrete and easy to remember
- Beginning to compose in a group, using cups to represent notes with different values, and colored Post-its to represent different pitches
- Motivating students using levels of mastery

#### UNIT 8

- Using voice and simple pitched instruments (keyboards, recorders, and resonator bells) to create melodies
- Using graphic notation — on its own or as a precursor to standard notation
- Serving as “scribes” for students’ musical ideas
- Suggesting possibilities for things to do with a musical idea
- Providing students with opportunities to collaborate with musicians when exploring musical possibilities

## NATIONAL STANDARDS

The musical activities featured throughout *The Power of Music* address the following Anchor Standards of the National Core Arts Standards:

### Creating

- Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work
- Organize and develop artistic ideas and work
- Refine and complete artistic work

### Performing/presenting/producing

- Analyze, interpret, and select artistic work for presentation
- Develop and refine artistic work for presentation
- Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work

### Responding

- Perceive and analyze artistic work
- Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work
- Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work

### Connecting

- Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art
- Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding