

Teaching Music

Length: 30 minutes

Featured Schools

School:	Harmony Leland Elementary School
Location:	Mableton, Georgia
In this program:	Sandra McGary-Ervin, principal Barrett Jackson, string specialist
School:	Smith Renaissance School of the Arts
Location:	Denver, Colorado
In this program:	Sylvia Bookhardt, music teacher Rory Pullens, assistant principal

About This Program

This program features the classrooms of two music specialists from arts-based schools serving diverse student populations.

Harmony Leland Elementary School in Mableton, Georgia, has purchased violins for all of its 485 prekindergarten to fifth-grade students. The school provides violin lessons for every child as part of the curriculum. String specialist Barrett Jackson oversees the program, which includes both regular and honors classes.

In this program, Jackson discusses how, in the absence of applicable standards for a project of this size and scope, she developed her own curriculum and learning objectives.

With a kindergarten class, Jackson asks the children to listen and follow directions as they demonstrate basic care and knowledge of their instruments. Children build self-esteem by successfully completing familiar tasks, such as increasing or decreasing the tension on their violin bows or playing simple note sequences. Through their violin instruction, they also learn some introductory skills they will need for participating in standardized tests.

With a fifth-grade class, Jackson works on basic knowledge of music, including note reading, the musical alphabet, and the lines and spaces on a music chart. As a tie-in to the school's literacy priority, the fifth-graders construct a list of words that can be formed from the seven letters of the musical vocabulary (a, b, c, d, e, f, g). They insert the words, expressed by musical notes instead of letters, in original stories. The stories then are given to second-graders, who learn the notes as they translate them back into words.

At **Smith Renaissance School of the Arts** in Denver, Colorado, music teacher Sylvia Bookhardt uses the experience of learning and performing choral music to launch investigations into other subject areas, such as history, literature, and social studies:

- Preparing to perform at an upcoming Shakespeare festival, her fourth- and fifth-grade students reflect on the role of music in Renaissance society and rehearse the song *Scarborough Fair*.
- Bookhardt's students engage in writing about Renaissance life and learn to perform a complex song in the style of the period.
- Bookhardt identifies standards met by the Renaissance unit and makes these clear to her students.

In both schools, discipline and character are important products of the music education experience, along with an appreciation of the art form and knowledge of basic skills.

About This Program, cont'd.

Arts Education Standards Addressed in This Program

Music (Harmony Leland Elementary School)

- **Content Standard 2**—Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music

Achievement Standards for Grades K–4:

- Perform on pitch, in rhythm, with appropriate dynamics and timbre, and maintain a steady tempo

- **Content Standard 5**—Reading and notating music

Achievement Standards for Grades K–4:

- Read whole, half, dotted half, quarter, and eighth notes and rests in 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4 meter signatures

Music (Smith Renaissance School of the Arts)

- **Content Standard 1**—Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music

Achievement Standards for Grades K–4:

- Sing from memory a varied repertoire of songs representing genres and styles from diverse cultures

- **Content Standard 9**—Understanding music in relation to history and culture

Achievement Standards for Grades K–4:

- Identify by genre or style aural examples of music from various historical periods and cultures

Source: *National Standards for Arts Education*, published by Music Educators National Conference (MENC). Copyright 1994 by MENC. Used by permission. The complete National Arts Standards and additional materials relating to the Standards are available from MENC, The National Association for Music Education, 1806 Robert Fulton Drive, Reston, VA 20191, telephone 800-336-3768.

Viewing Suggestions

Who Should Watch This Program

“Teaching Music” is a good resource for classroom teachers and for music specialist teachers. Classroom teachers will gain a deeper understanding of how and why children study music. Specialist teachers will have the chance to see other specialists at work, using contrasting approaches to teaching music. Other audiences for this program might include:

- curriculum or arts planners, to expand their ideas about how music contributes to learning in other subject areas;
- classroom teachers, to demonstrate how arts specialists apply standards in their curriculum and communicate standards to students; and
- visiting artists or artists-in-residence, to give them ideas about classroom practices and teaching techniques in music education.

Before Watching

This program explores two contrasting approaches to teaching music. Both schools consider their programs successful in meeting their objectives:

- At Harmony Leland Elementary School, Barrett Jackson’s program stresses respect for the instrument, self-esteem, hand-eye coordination, and personal responsibility. Performance is not a primary objective. However, honors students often are asked to play for districtwide events.
- At Smith Renaissance School of the Arts, Sylvia Bookhardt applies both performance and knowledge standards to her students’ work. Students are carefully rehearsed in advanced performance skills like presentation and style.

As you watch the program, consider which teaching approach would more effectively help you meet learning objectives in your classroom. How would you incorporate each approach into collaborations with classroom teachers or integrated curriculum units?

At Smith Renaissance School of the Arts, classroom teachers and arts specialists collaborate to develop school-wide themes. Consider how such a themed curriculum unit would work at your school. How would you begin the planning process?

How could you use music to advance effective instructional strategies such as inquiry-based teaching and learning?

Watching the Program

Watch “Teaching Music” (30 minutes).

Viewing Suggestions, cont'd.

Suggested Activities and Discussion

Consider the following questions for reflection:

- How can music be used to teach your students about other subjects?
- How can music be combined with the study of other art forms in your curriculum?
- What questions do you think are important for students to ask about music?
- How does music provide a forum for student inquiry that can enhance learning?

Below are some additional ways you can build on the ideas in this program in a variety of school and community settings.

Professional Development Sessions for Teachers

- Consider ways you can incorporate music-based lessons in your class. How would you plan the material? What resources would you use? How do you think the students would benefit?
- Think of ways that you can use music to help make your teaching more effective, for example, by bridging language barriers or developmental gaps.
- Consider how music impacts learning and behavior in your students' daily lives. For example, do they memorize the words of advertising jingles or imitate clothing styles based on popular music? How can you use this learning process to focus their interest on classroom subjects?
- As a group, visit a performance of your local symphony or chamber orchestra. Reflect on how the experience affected you. What would have made the experience more interesting or the music feel more familiar? How would you approach a similar experience with your students?

Curriculum-Planning Sessions

- Include a music specialist teacher in your planning session. Invite the specialist to help develop a themed unit that includes music objectives.
- Invite a musician or a representative of a local music organization to a session. Together, identify places where music would make the curriculum stronger.
- Explore educational outreach opportunities offered by your symphony, chorale, or other music organization. Do they provide special programs to schools or have artists who might offer a residency in your school?

School Board, Parent-Teacher, or Local Government Meetings

- Invite a music specialist teacher to comment on the work of Barrett Jackson and Sylvia Bookhardt, and explain how music is taught in your school.
- Invite a representative of a music organization that provides outreach programs to explain how music can enhance learning at your school.
- Invite community members to attend a musical performance by students.
- Present reflections by students on how working with music has enhanced their readiness to learn or their academic achievement.

Additional Resources

Related Video Library Programs

Watch these programs for more information on ideas explored in “Teaching Music”:

- Expanding the Role of the Arts Specialist
- Teaching Dance
- Teaching Theatre
- Teaching Visual Art

Web Resources

The Arts in Every Classroom video library Web site: www.learner.org/channel/libraries/artsineveryclassroom

The Arts in Every Classroom workshop Web site: www.learner.org/channel/workshops/artsineveryclassroom

Standards for the Arts

National Standards for Arts Education: www.ed.gov/pubs/ArtsStandards.html

State Standards for the Arts: www.ncsl.org/programs/arts/artsed/artedhom.htm

Related Organizations and Resources

The National Association for Music Education: www.menc.org

American Music Conference: www.amc-music.com

Leonard Bernstein Center for Learning: www.grammy.com/academy/foundation/lbc

Recommended by Barrett Jackson

Iowa Test of Basic Skills: www.uiowa.edu/~itp/itbs.htm

Riverside Publishing (for using ITBS outside of Iowa): www.riverpub.com