

UMFCNAFME FALL NEWSLETTER

| NOVEMBER 22, 2019



A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Hello Nafamily!

It has been such a privilege to welcome so many new faces to our NafME Chapter both from our freshman class and non-music education majors. Two of our goals entering this semester included increasing our membership with students outside of our major and connecting the chapter members with each other so that we may expand our reach. We hope that throughout the course of the semester, our activities during meetings, bagel bonding time, bake sales, social media presence, non-forum meetings, and the NafME bash allowed the opportunity for each of you to get to know one another better.

We had a Halloween-themed NafME Benefit Concert, including beautiful decorations and lots of creative costumes. This was an amazing opportunity for us to showcase diverse performances, including a rock band from Miami-Dade College, spoken word performed by a student outside of Frost, and an evergreen Marathi song performed by one of our members, Radhika Gore, accompanied by tabla. We are making strides to become inclusive to all people and art forms.

Over the course of the semester, we were able to serve our community in several ways. NafME held a shadow day for students from Robert Morgan Educational Center; Chapter members participated in Gandhi Day and got involved with Miami Jam Sessions, attended the FL NafME Collegiate Fall Conference, and more.

I am incredibly thankful to have had the opportunity to serve as President for an organization that means the world to me and to serve people who inspire me every day. I know that we will continue to be successful and deliver our message of music education for all. I'm so excited for what is to come with such an amazing executive board who is already working diligently in preparation for the next semester. Special shout out to the NafME boys and the Music Education faculty for always supporting us and helping us be successful. Happy holidays and congratulations, you're almost there!

Sincerely,
Mavel Morales

WHAT'S INSIDE

A Message from the
President

"Como te digo?"

"The System" : A Modern
Musical Approach for the
Marching Band

Music Education Survival
Guide

Executive Board

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“Como te digo?”

By Dora Pagán

“Music is universal.” Many people would agree with this statement. The listening and appreciation of music is universal, language does not matter in most cases. For example, most lovers of K-pop enjoy this music but are not fluent in Korean or know absolutely no Korean. This is also true of speakers of other languages for music in English. But how does music education occur when the language of the teacher differs from the student?

For the majority of my teaching experience, the teaching has always been in English. Even though Spanish is my first language, I have always taught in English, no matter the subject area. The idea of teaching in a language other than English had never occurred to me until last year when I had my first ELL (English Language Learner) student. This student had moved to the United States from Cuba two years when I first met her. One of the first things she asked me once I met her was if I spoke Spanish because her English was not very good, and she would understand everything better in Spanish. At first, I thought all I would have to do is flip the Spanish switch and the rest would fall from there, but I was wrong.

Teaching music in Spanish proved harder than I initially thought. This was an eye-opening experience as a young teacher. Just translating my language and lessons plans did not work in the very beginning. There were many instances where I would just stop to think and just say “*Como te digo?*” because I was at a loss for words on how to explain certain musical concepts or I just did not know the musical term in Spanish. Just the little things like how in Spanish the solfege for *ti* is *si* or how to say interval in Spanish. Then I found myself fumbling and truly being at a loss for words in the middle of teaching a concept. The first few lessons I questioned my competence of my first language, but later on I realized was that my academic music language was not present because I had never used it. The concept of conversational language versus academic language

was brought to my attention by a colleague and it took a lot of self-reflection and research on how to improve it for the betterment of my student's music education.

The amount of extra preparation I had to include in my lesson plans was something I was definitely not expecting. Not only was the language different but the cultural experiences this student had were very different from my own. Once when I was teaching her, there was a point I was trying to convey I referenced to a marshmallow and she did not know what a marshmallow was. Think about it, how do you explain the concept of a marshmallow to someone who has never experienced a marshmallow, then proceed to use that concept that person does not fully understand to teach another concept they do not understand. Many times, in teaching this student I would run into these types of situations. As with any teaching gig, the ability of rapidly adapt or improvise was very important in these situations. The solution to these kinds of situations is to conduct research, in this case since this was a private student, I was able to converse with her about her culture and her experiences. Sitting down and taking the time to learn about her and her culture was very beneficial. As with any teaching situation, it is important to stay calm during these situations and focus on the most important thing to remember, the student.

Most of us in this field will not think about the needs of ELL students until we take a class with this as its main subject or when we are confronted with it in the field, as what happened in my case. Sometimes we can get caught up in the musical aspects of music education and the educational theories that correlate with them. Sometimes we can even forget certain groups of students such as ELL students, students with disabilities, special learners, etc.

Since this is my last semester before student teaching, I am currently enrolled in a class directed toward ELL students and there is a field experience connected to this class. I go and observe a class completely comprised of level 1 and 2 English Proficiency students twice a week. The demographics of these classes are mainly Hispanic/Latino Spanish speakers, Haitian creole speakers, Russian/Ukrainian speakers, and Arabic speakers. Not a single one of these students are enrolled in a music class and many would like to be but have not enrolled because they believe the language barrier will prohibit them from learning.

One testimonial that was truly heart breaking was this sophomore girl from the Dominican Republic. She used to play flute in her country and absolutely adored it. When she first arrived, she was looking to enroll in a band class and went to speak to the band director, who did not know any Spanish. She was discouraged by this factor, since the director could not figure out a way to communicate with her in that instance and he could not offer any help. She said that if the director could speak or at least direct her to a student in the band program that could communicate with her should would have enrolled in band but because of that interaction she ultimately decided not to. She proceeded to enroll into a coding class as her fine art credit solely because she knew she knew she would have her friend as a lifeline in that class.

How many students are we not reaching as music educators? We advocate for music education, but who advocates for the students who want music education but have something holding them back? I ask you to put yourselves in the shoes of these students, put yourself in these situations. How would you feel if you were scared to pursue music because you did not speak the main language being spoken? I hope to advocate for these students now and once I become an educator in the field to truly make music education universal for every student.

“The System”: A Modern Musical Approach for the Marching Band

By Mia Laping

Teaching music in the marching band setting can be drastically different from teaching in the concert setting. Performing outside, and with such a unique instrumentation presents a whole host of new challenges to overcome in order to be successful. This article will explore a pedagogical method that has been used in recent years by drum corps and high school marching bands to approach this task. In addition to the information presented here, a list of books and resources on the topic can be found at the bottom of this article.

A prominent pedagogical program that has recently become popular in many marching arts groups across the country is simply called “The System.” Developed by Freddy Martin and the brass staff at Phantom Regiment in 2007, this approach is a detailed routine of breathing, physical awareness, buzzing (for brass players), articulation, and dynamics. This method has been used in many high schools and drum corps around the United States including Phantom Regiment, Spirit of Atlanta, Santa Clara Vanguard, the Cavaliers, BOA Grand Nationals frequenter Broken Arrow HS (OK), W.T. Woodson HS (VA), and countless others. “The System” is primarily targeted towards brass players, however much of it can also be applied to woodwind players as well.

The first part of this pedagogical system is breathing. “The System” uses exercises from Sam Pilafian and Patrick Sheridan’s book *The Breathing Gym*, as well as a few unique exercises that involve the use of latex balloons and PVC tubes. Proper breathing technique always begins with physical form- correct posture (no slouching!), arms away from the sides (placing both hands on the hips is a great way to do this), relaxed shoulders, and a relaxed “OH” oral shape. The air is to be taken into the body in three parts of the torso- bottom, middle, and top, with 60% of the air in the bottom, 35% in the middle, and 5% in the top. The bottom part of the

torso includes the diaphragm and lower part of the lungs- think near the stomach. The middle part includes much of the middle to upper chest area (including the back and sides of the upper rib cage), and the top part is the very top of the chest and the throat- hence why only 5% of the air should occupy this space when breathing. All breathing should be organic engagement, not forceful flexing or expansion. When breathing, the air should never stop moving or be “capped” at the end of the inhale or exhale, and air should be evenly distributed over all counts of the inhale and the exhale. For brass players, the aperture should set simultaneously with the exhale of the air. The count structure for breathing in “The System” is a four count preparation- two counts of cleansing exhale (not into the instrument) followed by two counts of inhale prior to the final exhale for playing (with a smooth turnaround of the air between the exhale, inhale and exhale again this time into the instrument). Altogether, this should be out for 2, in for 2, play. One breathing exercise to train this smooth turnaround is the balloon exercise. The balloon exercise involves taking the four count preparation of the breath before exhaling into the balloon, with the goal being for the balloon to begin to expand immediately and at a consistent pace as soon as the air leaves the body for the final exhale. The balloon acts as a visual indicator for whether or not this smooth turnaround is happening. When breathing, the oral shape remains the same for both the inhale and the exhale, and the tongue should be down and relaxed. This can be trained using PVC tubes (see below) that are placed in between the teeth during breathing exercises. The PVC tubes have an adjustable valve for changing the resistance on the tube in order to practice overtraining or an accurate representation of what playing on the instrument will be like.



The second part of “The System” is buzzing and singing. Buzzing should be done each day by brass players as part of their warm up routine, and is a great tool for exploring the fine details of the embouchure and producing a characteristic sound. When buzzing, it is important to keep in mind the following details:

- 1) The corners of the embouchure are always firm, but never tense
- 2) The aperture is always relaxed
- 3) The buzz should be full and rich
- 4) The buzz should have no excess tension, and consequently should have *some* air in the sound
- 5) The air creates the vibration- buzzing should be practiced with exclusively air initiations
- 6) The buzz should not be closed off as this is a result of excess tension

Buzzing should be practiced with a drone or reference pitch, and should not be done for more than a few minutes at a time to prevent overuse and overstraining of the embouchure. Singing is applicable to all wind players in a marching band, and is a great tool to develop pitch recognition and an ear for intonation. Begin by humming a concert F at a comfortable volume- checking (gently touch) the four main chambers of the body for resonance and vibration. These four chambers were described by notable music educators Robert Shaw and Jim Ott, and are as follows: the head (bridge of nose, teeth), the upper chest (clavicle, breast plate), the lower chest (ribs, front and back), and the small of the back/lower lumbar. Ideally, all four of these chambers should be vibrating when humming/singing as this is a sign of relaxation and proper usage of the air.

The third component of “The System” is articulation. In the marching band setting, articulations are often lost in performance due to the greater distance that the sound has to travel to the audience. In order to achieve better clarity of initiations, every note should start with an additional 5% extra volume then relax to the desired dynamic. This will also ensure that players are not scooping into notes. In addition, each type of articulation is given a specific definition in terms of speed of air and location of the release. The definitions are as follows:

- 1) Legato: 100% sustain, “dah” syllable
- 2) Standard: 95% sustain, “dah” syllable
- 3) Staccato: 50% sustain (one rhythmic value less than the printed rhythm- for example, a staccato quarter note is to be played like a standard eighth note), “dah” syllable
- 4) Standard Accent: 95% sustain with 10% more volume at the “left edge” of the note
- 5) Orchestral Accent: 100% sustain with 10% more volume at the left edge (note shape is 75% sustain and 25% taper)

The “left edge” is a term used to describe the beginning of a note, and the “right edge” is used to describe the end or release of a note. In marching band, musical impact comes from the left edge of a note and musical effect comes from the right edge or release of a note. With articulation in “The System”, it is important to note that EVERY left edge is a **legato** left edge, with zero exceptions. This keeps the breath, tongue, and mindset of the player relaxed. Shorter note lengths should be achieved by moving the right edge of the note closer to the left edge, without ever modifying the left edge.

The final, and arguably most revolutionary aspect of “The System” is the method of dynamics and balance. Balance on a marching band field is drastically different than in a concert band setting. The distance between the performers themselves, and the performers and the audience can greatly affect how an ensemble is balancing. The dynamic system present in “The System” is entirely dependent on each and every player executing their assigned dynamic level with 100% accuracy and consistency. Sometimes, the dynamic level may need to be adjusted for individuals or small groups of players on the field due to placement in the form or the musical responsibilities of that section of music. The key to ensemble balance, and to getting a marching

band, putting it simply, to play “loud” is for individual players to “balance up” to the given dynamic. What this means is that if the ensemble dynamic is forte, players of smaller stature or with a quieter sound may need to play louder than their individual forte in order to balance up to the dynamic that the ensemble and other individuals are playing. This will ensure that one homogenous dynamic will be heard from the ensemble, and will prevent individuals from being heard as “sticking out” of the sound. Once breathing exercises have been practiced to get students to utilize the full capacity of their lungs, they are ready to begin using the method of dynamics described in “The System”. In “The System”, each dynamic is assigned a specific number of counts over which the maximum capacity of air must be expelled (these counts are all based on q=108, the dynamic system will NOT work if it is not trained using this tempo). Using this logic, the fewer counts there are, the faster air must be expelled in order to get rid of it all (as previously stated, always expanding and using maximum capacity), and the faster the air the louder the sound. The following is a chart of the different air speeds as they relate to dynamics:

Dynamic Definitions

Every dynamic is defined by expelling ALL your air evenly over the assigned count structure for the specific dynamic as described in the table below:

3 counts	4 counts	6 counts	8 counts	12 counts	16 counts	20 counts	24 counts
T-Shirts	<i>fff</i>	<i>ff</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>mf</i>	<i>mp</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>pp</i>

In order for this method to be effective, these air speeds MUST be practiced every day with the ensemble, and students should be encouraged to practice these on their own as well. To practice each air speed, first practice simply doing the four count breath preparation followed by an exhalation of one of the specific air speeds, for example 16-count air. This can be done using balloons, and is a great way to check if students are using the same full capacity of air each time by checking the consistency of the size of the balloon. This should be done with the balloons and each air speed before moving onto instruments. On the instrument, this can be practiced using a long tone, following the same process of the preparation breath followed by the exhalation for

the designated amount of counts. After some time, students should be familiar with the various air speeds and the physical feeling of each one, and the teacher can begin to implement these specific air speeds in music. Balance issues can also begin to be addressed and the teacher can simply ask a student who is under or over playing to switch to a different air speed and the fix should be immediate. (Note: for brass players playing at higher dynamics levels, tension must be avoided at all costs. Often the aperture will need to stay more relaxed and increase the tiniest bit in size to allow for optimal flow of air).

Books/References:

- *The Breathing Gym* by Sam Pilafian and Patrick Sheridan
- *Spirit of Atlanta 2019 Brass Technique and Pedagogy*
- *Daily Drills and Technical Studies* by Max Schlossberg
- *Lip Flexibilities* by Bai Lin
- *Complete Conservatory Method* by J.B. Arban
- *27 Groups of Exercises* by Earl Irons

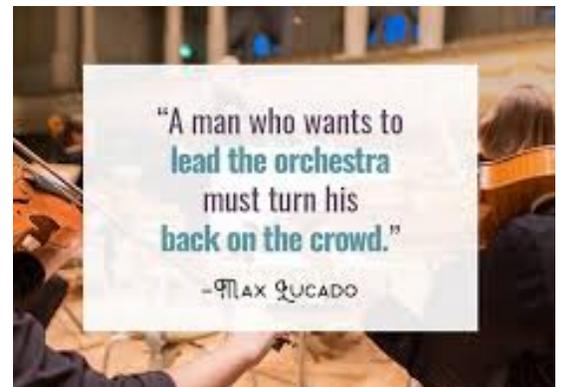
Music Education Survival Guide

By Radhika Gore

1. Purpose – always ask yourself: why am I doing this?

Sometimes, in the middle of the semester, a storm of projects, tests, essays and field experience pours immense stress on the music education major. It can make us want to give up or step back. But at the end of the day, what drives is our purpose and passion.

Many of us know that being a music educator is what we are meant to do and that it's what we're best at! If you are ever feeling burnt out or uninspired, recall a time when a musical experience shaped you, saved you or excited you. Write it down or tell it to a friend. It's important to never lose sight of why we do what we do



1. Music Ed Major Support System

The good thing is that you're not alone in these trials and triumphs. Stick together with your fellow music ed majors; it's incredible how much we can learn from and help each other. My year created a google doc to keep track of assignments (courtesy of Josh Class). Become friends with each other. You never know when these connections will help you in the future!



2. Your Water Bottle and a Snack

With our schedules, things can get rough! It's important still to take care of yourself by staying hydrated and nourished. Even when you think there is not time to eat, there is always time to eat. Prioritize your health and mental well-being. "You cannot serve from an empty vessel." – Eleanor Brown

**Self-care is not selfish.
You cannot serve from
an empty vessel.**

-Eleanor Brown

WE ARE
TEACHERS

3. A Planner

Along with our busy schedules, we tend to have 10 handfulls of assignments and then some. When you have solidified your priorities, make sure to adhere to them in your daily planning. A planner will help you keep track of your due dates and deadlines and it will help you plan out a balanced day. I personally plan by days out by the hour to make sure I can maximize my time. But I make sure to account for meals and rest as well.

Take advantage of the opportunities that present themselves to you. Take on tutoring a group of students even if you don't get paid- you gain experience while helping students grow. Take part in other organizations in Frost. Any group that spreads the importance of music and its power is a great group to be a part of. You don't lose anything from trying your hardest for anything you do. But also, know your limits and know when to step back. It is not easy and it probably never will be. But it will be worth it.