

STAR-POST (MUSIC)

NURTURE YOUR PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY THROUGH REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Have you had conversations and exchanges with students, parents or colleagues that made you reflect on your personal beliefs, or your role and purpose as a music teacher? Have you had moments of revelation that convinced you that you are a positive impact on your students' learning?

These are some questions that are indicative of how we perceive ourselves and how others perceive us professionally. Our professional identity refers to our set of beliefs, values, attitudes, experiences and understanding about our own role within the context of our work, and how we define ourselves in our professional life. It is both a personal and a social identity that has developed as a result of our work activities. It is also connected to our self-esteem and confidence about our work. Our quality of work, what we say and do, and what others say about us speak about who we are. Research has suggested a profound connection between identity and practice, and hence the value of reflective practice.

Here, we wish to suggest three strategies that you may wish to adopt to grow as a reflective practitioner to nurture your professional identity:

1. Experience a different context to reframe your assumptions and practices

Go on learning journeys. Ride on opportunities to view another teaching practice such as observing a lesson by a colleague in another school or culture, and engage in discussions and reflections. This will give you an opportunity to rethink: for example, what you believe to work or not work – is it still true?

2. Engage in reflective conversations with an outsider

An "outsider" refers to any other educator who does not teach your class or is not in your school. Insider-outsider professional exchanges and reflective conversations are able to unearth assumptions and presuppositions in our mindsets, beliefs and perspectives. The dialogues can facilitate reflection at different levels – whether they are reflecting on values, practice or content and skills.

3. Make it a habit to conceptualise before implementing, and analyse after implementation

The three-step cyclical process (conceptualising – implementing – analysing) helps us develop a better understanding of our own practice, as well as a critical and reflective stance towards our own work.

**"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. (Lao-Tzu)"
Let us take the first step to develop our reflective selves and grow our professional identities as a music teaching fraternity.**

A M O N G S T U S

Mrs Bridgette Teh • Chongzheng Primary School • Subject Head of Aesthetics



How many years have you been teaching music? Describe one moment which you are most proud of in your career.

I have been teaching music for 24 years and the proudest moment in my career was when I introduced mass performance in Chongzheng Primary School.

Stemming from my strong belief that all pupils should be involved in music making, I initiated mass performance in Chongzheng which incorporates environmental conservation and promotes recycling. We encourage pupils to use recycled materials to make their own percussion instrument. These percussion instruments are then used during the mass performance. This annual event has been improved upon, year after year, to involve popular music and National or Ethnic songs, forming a signature showcase in our school's annual calendar. The whole level or the whole school performs together, displaying what they have learnt during music lessons at our Racial Harmony Day celebrations.

What is your philosophy as a music educator?

My philosophy as a music educator is that music should be taught to anyone and everyone without exception. As educators, it is our duty to look for creative ways to teach and expose our pupils so that they can learn and appreciate music and the arts.

I believe that music and the arts is an excellent platform to develop pupils of good character. When a child works towards a performance or a presentation, he develops self-discipline and perseverance. His determination to do well in

the art form develops resilience. When the child is involved in group presentations or ensemble performances, he develops team work, social management and responsibility. Music and the arts are excellent channels to develop self-management. When pupils are committed to learning an instrument or an arts skill, they would exercise self-discipline and sacrifice in putting in hours of practice and even commit scores or dance steps to memory, just to achieve better performance outcomes. With such commitment to their practice of the arts, pupils become self-motivated and self-directed learners.

What would you say is the role of the music educator?

Through the many years of my teaching career, I have come to realise that as teachers we play a very important role in the development of our pupils. Our pupils' opportunity to get exposure to music and the arts depends greatly on the school. I am in the position to make a difference to my pupils' lives by providing the opportunity to gain exposure, experience and undergo excursions in the area of music and the arts.

In Chongzheng, I have initiated programmes for pupils to be actively engaged in music and the arts and thus develop important values and life skills. There are opportunities both for the masses to perform as a school and realise their talents and abilities, as well as for the talented to be stretched and work towards their artistic dreams and goals.

(Continued on the following page)

A M O N G S T U S

Mrs Bridgette Teh • Chongzheng Primary School • Subject Head of Aesthetics



How do you develop the aesthetics abilities of the pupils in your school?

To stretch our talented pupils, our strategy is to organise school-based competitions like the CZ Dance Mania (group dancing) and the CZ Superstar (solo singing) competitions where pupils can showcase their talents by competing with other pupils of their level. It is through such competitions that pupils realise their talents and work towards doing better each year.

School-based concerts such as the P1 Orientation Fringe Performance and the Lantern Festival Showcase Night also provide opportunity for pupils within CCA groups or from music programmes to showcase their talents and what they have learnt.

Stemming from my belief that music and the arts is for all, I have ensured that pupils are also given the opportunity to attend concerts and shows at renowned arts venues like the Esplanade. Annually, groups of pupils attend SSO concerts or the NAC-AEP Feed Your Imagination shows, experiencing the arts authentically at arts venues.

To help our pupils on the Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS) enjoy and benefit from the arts, I work closely with The Little Arts Academy to tap on the Business Times Budding Artist Fund to provide free music, art, dance and drama classes. I also work closely with the Esplanade to tap on opportunities for the FAS pupils to experience shows for free.

Annually, I also identify talented pupils from P5 or P6 to participate in the SOTA Talent Academy for music, dance and visual arts. I believe that the effort gives them a boost of confidence and a head start to being accepted into the school to pursue their passion.

What inspires you in your career as a music educator?

As a music educator, I am inspired when I see pupils developing their passion in music and the arts. I am especially inspired when a pupil realises his talent through our school programmes and develops his self-confidence and self-esteem in the process. I am also very inspired when my pupils respond positively to my music lesson. I am especially happy when he tells me, "I really like the ukulele lessons and I am going to ask my mummy to buy me a ukulele so that I can continue to learn it!"

I am very happy that one of my music teachers has been appointed as Senior Teacher for Music at the beginning of this year. I am delighted and inspired that my guidance has borne fruit with her appointment and there are greater opportunities for her to continue the journey to further improve her music teaching.

As a teacher-leader, I am pleased to be able to share my experiences with other teachers and I feel inspired to want to continue to share and mentor beginning teachers and see them develop their passion for music along with me.



AEC-APSMER CONFERENCE

JULY 17 - 19*, 2013
REPUBLIC POLY, SINGAPORE
*JULY 19 - Learning Journeys for
Int'l delegates only

ARTS EDUCATION CONFERENCE (AEC) 9TH ASIA-PACIFIC SYMPOSIUM ON MUSIC EDUCATION RESEARCH (APSMER) CONFERENCE

Have you registered for the **Arts Education Conference – Asia Pacific Symposium on Music Education Research (AEC-APSMER)**? The theme for the conference held on 17 and 18 July 2013 is **Arts Education and the Community**.

This international conference presents an opportunity for Arts educators to get together for conversations to bring about renewal and transformation. It provides space and time for you to glean ideas from conference speakers who include **Dick Lee** (Singapore performer and composer, 2005 Cultural Medallion Winner) and **Lucy Green** (Professor of Music Education at the Institute of Education, University of London, United Kingdom).

In addition to keynote addresses, there are a multitude of workshops and presentations for your selection. These would be conducted by Singaporean and international music educators and practitioners on a range of themes, including:

- » Community music education
- » Music creativity and composition
- » Music in early childhood education
- » Multicultural music education
- » Music in schools
- » Music talent
- » Music technology
- » Instrumental teaching

Conference fees are sponsored for MOE teachers, who may register at <http://arts2013.sg/conference-registration-for-moe-teachers.html>. Details of the conference and registration details for Independent school staff are available on the conference website at www.arts2013.sg.

PRE-CONFERENCE TALK
**NURTURING THE ARTS,
FOSTERING COMMUNITIES**

Come join us for a networking session with arts practitioners and educators on 1 June 2013, 11.00am at the Esplanade Library.

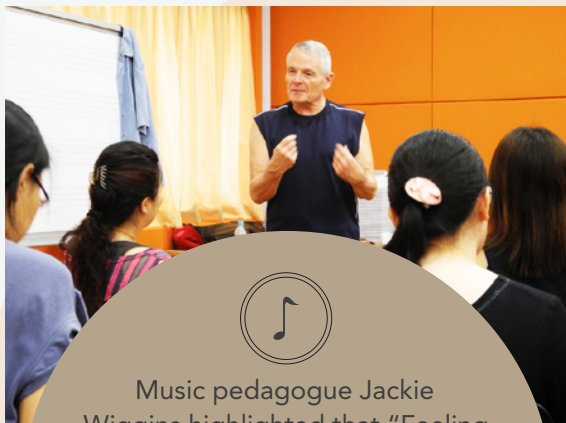
There will be buzz talks introducing the conference and various art forms in the Singapore community.


WHAT'S ON AT STAR



"To my mind, musical education should be entirely based on hearing or at any rate, on the perception of musical phenomena; the ear gradually accustoming itself to grasp the relation between notes, keys, and chords, and the whole body, by means of special exercises, initiating itself into the appreciation of rhythmic, dynamic, and agogic nuance of music"

Emile Jaques-Dalcroze





Music pedagogue Jackie Wiggins highlighted that "Feeling music is how we understand it."¹ Primary teachers who participated in the Dalcroze Approach in Music Education workshop experienced this firsthand, acquiring understanding of how to teach music through eurhythmics.

When we allow our students to experience music first before learning the music concepts, the learning has potential to be ingrained in their whole being. With listening, responding, creating or performing as the starting point, learning becomes meaningful when acquired through an authentic music experience.

"The whole (Dalcroze) method is based on the principle that theory should follow practice, that children should not be taught rules until they have had experience of the facts which have given rise to them."

Emile Jaques-Dalcroze



1. Wiggins, J. (2011). Feeling it is how I understand it: Found poetry as analysis. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, 12(LAI 3). Retrieved 12 April 2013 from <http://www.ijea.org/v12lai3/>.

WHAT'S ON AT STAR



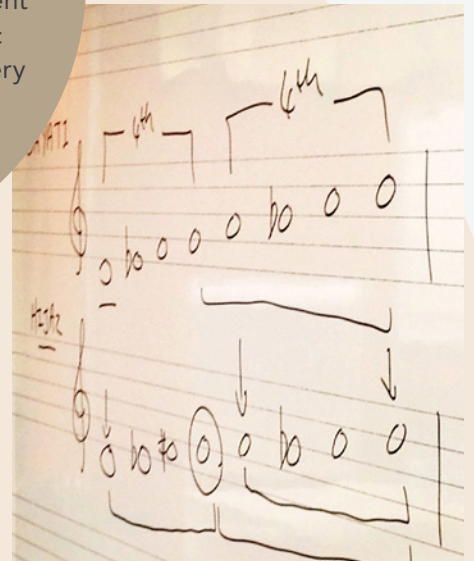
The experience of music making in an ensemble has value for every person. The Javanese Gamelan Community of Practice commenced in early April, with participants including our colleagues from other disciplines and even School Counsellors.

The participants in this ensemble experience what our students would experience when they come together in ensemble music making. Every individual has the capacity for music making. The right environment will nurture it to reality. As music educators, our classroom is that very environment in which we can bring about such discovery for our students.



Asia contains a wealth of music which provides our students a way towards understanding our regional cultures and therein, awareness of the world around them.

Our 'O' and 'A' Level Music teachers deepened their understanding of pedagogical approaches for the teaching of Asian Music and Malay Dance Music under the guidance of Dr Lee Tong Soon, Associate Professor of Ethnomusicology at Emory University.



WHAT'S ON AT STAR



Our Beginning Teachers who began their career in 2012 came together on 12 April 2013 for reflection and conversations about their first year of teaching. Mr Loo Teng Kiat (Subject Head, Zhenghua Primary School) and Mr Benjamin Lim (Subject Coordinator, Anglo-Chinese School (Independent)) inspired them with their personal sharing.



In our career as music educators, friendship and conversations provide a network of support and allow for exchanges of learning within the fraternity. When was the last time you had a conversation with a fellow music educator? Perhaps it's time to log on to our Musicators Facebook page for this little respite and energizer!



WHAT'S ON AT STAR



It has been an enriching four months of full-time in-service training for our primary music teachers, where they deepened their practice and understanding of music pedagogies.

Our heartiest congratulations to our music teachers who have graduated from the Advanced Diploma in Music programme.



P R O G R A M M E S

Milestone Programmes

Key mandatory programmes at key stages of the teaching career to achieve professional renewal, reinvention and positive transformation in teaching beliefs and practices.

TITLE OF PROGRAMMES	DETAILS	PARTICIPANTS
Kodaly Approach for Student-Centred Music Lessons	24 to 29 June 2013	CS1, 2 and 3 Music Primary or Secondary teachers
STAR ST Programme Module 2 – Study Trip and Industry Attachment Programme	May and June 2013	By invitation only

Upskilling Programmes

Programmes to help teachers become qualified music teachers or upgrade teachers in preparation for taking on additional responsibilities.

TITLE OF PROGRAMMES	DETAILS	PARTICIPANTS
Advanced Diploma in Primary School Music Education, January 2014 intake	Nomination deadline extended to 17 May 2013	Primary Music Teachers (By school nomination)

Pedagogy Implementation

Programmes to develop teacher-leaders to cascade their training, or guide and mentor beginning teachers.

TITLE OF PROGRAMMES	DETAILS	PARTICIPANTS
STAR Champions (Primary) PD Session	2 May 2013 (North & South clusters) 3 May 2013 (East & West clusters)	For STAR Champions nominated by Cluster Superintendent
STAR Champions (Secondary) PD Session	10 May 2013	For STAR Champions nominated by Cluster Superintendent
Teaching Music Arranging at NT Level (organised by Arts Education Branch, SDCD)	30 April and 7 May 2013	For Music teachers teaching Upper Secondary NT Examination Music Syllabus

Supporting Programmes

Programmes to provide new areas of learning and broaden perspectives.

TITLE OF PROGRAMMES	DETAILS	PARTICIPANTS
Ukulele Playing For Teachers, please apply through TRAI course code: 21270 For AEDs, please apply through OPAL course code: LD001W	13 Aug to 3 Sep 2013 Every Tuesday 3:00 to 5:30pm at STAR	CS1, 2 & 3 Music Primary & Secondary teachers, and Allied Educators *New! This course is now open to AEDs supporting your Music Programmes too! Please help spread the word.

Communities of Practice (CoP)

Programmes to provide new areas of learning and broaden perspectives.

NAME OF COP	DETAILS	CONTACT
Teachers' Chamber Orchestra *New!	Every Friday 3:00 to 5:30pm from July onwards, Blk K Level 1 STAR Music Workshop	Please contact Ms Tan for details: Tan_Bee_Ngoh@moe.gov.sg
Teachers' Choir	Every Tuesday 4:00 to 6:00pm from March to May, Blk K Level 3 Recital Studio	Please contact Ms Tan for details: Tan_Bee_Ngoh@moe.gov.sg
Javanese Gamelan Ensemble	Every Thursday 4:00 to 6:00pm from April to May, Blk K Level 2 Gamelan Studio. New intake in July 2013	Please contact Ms Tan for details: Tan_Bee_Ngoh@moe.gov.sg

WHAT'S ON IN THE ARTS SCENE

Uke Fiesta at CHIJMES

Our STAR Champion S3, Stephanie Soh from CHIJ Toa Payoh, will be participating at CHIJMES' three-day Uke Fiesta. The programme also comprises music presented by Seng Kang Primary and CHIJ Our Lady of Good Counsel.

17 May 2013 to 19 May 2013, various timings, C.H.I.J.M.E.S The Lawn

Spring: a violin piano duo recital

Violinist Tee Khoon Tang returns to Singapore and presents a special programme of violin piano duo favourites with British pianist Sam Haywood.

Tuesday 28 May 2013, 8.00pm, Jubilee Hall at Raffles Hotel

Feed Your Imagination: Beyond Bollywood – The Rhythms of Dance

Learn about the relationship between music and dance, and the relationship between traditional Indian dance and Bollywood dance style in Beyond Bollywood – The Rhythms of Dance, a NAC-AEP Feed Your Imagination programme presented for young arts audiences.

28 May 2013 to 30 May 2013, 11.00am or 2.00pm, Esplanade Recital Studio

Singapore Lyric Opera: Opera in the Park

Looking for some rejuvenation during the June vacation? Give yourself a treat to opera favourites in the outdoors at Singapore Lyric Opera's Opera in the Park, which includes a special performance by the SLO's Children's Choir. Admission is free.

Saturday 15 June 2013, 6.00pm, Shaw Foundation Symphony Stage, Singapore Botanic Gardens

STOMP '13

STOMP returns to Singapore with a new line up of percussion music and choreography.

18 June 2013 to 23 June 2013, various timings, Marina Bay Sands Theatre

SYCO Annual Concert – Four Seasons

The Singapore Youth Chinese Orchestra will be performing Lo Leung Fai's *Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter* as part of the Singapore Youth Festival 2013.

Saturday 13 July 2013, 8.00pm, SCO Concert Hall

Music Education Asia Magazine on iPhone and iPad

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C O M M I N G U P S O O N

TEACHERS'

CHAMBER

ORCHESTRA

Do you play an orchestral instrument? Would you like to experience the joy of ensemble playing as an orchestral player with Singapore's FIRST EVER Teachers' Chamber Orchestra?

The TCO is now calling for players. If you play a string, woodwind, brass or percussion instrument, don't hesitate! Come join us to make music and make history with fellow music educators.

Rehearsals are on **Fridays, 3.00 to 5.30pm** at **STAR Music Workshop**, starting **5 July 2013**. Be a part of TCO as we work towards the first performance at the end of this year!

To join, simply send an email to our colleague Ms Tan Bee Ngoh (tan_bee_ngoh@moe.gov.sg) stating the instrument that you play. A welcome souvenir will be given to members of this Community of Practice to mark the significance of this moment too. Hope to hear from you soon!

Engaging Voices: Singing Fun!

Would you like to draw out musical singing amongst your students and scaffold music learning through singing in the music classrooms? Have you ever wanted to acquire useful strategies on working around common singing issues such as breathing technique and pitching? If so, keep your eyes (and ears) peeled a little more our way. We'll be announcing something exciting on vocal pedagogy soon!

To subscribe to STAR-POST (Music), please contact STAR (Music) Team:

NAME/TITLE	EMAIL	TEL
Mrs Li Yen See, Master Teacher	Chan_Yen_See@moe.gov.sg	6664 1499
Mdm Suriati Bte Suradi, Programme Manager	Suriati_Suradi@moe.gov.sg	6664 1498
Mdm Ho Hui Ping, Programme Manager	Ho_Hui_Ping@moe.gov.sg	6664 1493
Mrs Joanne Yeo, Programme Manager	Joanne_Tan@moe.gov.sg	6664 1494