

Music Lessons Format

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My lessons are organized using a modification of the 4-MAT System, developed by Bernice McCarthy. She developed a strategy for presenting lessons that teach to all four cognitive styles identified by David Kolb's research: divergers, assimilators, convergers, and accommodators. She developed an elaborate system that visualizes a lesson as a circle, then she divides the circle into Quadrants--one for each type of learner. She goes on to subdivide each quadrant to account for right and left brain stimulation and other factors. The model becomes quite complicated. The main point of structuring lessons in Quadrants is that the teacher is constantly reminded that he/she is dealing with many kinds of learners and must teach with different emphasis both to build on the strengths of each learner and to encourage development in weaker methods of processing.

Quadrant 1: Why?

This part of a lesson answers the students' question (either asked or unasked), "Why are we doing this? What is the significance to me, to now, to the future, to other ideas, to meaning." This quadrant usually takes very little time and can be in the form of words of introduction or relationship, cues for focusing on specific musical events, mands, provocative questions to stimulate thinking, or any other activity that "hooks" students' interest.

Quadrant 2: What?

This part of a lesson answers the students' question (either asked or unasked), "What is it we are supposed to be learning?" This is where the teacher explicitly informs students exactly what the skill or concept to be learned is, checks for understanding, reteaches as necessary until all students are clear about what they need to learn.

Quadrant 3: How?

This part of a lesson answers the students' question (either asked or unasked), "How exactly do I do this, how do I relate it to other learning, how do I do the skill?" This section usually consists of some kind of practice, repetitions, or activities to reinforce and internalize the concept or skill.

Quadrant 4: What if?

This part of a lesson answers the students' question (either asked or unasked), "If I have learned this concept or skill, what else can I do with it?" This section helps students see the bigger picture, stimulates their creativity, encourages divergent thinking and personal meaning making. Students are often asked to apply their new knowledge or skill to a new situation and to evaluate the success of their learning.

The 4-MAT System

for delivering music instruction

