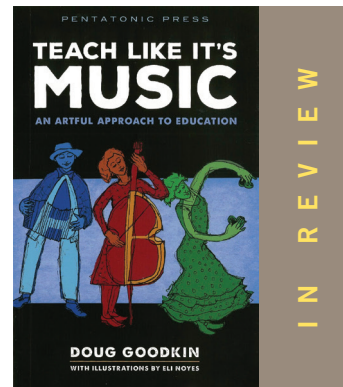


Reviewed by Martha M. O’Hehir

Teach Like It’s Music: An Artful Approach to Education

Written by Doug Goodkin/Illustrated by Eli Noyes
Pentatonic Press, 2019



Imagine you have just attended a session, workshop, or class with the author, Doug Goodkin. You are probably feeling a mixture of euphoria and awe: Euphoria because you and 20 to 150 people have just made music never attempted before, with ease and success that is hard to explain; and awe because you have also just experienced community, hope, risk, and encouragement. As you walk out into the hall, feeling glad to be human and alive, you might be wondering, “How does he *do* that?” With thoughtful reading, you will understand both *how* and *why* teaching each lesson as if it is music is such a magical approach, and you will be inspired to become that kind of teacher.

I appreciate the way Goodkin takes his own message to heart. Not only does he suggest how each lesson can be musical and artful, but also he goes on to show how the school day, the school year, and even the administration of a school can be approached “like it’s music.” I chuckled when I read the table of contents and saw how he wrote a book like *it’s music*. It is organized with an overture, three movements of three chapters each, three interludes with one following each movement, and a coda. The brilliance and playfulness of this organizational structure is not only fun, but also each section serves a purpose, like an extended sonata form.

The overture sets up the metaphor and the dream: Music is a metaphor for life and we can “dream together of an artful approach to education that makes the venture more exciting, dynamic, effective and *fun* for the children ... and more interesting and fun for the teachers as well.”

The first Movement addresses the big picture. Good teaching, like good music, has a beginning, a middle, and an end. So simple, but how he develops this theme is pure genius. Each chapter is packed with vignettes and particular tricks of the trade and why they worked for the author and may work for you. He gives just enough detail to see him in his element in the class with real children. Then the interludes develop, in turn, a musical sequence of bite-sized strategies that have stood the test of time: Interlude One contains great beginnings, Two holds wonderful connected middles, and Three describes satisfying endings. Each strategy is named (just like he reminds us to give names to musical elements for our students). At the close of each chapter and the first two of the interludes is a Schenkerian reduction: a summary of the section and a targeted prompt for implementation. Thus, on the fly, you can review and find, by name, and quickly, the teaching strategy you are seeking. I found myself reading the summaries like checklists of great ideas to tuck in my toolkit for when the moment strikes. I could remember the story context that went with each one and call it up for my own use. That is handy and useful!

If I had a student teacher, I would use this book to help us ground educational theory, neuroscience, and philosophy in practice. College professors who guide student music teachers' lab work can use this book for its many talking points and pedagogical prompts. It could easily become a handbook for a long career of joyful teaching and learning. As a seasoned music teacher, I found many new and intriguing ideas, implicit and explicit, sending me into thoughtful improvisations on the author's motifs. Orff levels teachers might consider using this book as aid for pedagogy class and coaching the Orff approach. As a newly minted Level I teacher, wanting to bring that Orff summer experience to my own classroom, I could be mentored every day by the author's wisdom and suggested strategies.

Goodkin has been making connections between culture, history, philosophy, neuroscience, literature, music, and pedagogy within the Schulwerk for over four decades. His claims, rooted in experience and considered in

the light of good scholarship, paint a picture of a "Pedagogy of Possibility."

This book, completed on the eve of the author's retirement from the San Francisco School, ends with a heartfelt Coda including testimonials from his students, not about *him*, but about *music*, and how music making has enlarged them as persons.

And that's how he does it. Our good kin, Doug. ■

MARTHA M. O'HEHIR has master's degrees in music education from Shenandoah Conservatory and educational leadership from Johns Hopkins. She served on the editorial boards of *The Orff Echo* for nine years, *Reverberations* for six years, and co-authored the first Professional Learning Network for AOSA with a study of Keetman's *Elementaria*. She has presented sessions at AOSA's Professional Development Conferences and is exploring the application of the Schulwerk to community music making. Over her 30-year career, she taught pre-kindergarten through high school general and choral music, elementary gifted and general education, and wrote new curricula for each of those fields. Martha is a member of *The Orff Echo* editorial board.

Playing With Process

"Play" and "process" are two words often used to describe the hows and whats of Orff Schulwerk teaching and learning. But what exactly do we mean by process? Is there one concise definition, or is it more nuanced? What is considered play and why is it important? How might Orff Schulwerk teachers consider "playing with process?" Look for the Spring 2021 issue, "Playing With Process," to answer these questions and more!

