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Panel Summation

After hearing all of the music educators speak on their experiences in the field I came across several similarities. There were three key topics that I took away from each panel member; they were the following: the students are always first, learn from your community, and be prepared to make several changes to your ever-growing philosophy.

One common theme was of course that no matter what decision you make as a music educator the students are always first. Mrs. Detwiler mentioned that it is important to take in consideration what students think; however, most students will most likely dislike everything the first time. But, when working with these students it is really important to take in consideration their thoughts in order to provide them exactly what they need. Even though it is important to give them all of the topics that you deem fit to be taught it is even more important to be willing to adjust to the needs of your students. It is important to remember that teaching is never about us it is always about the students and their needs.

A really important moment in the presentation for me was when Paul Leskiewicz specifically discussed reaching out and understanding the community where you teach. If you are unable to understand the norms of your community than you will never completely understand the needs of your students. In fact Mrs. Detwiler mentioned that if she were to completely to ignore her community she would be unable to effectively teach. I think that is something we often forget when we begin to teach. We spend a lot time within our classes talking about the importance of curriculum development with

regards to the nature of students; however, I think the nature of the community is just as important. All of the panel representatives all mentioned the same thing that if you cannot at least understand and respect your community than you will never be able to possibly teach the students and the community how to respect and understand the world and language of music.

If there is one thing I can learn from all of the panel members is that you have to be willing as a teacher to change your philosophy or willingness to accept a job that may not be in an area of your expertise. It seemed to me that every single member of the panel had at least one experience in a setting that either they were unfamiliar with or they felt unprepared to teach. I found that through each of them found this experiencing daunting at first, but they all offered the one solution of looking towards other colleagues, peers, etc for more knowledge. I have no doubt, especially after the presentation, that there will be a moment in my life where I will be faced with a position whether subbing or my hired position where I will feel uncomfortable in a teaching situation. But I feel a sense of relief knowing that if I look towards the correct sources and people that I should be fine. It appears that in the end you must be proactive and willing to constantly learn as you go along, even if are in a field of music education that you are comfortable with.

It was so nice to see real teachers from the field from communities that I have to experience, as well as the two doctoral students. All four teachers had a different perspective on the world of music education, but all seemed to agree on the three areas that I had mentioned earlier. As long as I do know that being aware of my surroundings, students, and being proactive within my job will help me get off to a strong start within my job.