

Music Literacy in the Modern Band

Quick, how many public performances does the average American high school band present annually? According to research summarized by Larry Blocher in *Teaching Music through Performance in Band*, Volume I, the average high school band performs more than 42 performances each year! Amazing statistic, wouldn't you agree? Since most schools have 36 instructional weeks in an academic year, this average is more than 1 per week. How could this possibly be true and has it always been this way? In Robert Garofalo's landmark text, *Blueprint for Band* (1976), the author refers to research by R. Jack Mercer that discovered that high school bands perform an average of 15.4 large group performances per year. It is clear that high school bands (and quite possibly all levels of bands) continue to be performance-oriented. We have all felt this performance pressure and understand the ramifications for how rehearsals (classes) can be impacted.

Of course, all of us have as a goal to develop outstanding musicians. But are we accomplishing this in our current performance-oriented culture? When I talk with band directors or visit their rehearsals, almost all are committed to teaching rhythmic counting, theory, and history; and, almost all reject "rote teaching" as a primary method of developing musicians. But what is the reality? Again, Larry Blocher provides fascinating insights with research he reveals in Volume III of *Teaching Music through Performance in Band*. This research found that in a typical band rehearsal, "middle school and high school band directors were teaching musical concepts less than 3 percent of the total time in rehearsals." After expanding their research, they determined the following percentages of rehearsal time spent teaching musical concepts: 1) Student teachers less than 1 percent; 2) Outstanding band directors less than 1 percent; 3) College and university band directors just over 3 percent; 4) All groups less than 2 percent.

Just imagine, in a one-hour rehearsal, only about 72 seconds is spent on teaching musical concepts, according to this research. Unfortunately, anecdotal evidence and my own experience support these conclusions. How can this be? Joseph Labuta first published *Teaching Musicianship in the High School Band* in 1972, Garofalo's *Blueprint for Band* was published in 1976, and more recently, the National Standards for Music Education were completed in 1994. These are just a few of the many efforts to define a curriculum for band students.

There may be multiple reasons why developing musically literate students through participation in high school band has been elusive: tradition; community and administrative pressure; lack of resources such as desks, reference materials, and computers; and role-modeling by college directors. According to Labuta, "Unfortunately, high school directors as products of typical teacher preparation programs tend to emulate their college directors who have professional-level performance as their primary, if not single, goal." But how many times have we witnessed the phenomenon that occurs when directors "teach the way they were taught, not how they were taught to teach." How can we break the cycle? Should we? Is it possible to have a great performing ensemble and still develop music literacy? Should a clarinet player spend 6 years in the band and come away with more than the ability to play the 3rd clarinet part to a handful of band compositions? Will this serve her well for the rest of her life? Furthermore, how many of us are secretly intimidated by the national standards, particularly the creating standards that include composition and improvisation? Perhaps one of our issues is that we continue to teach the "perform alone and with others" standard because that is what we are best trained to do.

Music Literacy

And what is music literacy? In a 2004 presentation at the Colorado Music Educators Association In-Service conference, noted music educator and composer Robert W. Smith proposed the following line of reasoning (and I paraphrase), "If literacy is defined as the ability to read and write, then should not music literacy also be defined as the ability to read and write music?" Another terrific quote from this same clinic was "Music for a lifetime, not a halftime!"

So, how can we break the cycle and incorporate the decade-old National Standards for Music Education while maintaining our beloved, high quality concert, marching, and jazz bands? First we must believe that a band full of musically educated, highly—motivated young people will perform better than a group that does not have the same level of understanding. The goal of performance is to educate the students in music, not acquire accolades. Here is one plan that produced extraordinary results:

Easy Steps to Organizing a Curriculum

Curriculum design is best accomplished when considering the entire pyramid or feeder system. Work together with your colleagues and supervisors to develop an overall plan from beginning band/orchestra to graduation. Your team should agree on goals, literature, method books, concerts, and activities. As your program improves, you will need to reevaluate your curriculum to meet the changing needs and abilities of your students. Here is a summary of the steps to producing a curriculum chart (see figure 1 for a sample):

1. Chart your school calendar. Include grading periods, holidays, testing. Place concert, festival, audition, assessment, and other activity dates on the calendar.
2. Determine your method book for each ensemble level or for rotating years with the same ensemble. Organize the key studies by week.
3. Schedule your theory concepts and lessons.
4. Determine your sequence for teaching rhythms. Utilize rhythm sheets and slides.
5. Select your music. At least select the literature for the first grading period, if not for the entire year.
6. Decide your projects. Develop or utilize existing unit studies on one piece for each concert/grading period.
7. Schedule assessments. (Always schedule in advance, never leave to chance.)
8. Attempt to sequence the presentation of all materials appropriately. Try to align each of the components so that there is cognitive, psychomotor, and affective learning for all concepts.
9. Post your plan so that students, student teachers, team teachers, parents, and administrators can readily understand your curriculum.

Plan to work and work your plan! Failing to plan means planning to fail!

Calendar

When you are planning your academic year calendar, this is the time to carefully consider how many performances are scheduled. Are there any areas that can be reduced? Are all the performances enhancing your goal of developing musically literate young people? While performances that provide service to the school and community are vital, are they in balance with your goals? Decide the correct spacing of your concerts, i.e. one concert per grading period.

Key Studies

There are a variety of excellent method books from which to choose. I recommend varying the method books in each grade level. If you have a mixed grade ensemble (i.e. 9-12 grade high school band), you may consider rotating the method books that you use on an annual basis. This helps to relieve boredom and can stimulate interest on the part of the students. The method book you choose will determine the key studies. Typically each key study should contain the following elements: 1) scales; 2) scales in thirds; 3) arpeggios; 4) technique studies; 5) chord progressions; 6) chorales; and 7) tuning exercises.

All exercises should be sung in solfege and/or numbers as well as played. Ear training should be a daily goal. This is one of the means in which an instrumental ensemble can achieve the first content standard, “Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.”

Theory Studies

Your theory studies should include lessons appropriate to your students’ background including: notation (reading and writing); rhythm; time signatures; note recognition; intervals; key signatures; major and minor scales; chords; chord progressions; symbols and terms. Materials are available commercially that will assist you in developing worksheets and supplemental materials. Determining the proper sequence is essential. The order in which the theory concepts are presented can be the driving force for the repertoire selections,

assessments, and psychomotor rhythmic studies. Since so much of a normal ensemble rehearsal is focused on the affective and psychomotor domain, theory worksheets and lessons can help provide a needed balance of cognitive studies in the classroom.

Rhythm Studies

Rhythm is one of the most important elements of secondary music instruction. Students will benefit from a comprehensive, sequentially appropriate approach. Too often rhythm study is driven by the literature that is chosen and therefore is not presented at the appropriate time and sequence. Notating the “rhythm of the day” on the board may be an effective means of learning a specific piece of music, however, it should not be the only means of instruction.

Rhythm study should be approached from a cognitive and psychomotor standpoint. A solid, fundamental approach to rhythm should be introduced through written exercises such as those in Carolyn Francis’s “Music Reading and Theory Skills.” Often your method book will have rhythm studies that you can utilize. I also recommend using rhythm slides, computer-projected slides, or flashcards. Slides have certain advantages over rhythm sheets. With the slides or flashcards, you determine how long the student looks at each rhythm. This encourages reading groups of notes as opposed to note by note. This is similar to encouraging students to read groups of words instead of syllable by syllable. Some computer projected slides use a teaching concept called the “Ruler of Time” which is extremely effective in helping students understand the duration of each note. Slides take more organization and preparation by the teacher prior to class, but they are well worth it.

Be consistent with the counting system, however, it is also possible to use more than one type of system. Positive results can be achieved using both the regular counting and the down-up “foot tap” system. Both have merits and are complementary. Combine cognitive rhythm understanding with pure psychomotor repetition. Don't forget to demonstrate the application of the rhythms to the music the students are learning to help with the affective learning domain.

And please, review—and review your review. 80 percent of learning takes place through review—build it in!

Repertoire

Your repertoire is the most important aspect of your curriculum! Your musical choices should be an outgrowth of your curricular goals. As an example, make sure you have an *alla breve* march prepared when you are working on counting in cut time. Select quality music that supports the concepts you wish to teach. The repertoire should allow students to learn about music while studying theory, style, and the structure of the music. Consider ALL the national standards when selecting your repertoire. Some selections may be more inspirational than others for teaching composition and improvisation. Plan each concert carefully so that it has a balance of different styles and structures. For example, a high school concert may include the following: overture, chorale, tone poem, suite or symphony, a concerto or solo at least once a year, and a march. At the middle school level, you may wish to include a novelty selection, such as a popular film score, in place of the symphony listed for the high school level.

I also recommend reading Richard Miles's Chapter "Curricular Models Based on Literature Selection" in *Teaching Music Through Performance in Band*, Vol. I, as well as Labuta's *Teaching Musicianship in the High School Band*. These discussions will help you determine a multi-year plan for selecting literature.

Be sure to select music that will challenge your students, yet be ready to perform in 4-8 weeks. One of the reasons we don't have time to teach conceptually is that we are constantly working out the technical demands of music that is too difficult for our ensembles. Students should prepare the music outside of rehearsal time, therefore reducing the amount of repetitive drill required during rehearsal. Teach students that “rehearsal is the place to practice that which cannot be practiced alone.” The best way to create “flow” (as defined by noted Harvard educational psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihaly) in your rehearsals is to

provide a balance of challenges and skills. The music should be well within reach of your students' ability, yet difficult enough technically and intellectually to inspire their best efforts to perform the music well.

Projects

Developing your projects can add inspiration and challenge to your ensemble. It breaks the constant routine of preparing music for performance and can invigorate the performance of a composition through increased understanding. Projects may be your best tool for achieving the content standards that encourage composition, improvisation, and understanding music in relation to the other arts, history, and culture.

Select at least one composition per grading period (or by concert) to provide an in-depth unit study. Unit studies should include the composer biography; historical background; relationships to history, culture and the other arts; stylistic considerations; and a formal analysis presented in a manner the students can visualize, understand, and enjoy. Additional listening and compositional or improvisational exercises to increase student understanding should also be incorporated. All terms listed in the music should be defined. These unit studies projects can be developed by the teacher or by utilizing existing resources:

- *Teaching Music through Performance in Band* - Miles. Volume I, II, III, IV, V.
- *Guides to Band Masterworks* - Garofalo.
- Use the methods outlined in *Blueprint for Band* to develop your own.

Composition projects may be one of the most exciting and memorable events of the year! Students become much more interested in notation, rhythm, theory, and compositional processes when they have an opportunity to compose for their peers. Email me for examples.

Many other projects can be developed using the following resource:

- *Rehearsal Handbook for Band and Orchestra Students* - Robert Garofalo - A comprehensive book designed for secondary school band and orchestra students.

Expression, note grouping and musical inflection concepts can use the following materials:

- *Express Yourself* – Beyond the Notes.
- *Notegrouping: A Method for Achieving Expression and Style in Musical Performance* - James Thurmond.
- *Kincaidiana*, A Flute Players' Notebook - John C. Krell.

Leadership projects can use the following resources:

- *Kick it In!* - Fran Kick.
- Books and articles by Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser.
- Books by Stephen Covey.

Many additional project ideas are available by reading:

- *Teaching Musicianship in the High School Band* - Joseph Labuta
- *Blueprint for Band* - Robert Garofalo

Another fun and practical project is to correlate the conducting unit with drum major tryouts. Drum Major candidates and students can conduct the band during chorales, national anthem, or their own compositions. Other project ideas include: 1) understanding intonation; techniques for adjusting pitch; expression, note grouping and inflection; transposition; musical instruments; leadership; terms and pronunciation; tempo and dynamics; symbols; cadences; jazz styles; sightreading; acoustics and the harmonic overtone series.

Assessments

Assessments are an essential component of any curriculum. Please keep in mind that more often than not, assessments are more for the teacher than the student. Many times we think we are teaching more than we are. It is your best opportunity to know how effective your instruction has been and can assist you in making adjustments. Be sure to read Larry Blocher's Chapter on "The Assessment of Student Learning in Band" in *Teaching Music Through Performance in Band*, Vol I.

Playing exams can be administered on audiocassette, video, CD, or emailed to you in a digital format such as an mp3. Students can record playing exams on their own time or during class time in a monitored practice room. Playing exams completed outside of class guarantee practice time! They also limit the embarrassment of playing individually in front of peers. Most importantly, they save valuable class time. Please remember that all recorded exams **MUST BE EVALUATED!!!** Choose some of the best to play in front of the class and reward creativity. Scales and arpeggios should be an annual exam. You may wish to vary the amount of octaves, articulation, and tempo requirements to encourage improvement for those members of the program who are returning. Musical excerpts derived from the concert or festival repertoire are an excellent method of improving the performance level of the literature as well as learning what your next music rehearsal will focus on!

Written assessments can be derived from the projects or unit studies. I recommend having at least one playing exam and one written exam or project per grading period. Not all students may earn a grade of "A" in band class. Remember that grades are "earned" and not "given." This can be a difficult adjustment when students and parents do not have an expectation of accountability in this elective course. Plan your grading requirements carefully and try to reward the many positive achievements by members of every ensemble. Communicate clearly to students, parents, and administrators your classroom and grading procedures. You may wish to institute a policy that allows and encourages students to continue taking each assessment until they succeed.

How Much Time on Tasks?

With all of these additional projects will there be any time left to prepare the music? Yes, a properly organized curriculum should allow plenty of time for old-fashioned rehearsal. Of course the actual times vary depending on the number of sessions your ensemble meets weekly. The following time chart provides estimates, which are based on 250 minutes of instruction per week. The actual weekly time may vary according to your goals.

Task	Percent	Minutes	
Key Studies	20	50	(daily for 10 minutes, or every other day for 20 minutes)
Theory/Projects	8	20	(twice weekly for 10 minutes on average)
Rhythm Studies	8	20	(twice weekly for 10 minutes)
Repertoire	64	160	(When students have fundamentals, they need less time to learn each piece. It is essential not to over-program.)
Assessments	0	0	(outside class time or in place of rhythm or project time)

How to Change the Curriculum for Students in Band/Orchestra for Several Years

Most music educators are faced with the issue of having multiple grade levels (and ability levels) in each ensemble. Here are some suggestions for developing a curriculum that addresses this reality:

1. Vary your method book for the ensemble every year. Different ensembles should use different methods.
2. Adjust your individual playing exams so that they are appropriate to each grade level by varying the length, technical difficulty, or adding other factors such as memorization.
3. When assigning scale parameters, adjust as appropriate to each grade level by varying the number of octaves, tempo markings, and articulations.
4. Determine a cycle of musical repertoire that is well suited to the average number of years a student participates in your ensemble. (You will remember the recommended writings by Miles and Labuta)

5. Vary the project content on a two, three, or four year cycle.
6. Individualize projects by ability.

Aligning your Curriculum

By creating a chart that outlines your curriculum for the year, opportunities will appear to properly align and sequence your instructional activities. For example, if your theory lessons are introducing or reinforcing the concepts of 6/8 meter, your rhythm sheets and slides should focus on 6/8 meter. During this period you may select music in 6/8 to reinforce your studies. In this way students will immediately see the application of the concepts they are learning and you will be addressing cognitive, psychomotor, and affective learning domains.

Marching Band

First and foremost, the question we must ask ourselves as educators is, “Are we developing musically literate students in our programs?” There is no question that comprehensive musicianship can be incorporated successfully into marching band activities. Similarly, musical literacy can be developed without a competitive marching program—or any marching band at all, for that matter. In fact, good music education is the same indoors or outdoors. The critical question is not whether marching band is competitive or non-competitive; rather, we should ask whether or not students are performing with high quality and understanding; whether or not the program is developing the individual musician; and how much time the activity is taking in relation to the development of a balanced program of marching, concert, and jazz. Whether you choose to have a marching band or no marching band; or choose a competitive or non-competitive band—any of these approaches can be successful as a vehicle for teaching comprehensive musicianship. The important consideration is to develop musical literacy with artistic and human values that will serve our students well throughout their lives. Likewise, professionally, we should work together as colleagues who share the same goals with mutual respect and consideration regardless of the educational approach we choose. In the end we are all teaching the same thing—not marching band, concert band, or even music—but people.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that participation in band, orchestra, or choir can be one of the most meaningful experiences in a young person’s life. Music education enriches learning and life for all students. The benefits of a well-rounded music education are well documented. But rather than take a hit-or-miss approach to a subject to which we have dedicated our lives, it seems critical that our profession embrace a comprehensive and sequentially appropriate approach to participation in band, orchestra, and choir ensembles. It is my hope that these tools will inspire you to develop your own ideas and organize your instruction in a manner that is effective in developing musically literate young people and musically inspiring ensembles. Our primary goal should be music literacy for all.

**Figure 1. Example Curriculum Alignment Chart
(Incorporates concepts for both junior and senior high school)**

Steps	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Wk	Events	Keys in Method Book	Theory Lessons	Rhythms	Repertoire	Projects (Samples, not all in one year)	Assessments
Grading Period 1							
1		F major	Pretest	Quarters	March	Unit Study – Concert Piece	
2		Bb major	1	Half, whole	Chorale Style	Composition	
3		Eb major	2	Eighth	Overture	Improvisation	
4		Review	3	Rests	Tone Poem/Suite		
5		C major	Review	Dotted quarter	Symphony (HS)	Understanding Intonation	
6		G major	4	Review	Novelty (JH)	Adjusting Pitch	
7		D major	5	Sixteenth		Expression, note grouping	
8	Concert 1	Review	6	Dotted eighth			Playing test 1
9		Sightread	Review	Triplets			Concept test 1
Grading Period 2							
10		Ab major		Syncopation	March	Unit Study – Concert Piece	
11		Db major	7	2/2	Chorale Style	Composition	
12		Gb major	8	6/8	Overture	Improvisation	
13	Honor Band	Review	9	9/8	Tone Poem/Suite		
14		A major	Review	12/8	Symphony (HS)	Musical Instruments	
15		E major	10	Meter comp.	Novelty (JH)	Leadership	
16		B major	11	Review		Terms & Pronunciation	
17	Concert 2	Review	12	Slides			Playing test 2
18		Sightread	Review	Sheets			Concept test 2
Grading Period 3							
19		Cb major		Slides	March	Unit Study – Concert Piece	
20		F# major	13	Sheets	Chorale Style	Composition	
21		C# major	14	Slides	Overture	Improvisation	
22	Solo & Ens	Review	15	Sheets	Tone Poem/Suite		
23		d minor	Review	Slides	Symphony (HS)	Tempo & Dynamics	
24	State testing	g minor	16	Sheets	Novelty (JH)	Symbols	
25		c minor	17	Slides		Jazz Styles	
26	Concert 3	Review	18	Sheets			Playing test 3
27		Sightread	Review	Slides			Concept test 3
Grading Period 4							
28		a minor		Sheets	March	Unit Study – Concert Piece	
29		e minor	19	Slides	Chorale Style	Composition	
30	Festival	b minor	20	Sheets	Overture	Improvisation	
31		Review	21	Slides	Tone Poem/Suite		
32		f minor	Review	Sheets	Symphony (HS)	Conducting	
33		f# minor	22	Slides	Novelty (JH)	Transposition	
34		c# minor	23	Sheets		Acoustics, Harmonic Series	
35	Concert 4	Review	24	Slides			Playing test 4
36		Sightread	Posttest	Sheets			Concept test 4

Weekly Schedule

Lower grade levels focus on theory concepts; higher grade levels focus on projects. Adjust as necessary for block scheduling.

Monday & Wednesday		Tuesday & Thursday		Friday	
10 min	Play/Sing Key Studies	10 min	Play/Sing Key Studies	10 min	Play/Sing Key Studies
10 min	Theory Concept/Project	10 min	Rhythm Slides or Sheets	30 min	Repertoire
30 min	Repertoire, Unit Studies	30 min	Repertoire, Unit Studies	10 min	Sightreading

Outstanding Method Books for Ensembles

(in suggested sequence concurrent with Bach chorales)

TIPPS for Band - Nilo Hovey. Warner Brothers Music Pub. \$5.95 each part. \$14.95 score. This approach taught me how to teach tuning and listening skills to my bands. It is an unbeatable, easy approach to developing ensemble sound. The title of the book, "TIPPS," is an acronym for tone, intonation, phrasing, precision, and style. It is indispensable for developing tone, intonation, balance, and blend. It has some technical and rhythmic exercises in it, but not as challenging as *Foundations* or *Symphonic Warmups*. Appropriate for advanced 8th grade bands through high school. Rhythmic exercises will need to be supplemented. Every band student should go through these exercises early on to develop ensemble skills. I used this with my advanced middle school band and my third high school band.

I Recommend - Ployhar. Warner Brothers Music Pub. \$5.95 each part. \$12.95 piano/conductor. A complete fundamental book containing exercises and studies in all keys on lip slurs, chorales, major and minor scales, chromatics, arpeggios, interval studies, articulation, dynamics, rhythms, and rudiments. Extremely useful. Would be an excellent method book following *TIPPS* and preceding *Foundations* or *Symphonic Warmups*.

Foundations for Superior Performance - R. Williams. Neil A. Kjos Music Company. \$9.95 each part. \$29.95 score. A comprehensive method for developing most of the skills needed in ensembles. Very popular book with proven Texas methodologies. Appropriate for advanced middle school through high school. Had it been available, I would have used it with my second high school band.

Symphonic Warmups for Band - Claude T. Smith. Hal Leonard Corporation. \$4.95 each part. \$12.95 score. A comprehensive approach to teaching technique, tone, and style. Utilizes all keys and most meters. Organized into Scale Studies, Etudes, and Chorale Studies (chorales in all keys!). The etudes and rhythmic studies progressively become more difficult. I used this with my most advanced high school ensemble almost daily.

Sixteen Chorales by J.S. Bach - arr. by Mayhew Lake. Hal Leonard/Schirmer. \$3.95 each part. \$9.95 score. A must have for any band program. A classic used by collegiate and outstanding high schools for decades. Also available for orchestra.

Must Have Student Text-Workbooks for Ensembles

Rehearsal Handbook for Band and Orchestra Students - Robert Garofalo - A comprehensive book designed for secondary school band and orchestra students. Meredith Music Publications. \$8.95.

Music Reading & Theory Skills, A Sequential Method for Practice and Mastery. - Carolyn Francis. Innovative Learning Designs. A comprehensive Music Literacy Curriculum Series in 4 volumes. Reproducible with purchase of a single-user lifetime copy license. Adoption package discounts for school districts. 1-800-232-6332. One of the single most important tools I ever used for developing individual musicianship and understanding. This method literally taught me how to teach theory and the elements of music. It is sequentially appropriate. I would not teach secondary school music without this method.

Must Read Books

Blueprint for Band, Teaching Comprehensive Musicianship Through Band Performance - Robert Garofalo. Meredith Music Publications. \$24.95. Read this book first and often. Many terrific ideas. Can't believe it was written in the early 1970s!

Teaching Musicianship in the High School Band - Joseph A. Labuta - now available in a revised and updated edition. Meredith Music Publications. \$29.95. Read this book immediately after *Blueprint*. The original and still indispensable.

Teaching Music through Performance in Band - Miles. Volume I, II, III, IV, V. GIA Publications. Volume I \$38.50. Volume II \$39.50. Volume III \$49.50. Each volume has a correlated set of CD recordings available. \$39.50 each. These books help you to implement the ideas in *Blueprint for Band* and *Teaching Musicianship in the High School Band*. Many new ideas as well. An incredible resource for any teacher.

After You Read the Must Read Books

Improving Intonation in Band and Orchestra Performance - Robert Garofalo. A comprehensive approach to teaching intonation. The tuning guides and intonation charts for each instrument may be reproduced for distribution to students. Meredith Music Publications. \$19.95.

Notegrouping: A Method for Achieving Expression and Style in Musical Performance - James Morgan Thurmond, Book. \$34.95. This book changes everything in terms of musical inflection and interpretation. Surpasses the Vandercook book on expression for modern note grouping.

Express Yourself - Sharper Videos, Video and exercises. 1-888-BEADGCF. \$29. The companion method for introducing the notegrouping concepts to secondary school students.

Kincaidiana, A Flute Players' Notebook - John C. Krell, Book (May be hard to find!) This book may be out of print, but if you can find it in a library, it is worth investigating. Another way of understanding and teaching phrasing and notegrouping is presented. An excellent sister to *Notegrouping* by Thurmond.

Kick It In! Developing Self Motivation to Take the Lead - Fran Kick. A terrific handbook for students (and directors) on leadership. \$10 each or set of 10 for \$75. www.kickitin.com.

The New ASBDA Curriculum Guide - The American School Band Directors Association. A reference book for school band directors.

Good for Your Soul

The Joy of Inspired Teaching - Tim Lautzenheiser. \$21.95. If you haven't read it yet, run to the nearest store to get it. If you have read it, reread often.

The Art of Successful Teaching: A Blend of Content and Context - Tim Lautzenheiser. \$21.95. Read everything he writes and attend every workshop you can!