

APPLICATION – please follow the format provided below.

A. Abstract: *(100 word limit using Microsoft Word – please post word count at the end of your abstract)* Describe briefly how the funds for which you are applying will be used. If funded, the abstract will be posted to the CoTA website.

Funding will be used to study and gather data concerning how K-12 music teachers approach non-traditional, learner-centered music classes. Funds from this grant will be used to help with travel costs for one trip to the New York, New Jersey, and Philadelphia area, and another trip to California, Arizona and Colorado to study the work of teachers that have at least three years experience with learner-centered pedagogies. During these visits I would collect data by observing classes, talking with the teachers, and holding semi-structured interviews with groups of students.

(94 words)

B. Proposal: *(500 word limit using Microsoft Word – please post word count at the end of your proposal)* Describe the goals of your project / activity / conference and the areas in which your project supports the strategic goals and objectives of the unit, college and university.

Involvement with learner-centered approaches to teaching has been prominent in various areas of education for several years and at all levels including primary, secondary and tertiary schools. This theory of education and learning has roots in the work of several psychologists and philosophers and is associated with the principles of Constructivism. From a constructivist perspective, knowledge cannot simply be given to students. Students must construct their own meanings and teachers need to allow learners to raise their own questions, generate their own hypotheses and models as possibilities and test them for validity.

The new K-12 National School Music Standards feature learner-centered concepts, and interest in learner-centered pedagogies has been manifested in some school music programs. However, the vast majority of music programs, especially in secondary schools, have yet to move outside traditional teacher-centered approaches. The music education profession has years of practice and research with this traditional model of instruction, and it has become formalized in schools. We know the most efficient ways to deliver this instruction and we know the most methodical ways to teach it to pre-service music teachers.

In contrast, we are not near a full understanding of best practices involving learner-centered pedagogies. The music education profession includes a small, and growing number of teachers who are activity involved with learner-centered instruction, but we lack models of best practice. Teachers are forced to make judgement calls on how best to address music classes that include significant amounts of learner-centered activities.

Learner-centered approaches to music teaching is my primary research interest and the music education area at USF is a leader in helping pre-service teachers develop skills with this educational approach. Yet, we are in need of a better understanding of how learner-centered models are playing out in practice. This study, if funded, will be used to gather data concerning how teachers approach learner-centered music classes. I have been working with other music education professionals to identify a list of K-12 music teachers who have been experimenting with learner-centered approaches, in non-traditional music classes (outside of the band/choir/orchestra paradigm), for a minimum of three years. I plan to visit with as many of these teachers as possible during the Spring 2018 semester. During these visits I would collect data by observing classes, talking with the teachers and holding semi-structured interviews with groups of students.

While there are a few such teachers across Florida, there are far more spread out across the U.S., especially in the northeast and far west. Funds from this grant will be used to help with travel costs for one trip to the New York, New Jersey, and Philadelphia area, and another trip to California, Arizona and Colorado.

This project supports strategic goals of the College and University by building partnerships, through collaborations, while fostering intellectual development that generates new knowledge to help advance the music education profession.

(493 words)

C. Anticipated Benefits: *(250 word limit using Microsoft Word – please post word count at the end of your anticipated benefits)* Describe the ways in which the proposed goals will be used to enhance your research and the impact/significance of the research to your discipline.

According to current Florida Department of Education data, only 8.6% of high school students in Florida enroll in traditional band, choir and orchestra classes. Discovering ways for the music education profession to become more relevant for secondary school students, and to provide creative musical skills which students can use throughout their lifespan have become accepted as important concepts in contemporary music education research. I firmly believe the results of my research will hold great significance in these areas for the music education profession. Learner-centered pedagogical approaches are now widely accepted in educational fields outside of music, and the music education profession needs more data describing how such approaches can lead to new models of music classes. These data could be used to help inform curriculum for pre-service music teachers, and in-service workshops for experienced teachers.

In addition to providing information to help with curriculum development for our undergraduate and graduate music education programs at USF, I am planning two tangible outcomes for this project. The first would be a research report to be submitted to a peer-reviewed, music education research journal, which could happen by early fall semester 2018. The second would be the use of data gathered from this study as part of a book project that I have started that will provide the profession with detailed models of learner-centered pedagogical approaches for K-12 music classes.

(233 words)