

# Transforming Lives . . . Building Community through World Music Drumming

Following are stories and comments from teachers who are teaching World Music Drumming. Feel free to use excerpts and attribute the stories to their authors by name and location (not e-mail address).

Will Schmid

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In a message dated 10/7/06 10:29:44 AM, mdietz@bresnan.net writes:

Hi Will,

I'm sure you know about the "best laid plans" theory. Well, I had a great idea for the special needs kids at North Middle School this year. Since we had done lots of drumming last year, I thought we would do bar instruments the first of the year and then get out the drums about February and try to do some combining by the end of the year. Things certainly changed!

The students I have this year are profoundly disabled. Four of the five don't (didn't) speak. There is Downs Syndrome, autism, fetal alcohol syndrome, and I don't know what else. It doesn't matter to me what the child's DISability is, I want to get to their ABILITY. They love it when I sing to them, but they need to be involved. I discovered they love their names and all could recognize their own name. We moved from there to trying to get them to know each other. How? I got out the drums! There is something that connects in the brain and muscles with the drums. Something about the sound that the kids tune in to, something about the touching, the rhythm, whatever. Now, I know that these kids have therapists working with them, too - speech, occupational, physical - all day. But something is connecting in music when I am the first teacher that the new students recognize in the hall and will respond to (It's not ME. They are connecting me with the music and drumming.)

Just to get these kids to interact at first was a big deal. They just wanted to play with shoelaces, sit with hands folded in laps, and listen to me sing. Then we got them to "say" (most were just guttural sounds) their own name in a "Hello, my name is...." song. Next thing you know they are doing it in rhythm (two syllable guttural sounds) and it fits in the song. Then, Jerry (his self-contained classroom teacher says he seldom makes any noise with her) started to insert everyone's name as I pointed to the different kids. Then Phillip (who loves his

shoelaces!) began to echo Jerry. We teachers and aides applaud and give high fives and on we go. Jerry is so pleased with himself that we have to stop and clap for him and he laughs out loud.

So on to the drums. I first got them out and a couple of kids wouldn't touch them and the rest just wanted to bang on them. So we worked that through and let the kids each explore them in their own way. From two weeks ago, we have gone from the aides getting the drums to the kids getting their own and carrying them really well and carefully. They sit like professionals (wish I could get my other classes to sit as well and consistently without attitude that soon!). We have gone from just making noise and saying each name to playing and saying their own name using both hands at once to, yesterday, Jerry got his arms to move independently and drummed his two syllable name Jer-ry with right-left. The cheering was spontaneous and he was SO happy. Jordan, who has made no sound this year, started yesterday to parrot a lot of the speech within the class as we drummed names and that guy is keeping a perfect beat on all the rhymes we do. The beat is all the same on all of them, but he keeps it right on!!!! Jerry is more interested in drumming the word rhythm so we have COMPLEMENTARY drumming going on! Summer, wheelchair bound and completely noncommunicative, responds more and more by waving her hands during the drumming.

I cannot tell you appropriately in email or wouldn't be able to in person, what is going on here. I just know that these kids are responding to the drumming, to the spirit of it all, to the community of it all, to the sounds and rhythms, to the success building on success, to the physical movement, to the aural/oral teaching methods, to everything! They are more animated in music than in other areas at school. They are so obviously excited when I say it is time to get the drums so they know they are going to have a good experience. I am loving it! And I am flying by the seat of my pants just "reading" the kids and what they are responding to and expanding from there. Then, when I do some research or am looking through special needs learners literature, I am finding more that we can do to bring them out. It is truly incredible!

Anyway, thanks again for the workshops and all you do with/for this curriculum. It is paying dividends in ways we will never be able to know or comprehend.

Mary Dietz, Great Falls, MT

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In a message dated 12/15/06 8:23:14 PM, VONNAN@holmen.k12.wi.us writes:

Wanted to let you know that the response to WMDr has been really positive at Holmen Middle School - I've had a lot of compliments from parents & staff. We had a small group of drummers and singers perform

at the open house for the new addition to our school, we performed Peace with the choir for Veteran's Day and used the 6/8 pattern along with a selection called Welcome One and Welcome All for the opening of the choir concert. It worked out great! Had the drums across the front of the stage. We ended the Christmas choir concert with Peace - beautiful.

The most rewarding part so far has been in creating ensembles, taping them and having the students assess their own playing. We have a small 8th grade semester general music class, so I have had more time with them. Two groups came up with such great original ensembles, that I had them be the leaders, and teach the class how to play their creations. One girl, who is pretty quiet did such a great job, showing the patterns to her classmates - you would have thought she was at the workshop this summer! The other group had a tough time teaching their ensemble, but the class finally got it & it sounded pretty cool! Also found some fun CD's to accompany the ensembles - the 6th & 7th graders like that.

Our annual holiday talent show is next week - recruited a group of teachers, and other staff members for an adult ensemble - we are performing "Rock-It" & Jamaican Jingle Bells!

Nancy Von Arx, Holmen, WI

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In a message dated 12/15/06 7:34:22 PM, charless@friscoisd.org writes:

I am so excited you are coming back to Texas! I really enjoyed seeing you all in Nebraska at the Orff conference. I had a program last Thursday and it was a terrific success. Included in my program were several choral selections, an Orff Volume 1 piece and THREE WORLD DRUMMING pieces!! The parents loved it. We did Ensemble 1, 2 with Take Time in Life worked into the form, and Rock-It. We closed with Dance for the Nations. I told them all about my World Drumming curriculum and the parents were so receptive. My students and staff love the performances and I enjoy sharing all I have learned. Thanks!

Shara Charles, Frisco, TX

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In a message dated 12/16/06 10:17:04 AM, andiekay@earthlink.net writes:

Our Remo "Package A" arrived about 6 weeks ago. The instruments were provided to us by the International House of Blues Foundation. I have been drumming with all of my middle school band and orchestra classes on Fridays. The students are very enthusiastic about the p[rogram. We are making steady progress. So far, we have mastered Ensembles 1 & 2. I was able to dig up some old melody bells and have started a group of eager students on the xylophone parts to "Take Time in Life." I hope to purchase some xylophones in the future, but for now, the bells will have to suffice. Several of my 8th grade students served as mentors when we took the drums to a senior citizens' holiday party last week. We had about 42 participants in the drum circle (mostly in their late 70s and 80s). We taught them to play Ensemble 1. Throughout the event, te students moved around the circle, offering assistance and support where needed. Everyone had a great time! They earned community service credit for their participation too.

Andie Kay  
(Beverly Hills Unified Schoold District, CA)

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In a message dated 12/17/06 5:24:04 PM, Imason@northstar.k12.ak.us writes:

It's always good to get your emails. I am so hoping to get to do level 2 this summer. Last summer I had my knee replaced, and it is doing well. I wanted to tell you about our Winter Concert at Hunter Elementary. This year, I began a young men's choir that was open to intermediate boys. I had twenty sign up, and we sang and drummed and had a blast. At the Winter Concert, they performed Banuwa. All the boys werein the drum ensemble, except three strong singers who led the audience in singing the song. Every child in the school had learned to sing the song in music class. It was a great success. After the song, all the students in the gym started cheering for the boys. The excitement was electric. You have blessed us so with your superb teaching. Thank you!

Linda Mason, Fairbanks, AK

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In a message dated 12/18/06 8:32:38 AM,  
MCCANJE@STAFF.SAUKPR.K12.WI.US writes:

Hi Will! Merry Christmas! Two of my three holiday programs are finished and I wanted to share a song that was an audience favorite. The piece is called 'Christmas in Any Language' by Teresa Jennings (MusicK8.com). Ensemble 1 or 2 both work beautifully with it, so it's great with a fifth grade beginning group. The audience was amazed! All of the WMD friends with young singers/drummers may want to add this to their bag of tricks for next year. It's an easy and very successful piece that doesn't sound like a beginner song.

Jenna McCann, Sauk Prairie WI

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In a message dated 12/19/06 12:37:22 PM, rhythmsis@comcast.net writes:

Hi Will-

I have been remiss in writing, but just wanted to let you know that I taught a very successful World Music Drumming class during "Teen Week" at the Augusta Heritage Center in Elkins, WV this past August (2006). This was a first-time for drumming during this event, which normally concentrates on traditional dance. I taught Ensemble 1, over which we sang "Funwa Alafia", as well as the "Harambee" drum ensemble. Both fit nicely with the teen week theme of community making through music and dance. Working with the professional dance teachers/facilitators in residence for the workshop from the Footworks Dance Ensemble, I also taught the KuKu dance to the teens. The kids ate it all up with tremendous passion and were hungry for more. Many thanks to Michelle Quigg's patient and inspiring teaching of the KuKu dance at the Laurel workshop and thanks to James for doing the slow and fast version of his drumming for my videotape. Michelle and James, you are the best!! I'm now teaching WMD in an after-school program in Annapolis, with residencies and summer camp opportunities coming forth soon. Thank you again to the whole WMD team!

All the best,

Elizabeth Melvin, MD

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In a message dated 1/7/07 10:57:19 PM, janwckhm@yahoo.com writes:

Hi Will,

It's Jan, a Las Vegan...happily drumming away. I ended up teaching in an interesting setting this year. It is a GREAT job...200 high school students.

They are in many ways very much like Jr. High. Most of them are 9th and 10th graders. They LOVE drumming!

I think of you often. I use the curriculum so much. Our school is "Global Community High School". We have some kids who can "get down" on these drums!!! I am actually taking lessons from a hall monitor from Haiti. He is awesome.

Love and peace to you,  
Jan Wickham, NV

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In a message dated 1/16/07 2:17:55 PM,  
james.mader@browardschools.com writes:

It has been awhile. I have a few minutes to share with you the latest. First, the Holiday show at my school was awesome. We did some really cool

stuff. As cliché as it is we did the Little Drummer Boy with my ensemble Reggae Talk. Very Caribbean! We joined the chorus as we did ensemble #5

and they sang Bring a Torch Isabella. THAT, my friend, was very cool! I am truly blessed with awesome students.

James Mader, FL

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In a message dated 1/18/07 10:45:45 PM, QuiggMi writes:

Last Saturday, and this weekend is the HMEA Middle School Music Festival. I have been the drumming director for 3 years now, working with students from many different districts. This year we are including one of Mader's pieces and ensemble 7 played with a Walt Hampton piece, "Abandon." 80% of the group has no prior drumming or xylo experience but they are fabulous kids who just can't get enough of playing. They love it!

Michelle Quigg, Long Island, NY

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In a message dated 1/22/07 6:24:09 PM, fayz798@optonline.net writes:

I'm at PS 75 in Manhattan, NYC and the drumming is wonderful. The children have really taken to it, and love the song "Take Time in Life."

We're having a blast. Thanks again.  
Fay Watson, NYC

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In a message dated 2/16/07 10:15:36 PM, radmusic@sasktel.net writes:

I'm checking in to see how you are doing. From the emails I've been getting sounds like everything is humming along with WMD. I keep plugging away here in Saskatoon. I've been drumming with my Soaring Eagles, a small group of students in a behavior modification program. I see them 3 mornings a week for 30 minutes prior to their medication kicking in (takes 45 minutes and they take their pills when they get to school). Some days its out of this world. Some days its God's way of teaching me patience and compassion. It all depends on the night before at home. I'm planning to have them perform the week after the break were on. I'll starting to drum with the rest of the classes I teach next week. I continue to play with Enije a local group led by Joseph Ashong, the master drummer from Ghana I've told you about. He is the consummate professional performer, a true joy to play with and learn from.

Richard Dubé, Saskatoon, SK

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In a message dated 3/17/07 11:46:02 AM, lanierkeosaian@optonline.net writes:

My World Drumming course for 7th and 8th graders has been a huge success. It has built a fire under the whole middle school. I have kids running into my room between classes saying, "I can't WAIT to take this class!" We used ensemble #1 with the choir in the Holiday concert and will use it again in the Spring concert. The administration is very happy with me!

See you this summer!

Linda Lanier-Keosaian, NY

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In a message dated 3/20/07 3:12:26 PM, PBauer@northalleggheny.org writes:

Just wanted you to know that today when we were improvising on keyboards with question and answer phrases, one of the kids in my seventh grade boys' class said, "Hey! This is just like with the drums, right?" Imagine how shocked they were when they figured out that their love of drumming could help them play keyboards better. Will wonders never cease?

Pat Bauer, PA

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In a message dated 9/18/06 11:37:53 AM, RachNewell writes:

I did your Amazing Grace at a funeral for a friend's husband last weekend and it was unbelievable. (Used contra bass bars and chimes, too.)

Rachel Newell, Leesburg, VA

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In a message dated 9/18/06 11:45:48 AM, andiekay@earthlink.net writes:

I just moved to a new position teaching middle school band and orchestra in the Beverly Hills Unified School District (CA). I have a huge job ahead of me building a weak music program into a strong one. The good news is that The International House of Blues Foundation will be providing us with a Remo Package A so that I can include World Percussion Drumming in the program. I was the pilot site for their Make an Impression Drum Circle Program at my former school (selected from among the participants at your North Hollywood workshop several years ago), and they have generously enabled me to have a drum circle program here too. I had hoped to join you in Las Vegas, but the job move required my full attention and sadly, I could not get away. Perhaps, I can participate in another workshop this year. I'm eagerly awaiting the arrival of the drums and I know that they will be enthusiastically received by my students.

Andie Kay, Beverly Hills, CA

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In a message dated 9/18/06 12:20:20 PM, PBauer@northallegheeny.org writes:

Will:

I've been thinking of you a lot especially with the tenth anniversary this year.

Congratulations on all the wonderful things you'll be doing this year. As the year changes, so does my schedule and how much time I spend at the Middle School level. I am at a different Middle School in the district now, but the drums came with me – no questions asked. I have two stories that you might enjoy:

We have a Small Ensemble for select singers. It is open to all students and provides a place for singers in Band and Orchestra to participate in a vocal ensemble. While observing auditions, I noticed that one of my General Music students was auditioning. He sang in tune and his sight-reading was perfect. He easily made the group. When I asked him why he was in General Music rather than Chorus, his response was, "General Music ROCKS!" What could I say?

I have a Life Skills music class this year – a great bunch of kids who are essentially non-verbal with two in diapers. So what do we do – drum of course!! We have four kids and three aides and everyone's busy all the time. They have made great strides in the three weeks we've been together. Today, the child we couldn't get off of the floor and into a chair on the first day of class, played the drum unassisted for the first time. In the scheme of life it was pretty humbling.  
Pat Bauer, North Allegheny, PA

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In a message dated 9/18/06 6:37:48 PM, janflynn@comcast.net writes:

Many good things are happening in little Oxford, Michigan. Kids are fired up! The "Thunder Drummers" were asked to play for the Welcome Back Breakfast for the entire district -- all faculty, staff, administrative types were there. And the kids played beautifully! We played "Bobobo" and the kids nailed it! (I think!!! :-) There's a tangible sense of pride when they master a piece -- they sound good, look good, and get LOTS of kudos from adults and kids. Man, how do you put a value on that??

Warmly,  
Jan Flynn, Oxford, MI

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In a message dated 9/18/06 10:40:12 PM, mccoym@prodigy.net writes:

I want to thank you for another great year of drumming at Lake Geneva in level 2. This year has started off FANTASTIC with my 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students! This is my 3rd year including the World Music Drumming curriculum with my kids, and every year I have better success than the last! The kids are more focused than ever this year, and I can already see an improvement in their rhythms! Our band directors have even commented on how much better the kids sound rhythmically this year. We are starting to find verbal phrases in our "say it and play it" rhythms, and the kids love it! I have been able to use Ensemble #2 with several songs this year, and continue to find new ways to teach the ensemble! This year the kids are much better on the bell part, and can really rock on it! It seems as if they can get the harder rhythms easier than the simple ones! The 5th grade students are learning Bobobo for their 5th grade musical program, and are very excited!

I am also in the process of trying to start an intramural drumming program for special needs students, and am waiting to hear from my

district office. My principal was very receptive to the idea, and made it a priority with the district. She is really seeing how the program is impacting and improving the learning of our students, so THANK YOU for introducing and continuing this program!

Maureen McCoy  
Naperville, IL

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In a message dated 9/25/06 10:24:35 AM, TRUDIE\_MYERS@hcpss.org writes:

Just an update for you! My classes are going wonderfully well. the students (and faculty and staff) are so into the drumming. We have a very multicultural population, and it has had an amazing effect on the school!

I was so apprehensive about my ability to remember everything from this summer, but after a few classes I no longer needed the book, and I have also taught students to be the leader. And of course that opens them up with greater self-esteem and self-confidence. The "behaviorally challenged" students are stepping up to the plate to be leaders...the change is amazing. I am so appreciative of your vision with this program. My students are truly becoming better students and even more importantly better young people in general!

Thanks again!

Trudie Myers  
Laurel MD

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In a message dated 9/27/06 10:12:09 AM, rrobbins@wacoisd.org writes:

By the way, I have to tell you that getting drums for our campus and attending your workshop totally revolutionized my teaching! Even my 5th grade boys think I am the coolest teacher on our campus now! Thanks for restoring the joy of teaching 5th grade music to my soul.

Rhonda Robbins, Waco, TX

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In a message dated 10/3/06 9:31:00 AM, mblum@westmusic.com writes:

I wanted to let you know of a couple of my recent gigs: last week I did a WMDrumming Community-building Session for 120 of the senior staff of the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics as part of their monthly staff meeting. It was a great success. Always fun to have a group of people with almost no experience in anything like that and see their very positive reactions. I did a similar one several weeks ago for the opening day of orientation for all of the 1st year Medical Students and some of the staff of the Medical School (about 185 people total). After that, the Dean of the Medical School said to me, "Wow, if I could get that many people to work together so well in such a small amount of time, I could really learn something from you!" Very exciting!

This Saturday, Paul Corbiere and I are doing 2 mini-sessions on WMDr for the Illinois Collegiate MEA Fall Conference at Augustana College. They expect 100+ Music Ed. students to attend. We'll definitely recommend that they check out the updated summer '07 workshop schedule on the website.

Melissa Blum, Coralville, IA

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In a message dated 10/3/06 3:10:23 PM, patbowesjeffers@yahoo.com writes:

Hi Everybody,  
Here is a piece covered by Fox news about the drum circle I help run at the Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa Florida.

Just go to this URL and you will be able to see what they did. It focused on the patients and Cheryl Bellinger, the Director of Arts in Medicine at Moffitt. There is a shot of my hands playing the djembe.

<http://www.myfoxtampabay.com/myfox/pages/Home/Detail?contentId=1065342&version=1&locale=EN-US&layoutCode=VSTY&pageId=1.1.1>

Thanks,  
Patricia Bowes Jeffers, Tampa, FL

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In a message dated 10/30/06 9:16:41 PM, loreyh@earthlink.net writes:

I have been a student of Will's at two WMD sessions and wanted to let him know that I am now at a school that includes middle schoolers. We did drumming the first quarter and plan to perform at the Winter Choral concert. The kids liked it and worked hard, but only want to perform for younger students! They played for the K and First graders the other day and I am hoping they will have enough confidence to be willing to play at the chorus concert. I play to have my 4th-6th chorus do the "African Noel" (like "Banuwa") and use drums to accompany it.

There are many African teachers at this school and many have stopped in and played my drums. We are hoping that they will do some performing at the annual French cultural fair in November. I actually teach on the side of the school which is Montessori but helped out with the French Immersion Middle School General Music class. (Now I seem to be the lead teacher for it...)

Hope all is well with Will and the rest of the drummers!

Lorey Hallada  
Cheverly, MD  
Robert Goddard French Immersion and Montessori School  
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In a message dated 11/1/06 4:01:03 PM,  
Nancy.Rigdon@eastlymeschools.org writes:

[Many, Many thanks!! The curriculum is being very enthusiastically received here!](#)

Nan Rigdon  
Choir Director/General Music Specialist  
Niantic, CT  
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In a message dated 11/13/06 7:50:59 PM,  
susan\_tolley@charleston.k12.sc.us writes:

I just wanted you to know that my sixth grade chorus is performing 3 World Music Drumming songs tomorrow evening. We have been working with a High school group that has a drum group and are performing: Amazing Grace, By The Waters of Babylon, and Peace Will Come. We taught the drum parts to both sets of students (High school and my 6th graders) and have had so much fun with these songs!

Have a Happy Thanksgiving! I look forward to seeing you and going to your session at the Southern Division SCMEA conference.

Susan J. Tolley  
Chorus Teacher  
James Island Middle School  
Charleston, SC

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In a message dated 12/15/06 7:58:09 AM, rusdlm@verizon.net writes:

Just want to let you know that I used your "Get It Together" arrangement as the final number in our holiday concert at the Valley School of Ligonier in PA. Four 9th graders drummed while the 5-6th chorus sang the song. We introduced the song by explaining what "Harambee" means and then applying that to our school's record of community service within the school family, the local community, and out into the world. We have all been "pulling together" to make that happen here! Thanks again for so many great ideas. I have written the "Patsy Ory-Ory Aye" recorder parts out for my younger orchestra and plan to use my older orchestra as drummers and verse singers, and the audience as refrain singers for our spring program. I'll let you know how that goes, too!

Happy holidays!

Debbie Mewherter, PA

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In a message dated 5/23/06 5:26:58 PM, schteep@usfamily.net writes:

Here's another story for you about the power of WMDr. I had three of my "Magnificent Seven" students in class yesterday. (Two got themselves kicked out for not participating, one elected to stay and do his job.) We have a concert on Tuesday, and I'm trying to get them up to speed for the two songs their class is doing, with limited success.

So this young man was playing his drum part (kind of) and getting faster and faster. (Ensemble #7-Waters of Babylon) Finally I had him stop and listen to the bell part. And he said, "Oh, I get it! I don't play always at the same time as her (the bell player), but the pieces fit together like a puzzle." I got all excited and jumped up and down in my chair. I then told him that life was like that. When you're listening and doing your part, your part (in life) will mesh with other people's parts and make the whole more interesting. Hopefully this won't be the only time in his life where he is a part of something greater than

himself in a positive way. (Those opportunities have been few and far between for him, with very limited success this entire year.) Only time will tell. But I could tell that he was excited to finally "get it."

Julie Schramke  
Achieve Language Academy  
St. Paul, MN

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In a message dated 8/4/06 9:50:08 AM, jverde@velocity.net writes:

Hi Will,

I wanted to thank you and your terrific staff for the wonderful experiences I had at the workshop in Wisconsin this summer. I enjoyed the sessions very much and discovered new ideas to add to my curriculum. My students will certainly benefit from them. I have been teaching for more than 30 years, and through your program, I have renewed my enthusiasm for what I do every day. Again, thank-you.

Jean Verdecchia, Erie PA

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In a message dated 9/11/06 1:02:35 PM,  
aehorn@eusd.tehama.k12.ca.us writes:

Hi, my name is Abbie Ehorn and I teach K-4 general music in Cottonwood, CA (Northern CA). Our state just passed historical arts and music funding (105 million ongoing and 500 million one time grant). I have started a world music drumming program at our middle school 5-8 (which had no music program at all). Through the grant, we were able to purchase the world music drumming package for both school sites. After just 4 short weeks of following the world music drumming curriculum, these middle school students with no musical experience are successfully learning and motivated about drumming. They race to the music room and I have had no behavior problems at all!

Abbie Ehorn, Cottonwood, CA

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In a message dated 9/14/06 7:56:35 AM,  
teresamiller1980@yahoo.com writes:

Thanks for sharing "Peace Will Come" and many other songs with us. I made a comment to my students about how much fun I had learning more about the drums and the songs that the drums can accompany. They wanted to know why they don't get to sing all of the songs you taught me and I explained I have to spread the love to the choir students next year. The kids really enjoy singing songs that they themselves can accompany. Thanks again for sharing with me and the students at College Hill Middle School.

Terri Miller  
Texarkana, AR

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In a message dated 2/14/06 8:18:33 PM, cdstaub@verizon.net writes:

Just wanted to let you know what is going on in our little corner of the world - Montgomery County, Maryland. Kathy Tyndall and I approached the PTA for funding in the fall, and they awarded us \$2000 in support of purchasing drum equipment. We then went to a local church who used us as their stewardship project for the summer Vacation Bible School program, and received another \$250.00. One of our students sold some of his "outgrown" toys at a local flea market & brought us \$75.00. Just last week, a parent donated \$500.00 and promised a company match! As you can imagine, we've ordered quite a bit of equipment, and are thrilled with that. We started a staff drumming ensemble before school 2 times monthly - they have named themselves "the Deadbeats", and they are very enthusiastic! Some of our more adventurous teachers have been willing to improvise on Orff instruments. They are working on "Sands of Time". We've started 2 student ensembles before school - one Grade 2-3 ensemble, and one Grade 4-5 ensemble, and the kids are so excited. One parent told me that his child is IMPOSSIBLE to get up in the morning, but on the days he has drum club he "bounces" out of bed and hustles everyone else in the house. We're slowly changing the climate of our school, and we are both very happy with the results. Looking forward to level 2 this summer!

Carrie Staub  
Waters Landing Elementary, Germantown, MD

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In a message dated 2/16/06 5:53:34 AM, Denisully writes:

Drumming has been the saving grace for my 7th grade general music kids. I don't think I could ever go back to traditional general music with this grade level again!

Denise Sully, Grantham, NH

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In a message dated 1/5/06 9:00:48 PM, johnmonward@sbcglobal.net writes:

I realized reading all the great news from around the world, that I hadn't touched base with you in awhile. This is the second year at my new school and the kids are moving lights years ahead of last year. We have been working on ensembles from your new book as well as from James and Paul's book. Rock It! was a favorite that we performed at our last concert, with the 8th graders wearing sun glasses while playing (yes, they are too cool.....) My middle schoolers love improving with the sticks during that ensemble. The mentoring process which has arisen in my classes has enabled everyone to rise, no matter where they start.

Both my 7th and 8th graders were so excited to come back to drumming this year and at the beginning of the year, they played for Cox Kids, which is a grant organization founded by Cox Cable employees and matched by their corporation. We had written a grant to get more xylophones, bass bars, and xylo tables, and after hearing our 7th graders play *Desert Fire*, *Teakwe*, and *Sands of Time* (Paul and James), we were awarded a \$3,300 grant. The person who fought for us said he was so touched to see the heart and spirit in middle school students and they were pleased to support our innovative effort!

Recently, when I had students journal about how drumming impacted their lives, I received some very deep answers about their emotional growth, sense of community, and pride in what they were able to accomplish. So satisfying to know in their own words that they are really receiving the many gifts that drumming has to offer. After our last performance, parents came up to me and said, "Thank you for the depth with which you work with our children." I feel like thanking my students for the depth with which they work with me.....

Monica Loebel-Ward, CA

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In a message dated 1/6/06 12:10:59 AM, ldailing@cox.net writes:

I am happy to report that my 4th and 5th graders performed Ensemble 1 this Christmas. My 4th grade played to a "Jingle Bell Fantasy and the 5th grade played to "Winterwonderland". The program was well received and began the start of the "Myer School Rockers". What a great time we shared and the community truly enjoyed our programs. Thank you for opening a whole new program

of Music for me. We refer to the building of the Ensemble as making "Pizza"; of course, the medium drum part is the Crust, holding everything together :-). Again, Thank you.

Linda Dailing, Ft. Huachuca, AZ

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In a message dated 1/15/06 10:12:42 AM,  
Mari\_Schay@ddouglas.k12.or.us writes:

By the way, my 3-4-5 grades have their concert next week. They are doing pop music from around the world using your drumming curriculum as the basis. They each learned one ensemble. Then, I took the percussion lines from that ensemble and wrote marimba / xylo parts with the same rhythm. For example, on Oye Como Va, they are using the Latin ensemble with the drum part that goes "ta ti-ta ti-ta", so the bass xylos / marimbas play the same thing but on chord roots. (And their unison rhythm on that song would make Tito Puente grin in heaven.) One class accompanies the other seven in those grades. The accompanying class has also done the arrangement for entrances of the various instrument lines and vocal parts, percussion breaks, etc. By choice, every classroom teacher is playing with their class and several district administrators are coming to play also.

You may remember that I asked to skip level one because I already play percussion, but I am so glad you said no. The curriculum and your approach really gave me a lot to think about in terms of my approach to teaching. In many ways, I suspect I got more out of the class than those who had never hit a drum.

My general classes are playing and singing better than ever. Every single student participates every single day --- even Chris, who never does anything at school. My after school ensemble is playing at a level I wouldn't have thought possible at grades 4 & 5. They learned Paul & James' Reggae Talk percussion parts in the last eight minutes of class this week and kept it rock solid the last five. My district dropped preps for the elementary music teachers this year and everyone else is complaining constantly, but I am having more fun than ever.

Thanks for a great opportunity to take my students and myself to the next level. I'll see you again one day. Mari Schay, OR

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In a message dated 1/17/06 5:51:28 PM, lark@globaldialog.com writes:

I use the drumming program every day with my General Music class. They LOVE it. I have them singing and playing...it's neat how this program reaches some of the quietest kids...the ones who might otherwise be invisible...and gives them a chance to shine. It brings you into touch with your students at a deeper level. How sad I feel for teachers who have never looked into the eyes of a student who is right "on" with the music... who looks at you and smiles that smile that says "Look what I can do! This is cool!" I am so lucky to be a music teacher!

Lynne Carlstein, Oconomowoc, WI

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In a message dated 1/28/06 6:27:21 PM, mdietz@sofast.net writes:

I teach a special needs music class at North Middle School in Great Falls, Montana, in addition to a full load of gr. 7 and gr. 8 general music classes. We have at had WMD in Great Falls for many years, but I decided this would be the "Year of Drumming" for the special education kids and are we having a great time! They accompanied themselves during their December concert on two pieces and when we were invited to do a concert downtown during the holiday season, we took drums and "wowed" the audience! The greatest thing is that these kids work so hard to accomplish the rhythms and concentrate so hard to put the ensembles together and are so elated when they find a groove! And they know - they hear it and feel it. One student, who had not responded in class at all, has "awakened" this year and is singing the African songs and playing drum and rattle, not always right on but loving every minute of it. All 10 of the students are loving it all - and working to move on. It is so gratifying for them. This drumming class is truly working as therapy for these kids with Autism, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Down Syndrome, blindness, and much more.

Much love and thanks to you and the WMD teams from levels 1 and 2 that I have had the opportunity to work with in Leesburg and Seattle! We are making a difference in very special lives!

Mary Dietz  
North Middle School  
Great Falls, Montana

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In a message dated 2/13/06 3:19:10 PM, siseminger@msn.com writes:

Thought people on your mailing list would appreciate an idea. At Nick Page's workshop last summer, "Sansa Kroma" was on a list of good songs. It's 2 part by Michael Scott by Warner Bros. [It is also in "Let

Your Voice Be Heard," World Music Press] It's a Ghana folk song, so I cut the piano part and added WMD's Ensemble 1 as an accompaniment. Our Young Naperville Singers just hosted our 4th Annual Boys Power Sing! last Saturday. This was one of the activities we used. The boys loved it. I had a ball.

Hope you are well.

Cordially,

Scott Houline Iseminger, IL

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In a message dated 12/15/05 1:20:19 PM,  
hofmank@cpsboe.k12.oh.us writes:

Once again I am thrilled by the responses from my students, parents and community when we share our drumming. Our Sixth Grade did a short presentation for the School Board. Many questions were asked about World Music Drumming, Professional Development for our teachers and impact on student achievement.

I know what World Music Drumming has done for my students.  
Thanks a million,

Katie Hofmann

Cincinnati OH Public Schools

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In a message dated 12/15/05 3:29:52 PM, siseminger@msn.com writes:

Thanksgiving Day weekend, my D.R.U.M.S. 2006 ensemble was invited to perform in the Naperville Hometown Holiday Parade (the town where my private school is located in IL). My kids all have behavioral disorders or autism spectrum disorders. We were provided with a float which comfortably sat 12 of us with our tubanos. We had a donor give us navy blue hats with our logo as well as matching sweatshirts. It was a drizzly day, but none of the boys complained. We started off the parade with "Ensemble 2," passing sticks around for improvisatory solos. Then we did a rhythm round with drum sticks. The crowd was so enthusiastic about our boys. I did not know that the parade was being judged--afterwards I found out that we placed third out of thirty entries. (Dancing horses came in first.) A week later I was flabbergasted to get a letter stating that our third place prize came with \$400!

I am so proud of my boys I can hardly stand it. No consideration was made or given to us because of our "special education" status. We

participated in a normal activity and won on our own merit. We had something tangible to prove that "hard work pays off." The boys are so proud of themselves. At times I have to keep fights from breaking out, but participating in the parade and winning has brought the teamwork spirit together. Now at concerts, I can introduce the group as "the award winning . . ."

Cordially,  
Scott Houlne Iseminger, Naperville, IL

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In a message dated 12/16/05 2:38:48 PM, ehoffman@nsd.org writes:

I have to share with you the success of my winter concert. The theme was holiday traditions, and I had the 5th/6th grade classes perform the song "Dance for the Nations". I combined this with the ensemble #1 drumming combo. It was such a big hit. I had at least a two dozen parents come up to me afterwards saying what a wonderful job the children had done, and how lucky they were to have me as a music teacher. The children enjoy the world drumming so much, they are asking if their 45 min. class period could be extended to 1 hour. We are having a great time. See you in Las Vegas.

Elaine Hoffman, WA

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In a message dated 12/16/05 4:25:39 PM, amcfeely@mv.k12.wa.us writes:

Drumming has been great this year. In addition to teaching it in my general middle school music classes, we started World Drumming Ensemble which rehearses once a week as a performance focused group for kids who don't have other venues. We're using the Beat for Peace model. Excellent support from staff and parent group. Great successes for the kids- they performed in front of almost 400 people at the holiday concert ("Swing" Ensemble with jazz band doing "Swing Lo, Sweet Chariot" and Ensemble 1 with the choirs singing "Tue, Tue;" processed to "Motormind"). Unfortunately, 3 suspended the next day. I think it is a long process to become comfortable with success and mainstream society when you've been living on the edge for most of your 13 or 14 years. All 3 sunk their hands in their heads though (the girls cried) when they realized they would miss today's performance at the talent show. We'll see what January brings....

Amy McFeely, WA

+++++In a message dated 12/16/05 9:25:47 PM, scottwinship@comcast.net writes:

Dr. Schmid,

I wanted to take the time to reply to one of your WMDrumming Occasionals and tell you about how I have been doing with your program. You might not remember me, but I was the only high school band director at the session in Washington state two years ago. I was interested in adapting your program for my high school classes. The help that you, Paul Corbiere, James Mader, and Josh Ryan gave me have allowed me to put together a program that has grown by leaps on bounds and is one of the most popular programs in our school music program.

Last year was my first year teaching the program and I did 3 classes during the first semester. It was a great success and the administration loved it. Combined students from all three classes performed at 3 school functions, 2 concerts, and a cable T.V. show.

This year the program was expanded to 5 semester classes (2 this (first) semester and 3 next semester). Additionally, we will be starting a WMD 2 class next year that will expand on WMD one. It will be open only to students who have completed WMD 1 and will expand on that class by introducing marimbas and advanced ensembles.

Each class meets for 45 minutes a day, 5 days a week, for 20 weeks. Because of this intense scheduling the students in these classes pick up these rhythms fairly quickly and I have had to adapt the way I teach the classes to keep the kid occupied. I use almost all of the ensembles in the original book, a fair amount out of your second book and some of the ensembles out of Paul and James' book, but I also have come up with some of my own that I have perfected over the years through experimentation.

As I feared, my high school students were not keen on the singing songs that you promote and it led to class outbursts and discipline problems, so I have dropped singing from the curriculum altogether. Also, these kids have had no interest in playing any auxiliary instruments (bells, shakers, etc.) all they want to do is drum, so I've had to adapt the program to just use the 3 drum voices, but since I've done so, classes have run much smoother. I sincerely hope that in WMD 2 next year that I'll be able to add auxiliary instruments and xylophones and marimbas with those students who really enjoyed the whole experience and wanted to get more out of it.

Anyway, it has been going great and the classes are slowly getting bigger as I add more drums. We started out with 12 drums last year and I bought 3 more this year. Next year I hope to buy 3 more and have classes of 18 students. My plan is to add 2 or 3 drums each year until I get to 24-28 drums. I am using congas instead of tubanos because they are cheaper and I can get more use out of them with my other performing ensembles, but they work just as well as tubanos do. I also have a couple of djembes (which are popular with the kids) and bongos, a surdo, timbales, and frame drums as well as four tubanos that I bought last year.

Basically I work on a new ensemble each week. Every other week or so, I allow the students to break into small groups and work on variations of whatever ensemble we are working on that week. I will often lay down ground rules for these variations (i.e. - they must be 2 beat patterns, or 4 beat patterns, one drum part must remain the same as the original ensemble and the other two are variations, etc.) As the weeks progress these ensembles get progressively harder and the small ensemble assignments offer more freedom to improvise their own parts. Lastly, I take the time to actually teach the students basic rhythmic reading exercises which has been beneficial for my percussion ensemble and marching band drumline as many of the students pick up the reading quickly and I quickly recruit them to join these other ensembles. As a result, my marching band drumline this year was the largest in school history!!! (it had 6 former WMD students in it from the first year)

Anyway, it is going great and although I've changed the curriculum significantly from what you suggest in your method book, I start out just like you do in your book with ensemble 1 and things go progressively faster after that.

Thank you, thank you, thank you for making this program so successful!!! It has made our music program stronger since the general student body who take the class gain a greater appreciation for music, and for the difficulty level that my band students regularly perform daily.

Please check out our website and see some of the photos of my high school students in action!

Also, would you please forward this letter of thanks to Paul, James and Ryan? I'd really like them to know how much I appreciate all the help and advice that they gave me during the week two years ago.

All my best and I wish you a happy and safe holiday!!

Scott Winship

website:

<http://www.naschools.net/NAHSMusic/Other%2003%20Hand%20Drumming.htm>

Scott Winship

Band Director

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[www.naschools.net/NAHSMusic/Default.htm](http://www.naschools.net/NAHSMusic/Default.htm)

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In a message dated 12/17/05 11:01:04 AM,

marilynacarson@comcast.net writes:

I always enjoy hearing the drumming news. Next summer sounds like another great time. Please notice the new email address:

marilynacarson@comcast.net

John and I will be snowbirds down in Florida (Bonita Springs) from Jan-about April, so if any of your Florida music teachers in that area are interested in a WMD substitute pass on my name.

Marilyn Carson, IL

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In a message dated 12/17/05 4:53:02 PM,

debbie\_morenzi@yahoo.com writes:

I want to thank you again for such a wonderful experience this past experience. Recently the students I am currently am teaching in NYC have had a chance to perform using the drumming techniques I learned from the staff. It has made my teaching experience joyful seeing children's confidence grow strong in front of my eyes. I am hoping to attend this summer. It's great that you will offer African dancing with Michelle.

Thanks for sending the photos

Debbie Morenzi, NY

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In a message dated 12/24/05 8:06:27 AM, morrisl@midrivers.com writes:

For my students' winter holiday program, I knew I wanted to use drums for "The Little Drummer Boy," and found your "Spirit Drum" number from New Ensembles and Songs just the ticket. With a few alterations we had a wonderful accompaniment. Striving for a simple elegance, I doubled the value of the notes, with 8th notes becoming quarters, 16ths becoming 8ths etc. To keep the low-medium-high drum rhythm in mind, I had the students use the sentence, "Come with us, won't you play your little drum." Using the chord symbols provided by the music series, we used the electric bass rhythm on bass xylophone and metallophone. I liked the simple sound of using only the root of the chord in octaves. In the third verse, a tambourine doubled the rhythm of the frame drums. I love the rising intensity of this accompaniment as the layers of instruments are added on each verse. The results were beautiful.

We had many very enthusiastic compliments on this program, which also included "Take Time in Life" and "Mufasa's March."

Laura Morris  
Baker Public Schools  
Baker, Montana

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In a message dated 1/4/06 3:48:05 AM, lauralentz@fastwebnet.it writes:

I am a music teacher in Rome, Italy and have been using your WMD book with much success with my 6th, 7th and 8th grade students.

Laura Lentz, Rome, Italy

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In a message dated 10/14/05 3:38:44 PM, mgregan@tsc.k12.in.us writes:

Dear Will:

Thank you for all of your inspiration and the tools to accomplish exciting things. Today was the first session for what I have called Fantastic Fridays. I received a \$5,000 for equipment through a county wide organization called Public Schools Foundation. I have thus far had a test preparation session called "We're #1" for students with learning, behavioral or emotional challenges. Started an after school group called "The Beat Goes On" and today had our first "Fantastic Fridays" session pairing 3rd-4th and 5th grade students with low incidence students from 2 area schools. What a magic moment!!! I can't describe the feeling that filled the room as my students reached out and helped students with compound physical and learning challenges.

We will continue meeting throughout the year. Anyone who wants more info on the "how to do it" can e-mail me at my address above.

Mary Jane Gregan  
Burnett Creek Elementary School  
5700 N50W  
West Lafayette, Indiana 47906

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In a message dated 10/14/05 7:09:15 PM, lark@globaldialog.com writes:

Hi Will,

I missed the workshop this summer, but intend to be back for next. I'm glad you send out the Occasional. Keeps me up to date. Meanwhile, my school system handed me a 7th Grade General Music class. While it is MUCH more than a full time job now, I have the kids in the palm of my hand. Drumming. They love it. They are so excited to come to class each day. It is amazing how quickly you can tell the real listeners in the group from those that just like to make noise. Um, not that there is anything wrong with making noise, but, well, you know what I mean. Very quickly, the dedicated students are settling in to really listen to one another to build an ensemble that grooves.

At any rate, I am using some of the new ensembles, too. With great success. I have long been an enthusiast for this program. But now that I'm teaching this program in depth, I can see how it works on different levels for different kinds of learners. In this class, I have one who reads music very well and plays bass guitar very well and he can drum right along with the two CD students I have. I give him the complex rhythms, and at times, he likes to guide the students that need assistance. I also have a student who did this before in another school. She is a very quiet shy girl who usually lacks self-confidence. But when she realized she knew something the other kids did not, she was anxious to help me teach and she does very well at tutoring the basic parts. For a 7th Grader to do this is just wonderful! It is a challenge, however to get students to put aside books and structured tests and learn by watching and listening. Some of them really struggle, sort of like those of us who try to write everything down at the workshops!

I also teach three choirs, and we are using your choral arrangements. My singers love these, too. We are using "Peace Drum" now and they can hardly wait for "Sow It On The Mountain" in the Spring.

But the drumming is really saving me. Thank you so much for putting together a solid teaching tool with the breadth and depth to answer to the needs of the children and the needs of the teacher.

Lynne Carlstein, Oconomowoc, WI

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In a message dated 10/17/05 3:14:13 PM,  
CSutherland@cvcsonline.org writes:

Some good news about our music program at Cole Valley Christian School. A first time 8th grade music class which was supposed to be a choir was converted to world drumming. No money, of course – but an anonymous donation to purchase drums from someone who believes in the program. I was ready to do make shift. The kids are excited about it, and so are other staff members who wander in and out to hear these new sounds. I have a class of only 8 students to pilot the program. 4 are gifted, 4 are challenged, and what they are already accomplishing is amazing. It is truly a program that reaches all. How fortunate I am that I was able to take your course this summer. I hope it is as rewarding to you over and over again as it is to those of us who have learned it for the first time.

Claudia Sutherland, Boise, ID

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In a message dated 10/17/05 5:22:10 PM, [Musithang@mchsi.com](mailto:Musithang@mchsi.com) writes:

Just got back from an incredible event! **Visions in Focus** was the name of it. There were three things on the bill that evening: Iowa's Governor making an announcement for three communities in Iowa (receiving money for economic stimulation, etc...); the "Iowa Groove," and a lecture from Richard Florida ("creative economic" guru). The Iowa Groove was a giant drum ensemble that I was asked to facilitate with West Music's Melissa Blum. It was awesome ! ! !

We had over 1300 people in the audience drumming an ensemble that I wrote for the event. Nine different parts! Couldn't believe it. At one moment I stepped back to take it in and could actually hear all nine parts! Melissa and I taught each part as a chant and then put it all together on the drums. To give you some idea...40 woodblocks, 20 a gogo bells, 20 gankogui and 40 tambourines...80 small drums, 90 medium drums, 80 Low drums. Remo Drums and West Music sent all of the drums and West Music supplemented everything else (over 300 frame drums of various sizes to fill in the drum parts). To top it all off, the Hospital of the University of Iowa donated \$10,000.00 to purchase

2000 sound shapes (with a silk-screen of the evening's logo and date, etc) that every member of the audience received as a gift.

Once the audience knew the ensemble, we were able to perform it in various ways, ie: featuring different sections, some chanting, dynamics, etc... The coolest was how we end. All 1300 participants, divided in half, chanted "Beautiful Land"...."IOWA" - bringing it down to a whisper (yes ....all 1300 people whispering!) and ending with a huge GOOOOOOZSHE! - a single loud BANG!

So Cool!

Equally great was that a group of 55 people, such as business people, local politicians, community leaders, (CEO of University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics), etc.... that helped organize this event, where on stage as the "lead ensemble", They rehearsed with us 2 days prior to learn the parts. VERY cool group!.

Of course, it goes without saying that my experiences with World Music Drumming gave me the background and courage to even consider something of this magnitude. Steve West and his crew were invaluable (1000 pieces of equipment, handed out in 3.5 minutes - AWESOME). Can't wait to share more of this with you. If you'd like to see some incredible photos, go to :

[http://www.andystoll.net/galleries/visions\\_in\\_focus/index.htm](http://www.andystoll.net/galleries/visions_in_focus/index.htm)

The photos are of the rehearsal for the stage drummers and of the event. Yes...that's right....you will see the Governor of Iowa drumming with everyone! How's that?! ! !

Just wanted to share with you all of this - It was so amazing! Talk to you soon,  
Paul

Paul Corbière

[Musithang Publications](#)

See Staff bios

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In a message dated 10/19/05 1:58:04 PM,  
PBauer@northalleghey.org writes:

This year I am teaching in a different Middle School. The good part is that the drums came with me to the new building! We are on an A/B schedule, so even though I still teach at the High school in the morning, I have 6 different groups in grades 6, 7 and 8 (mostly boys) drumming in the afternoons. The principal has even admitted to sneaking into my room after school to play the drums when no one

else is around. I have been especially pleased to be able to drum with an autistic student who is non-verbal. It has been really good for him. His Aide says that it is, "40 minutes when I am not sitting on the edge of my chair clenching my teeth worrying about what will happen next."

I have used a new signal for students to have their hands on their thighs and be ready to play. All I say is "Flip it" and the idea is that you flip your hands from where ever they are, to your thighs, check your posture and be ready to play. We have added it to the end of, "I Love to Drum", and of course they take great pleasure in slapping their thighs which makes it sound really cool when they get it all together. It has been a quick way to stop wandering hands in between things. We even have a way to hold the shakers for Flip it so that they stay quiet too.

Because of circumstances beyond our control, we had to go to the Library classroom for a couple of days which ruled out playing. I took the CD of James' and Paul's and your new ensembles and we played them and identified the Time Line and different rhythms and clapped them or performed them in other ways. Yet another way to drum without drumming!

Pat Bauer, Pittsburgh, PA  
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In a message dated 11/12/05 8:24:23 PM,  
Leslie.Orvis@edmondschools.net writes:

Here are some photos from our school's Family Drum Night.  
<http://edmondschools.net/sequoyah/drums/drums>

Leslie Orvis, Edmond, WA  
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In a message dated 11/11/05 6:46:53 PM, peacsekr@cox.net writes:

ZOOM, our school drum performing group, is performing as the entertainment ensemble for our local high school's marching band field tournament competition tomorrow night. Bands from all over San Diego and Orange county will be in attendance.

7,000 people will be there and we get to play between the last marching band and when the judges announce the winner of the tournament.

What an incredible opportunity!...not to mention a captive audience.

Anne Fennell, Vista, CA

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In a message dated 11/13/05 9:20:58 PM, morrisl@midrivers.com writes:

Just a note to let you know that some 5th and 6th grade students of mine participated this evening in a dinner/talent show benefit to raise money for Katrina victims in Cameron Parish, Louisiana, a rural town about the size of our own town of Baker, Montana. These students gave up a lot of before-school playground time to prepare "Take Time in Life," and Mader and Corbiere's "Mufasa's March" and "Sands of Time." It was such a pleasure working with this group who maintained great enthusiasm through all the rehearsals, and they may

have one of the best groups of the evening.

I can't thank you enough for the many benefits World Music Drumming has given me. My physical coordination, ear, memorization skills and confidence as a director have increased dramatically since being exposed to the African way of performing music.

Laura Morris, Baker, MT

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In a message dated 11/23/05 8:14:24 AM, QuiggMi writes:  
Encouraged by Walt Hampton, I now have a marimba group with 18 students.

We are playing on Orff xylophones for now but hoping money will come soon for new instruments. Also, I think I mentioned to you that last year I directed an all district drum ensemble, 16 kids selected out of 20 districts. All went well and they asked me to direct the following year. Well, the festival is coming up in January again and the numbers have increased to 46 students. Now we have enough to play and dance!

Thank you for your inspiration!

Michelle Quigg, NY

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In a message dated 11/25/05 6:00:05 PM, jennierose@shasta.com writes:

This is Jennie Morgan from your Drumming workshop in Seattle this year.

A couple of months ago, the elementary school music teacher in my district and I (I teach music at two middle schools in northern California) collaborated on a grant proposal to a local philanthropic foundation - we wanted to start an after school World Music Drumming group open to 3rd through 8th grade with me as the teacher. Just before Thanksgiving break (last week) we got the good news that we had been awarded the grant (\$4000.00). We will be able to buy the big Remo World Drumming outfit and also be able to pay me a stipend. Hope to get it up and running in January.

In addition, since you are also involved in this, I took the Teaching Guitar Workshop in Las Vegas in June of this year, and have begun two guitar classes, one at each middle school.

I am finally beginning to achieve my personal goal of finding ways to engage children in music who are not interested in band or choir. Much hard work ahead, but I wouldn't want it any other way. See you next year in Las Vegas.

Jennie Morgan, CA

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In a message dated 11/27/05 4:52:26 PM, mrforfar@forfar.net writes:

I remember someone at the Seattle WMD conference talking about how to repair small tears on REMO Turbano drum heads, but can't remember the particulars. Any suggestions as to how or where to look it up? ( i searched web but can't find much except 'repair shops.' Thanks.

Please respond directly to Chris at the e-mail address above.

Chris Forfar

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In a message dated 12/1/05 6:30:40 PM, schteep@usfamily.net writes:

I just wanted to share a moment I had with my class today. I also shared this with my Orff cohort.

I was teaching 7-8, and am doing the World Music Drumming curriculum with them. We're working on "High Life" which is the first piece where "1" isn't apparent (it's rhythm cycles, where everyone's "1" is in a different place in the measure). Well, I've got them all clapping the bell part, and then I hand the bells out. To my surprise, Arturo, who is almost always sitting way back in his chair, and almost never engaged, takes the bell. He's playing the part correctly, and gradually he sits up until he's on the edge of his seat. By the time we got everyone in and we're grooving, he's practically standing up playing the cowbell for all he's worth, right on for every beat of his part. He's also grinning like a fool, because he knows he's right on the money, and everyone in the ensemble is following his lead. The look on his face was totally priceless. I smiled, then started to laugh because they sounded so good, and Arturo especially was so into the cowbell part. After we stopped, I looked around at all of them (there are 19 in this class) and I smiled at every single one of them. I said, "Thank you for making my day. I've been kind of crabby for the last couple of days, and your enthusiasm, energy and sheer joy for making music has made me laugh for the first time in days. You guys are fabulous!"

I have the best job in the whole world!

Julie Schramke  
Achieve Language Academy  
St. Paul, MN

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In a message dated 12/12/05 8:56:24 PM, MFJMMM2 writes:

13 of my 5th graders and I provided percussion for the UWMC Christmas concert last night. We played a pretty close version of Ensemble 5 for a really cool piece called Bethlehemu and then Ensemble 4 for Jamaican Noel. Marathon Center's new choral

director has been a supporter of the DRRUM clubs for years and now that

she is in charge she wants to incorporate the drumming as often as possible. What a trip for fifth graders to play with college kids! We have been invited over to play for two of her classes in January so will have to get right to work on that as soon as we get back from vacation.

Margaret Jerz, Wausau, WI

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In a message dated 12/11/05 3:42:07 AM, gabrielk@ask.edu.kw writes:

Dear Will,

I hope this email finds you well and enjoying the holiday season. At this summer's workshop in Lake Geneva, you mentioned that you'd like to know how the WMD curriculum is going over at my school and other places in Kuwait. Well, I hope this will pique your interest-

The students, teachers, and administrators at my school like the drums so much that my assistant principal encouraged me to offer a workshop (a *brief* introduction to West African drumming and the WMD curriculum) at the PEAK (Professional Educators Around Kuwait) conference. We did some question and answer, echo, call and response, as well as performing Ensemble 1 at the end of the conference. Teachers and administrators LOVED it and administrators from a couple of schools asked for more details.

As a result of the PEAK conference, the school has nominated me to present the same workshop in Bangkok at the NESAS (Near East South Asia) conference. This conference involves several hundred teachers and administrators from international schools throughout the region. I am excited about the possibility of finally having a music workshop presented at the conference ("specialist" areas are often neglected), not to mention the opportunity to go back to Thailand.

Katie Gabriel

Elementary Music Specialist

American School of Kuwait

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In a message dated 10/5/05 7:04:06 AM, sstillma@loudoun.gov writes:

We did a very cool drumming session with a local group of Senior Citizens! The kids each paired up with a Senior Citizen and we all drummed. Everyone had a great time. I will see if I can get you some

pictures - you will get a kick out of it.

Thanks a bunch!

Sarah Stillman

Lovettsville Elementary, Loudoun County Public Schools

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In a message dated 10/5/05 11:33:00 AM,

lmason@northstar.k12.ak.us writes:

Dear Will;

A curious thing is happening here since the advent of the WMDrum curriculum

this year. My native Alaskan students, especially the older boys, are suddenly participating, even emerging as leaders of our ensemble.

Last year I

never heard any of them sing. They often just sat, silently and respectfully,

until class was over. Now they sing, they play, they participate! They even

come up to me after class to share ideas based on things they learned in their

village. It is so exciting. We are planning an Alaskan native drumming unit,

and I have some Yupik elders coming to help the students make their own hoop

drum. I owe you such thanks. I feel I am finally connecting with these kids.

Linda Mason, AK

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In a message dated 10/5/05 3:13:03 PM, siseminger@msn.com

writes:

Will,

I just read your occasional #3 and was really touched by the wonderful stories; especially James' in working with juvenile inmates, the Alzheimer's patients story, and Kim's homeroom of at-risk students. It is amazing just what a positive impact drumming and music have on our society. Thank you for incorporating all of this into a curriculum and teaching it across the country.

Last spring, my D.R.U.M.S. ensemble of kids with autism, Asperger's Syndrome, and emotional/behavioral problems performed a successful concert. This year's group learned Ensemble 2 in one day, whereas last year it took a good two months to learn Ensemble 1. The

returning kids help teach the new kids in the performing group. Our higher-up administrators were at our spring concert and liked what we were doing so much, they asked us to be a part of a hometown holiday parade the weekend of Thanksgiving. It means a great deal to the boys that because of their hard work and accomplishments, they are being asked to do something special. I'll let you know how it goes. The kids immediately asked for fireworks and M80's to be on the float with us--I don't think so.

I am using WMD with a high school class of boys with emotional disorders and Asperger's syndrome. I've noticed over the years that boys with Asperger's typically have some motor problems in playing the drums; but they learn to compensate--the rhythm is correct, even if the hand position is not entirely correct. What is wonderful about this particular class is how the level of cooperation has improved amongst them. They don't really get along very well, but in doing complementary rhythms, Ensemble 2, and improvising, they have learned to rely on one another's parts. This week, one student ran out of the room because he was provoked by another student's facial expression to him. To my amazement, two other boys confronted the provoker in a calm, therapeutic, respectful manner. The "tone" in our room has become much more respectful, thanks to drumming.

Lynn and Nick's class was absolutely awesome. With my professional choir, I teach the first and second graders. I have them improvising vocally with Nick's song, "Freedom is Sweet." What a hoot. I never felt qualified to teach improvising until I took Nick's class. The kids love it and all want a turn to improvise. Right now, they are improvising on their names. And Lynn's ideas about rhythm and subdividing is paying off in my rehearsals when it comes to learning to sing rounds. Thanks for adding those two staff to your Lake Geneva class schedule.

Well, I've gone on at length--could go longer, all positive stuff.

Cordially,

Scott Houlne Iseminger, IL

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In a message dated 10/6/05 5:37:32 AM,  
hardwick.spencer@verizon.net writes:

I thought you might enjoy hearing that our school, Notre Dame Preparatory, received its shipment of Package A WMD. The \$500 combined savings offered by both Remo and West helped to expedite the action, as well as an enthusiast Middle School principal, and a young and enthusiastic headmistress who has connection to an avid drummer in the convent of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, an order whose tradition has been activism in the areas of social justice. We hope to demonstrate on Grandparents' day in December. My

colleagues and I met for supper and then visited Nellie Hill's drumming circle at Lime Kiln Middle in Maryland. Thanks to you and your faculty for inspiring us and keeping us young in music teaching and making!  
Peace out!

Hardwick Spencer, MD

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In a message dated 8/15/05 4:55:15 PM, halezoid@mindspring.com writes:

My class of middle school autistic spectrum kids (14 kids, which is a lot for me) is going really well all things considered. My wife got some grant money to get busses and I plan to take them out to perform at some of the Alzheimer's homes in the area.

Barbara (my wife) did a percussion circle (with classroom rhythm band instruments) with an Alzheimer's group when I was in Leesburg. She said they loved it...but instead of going for the instruments they all wanted to dance! Well...she wrapped a bunch of small instruments in paper napkins and told them they were puppets...and wouldn't you know they made the puppets dance...and had a ball!!! There was a guy there watching who was so impressed that he made the grant!

Also...I had a great trip with Ms. Joseph...the traffic was awful...and it took forever, but her company was so delightful that it didn't matter! Again, thanks. It's the atmosphere that you foster in your workshops that spills over...

Steve Haley, FL

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In a message dated 8/15/05 5:45:01 PM, Imason@northstar.k12.ak.us writes:

You have inspired me to buy a guitar, and my school has bought a mixer/amp to use with the drumming. I am so excited. I made little covers for my drums out of bath towels, and I am working on a drum sling for the leader's drum fashioned from one of those folding camp chairs. Ideas, ideas, ideas! Have a great year!  
I'm coming to level 2 next year!

Linda Mason, AK

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In a message dated 8/15/05 10:43:13 PM, cynthia@godsmiles.com writes:

Dear Will,

I loved the World Music Drumming class in Bothell, Washington this summer! I have been applying what I learned in church every Sunday. I took 2 of my 3 new tubanos with me when I flew up to a class reunion and to visit my sister and mother in Wasilla, Alaska. Alaska Airlines has a size limit for boxes so I couldn't take the 14" tubano. Of course I took claves, guiro, gankogui, maracas and my 8 year old granddaughter to help play them. We did ensemble 3: High Life at my sister's church in Wasilla while the piano played "Look For the Silver Lining." We also sang "Peace Drum Song" for 6 minutes as the background to their meditation. My sister added a flute obbligato part.

I tell everyone I meet about the class and I invite them to my church to play drums.

Thanks again for a wonderful class,  
Cynthia Turcott  
Sitka, Alaska 99835

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In a message dated 8/24/05 10:25:08 PM, tadeckert@rushmore.com writes:

On a side note, we did a few of the first lessons from the WMD curriculum at Rapid City Children's Chorus camp this summer. It was a huge success. Going into it, I was just a little leery of how it would work, since I had kids ranging in age from 8 to 16 yrs. old. But the kids LOVED it and whenever there was free time, they were dying to go to the "drum room" and drum. On the first evening of camp, a group of kids were in the drum room, jamming together. At first, the sounds started out like mostly a lot of random noise, but I decided to kind of let it go to see what might evolve. After a few minutes, there was a very funky ensemble taking shape! I slipped into the back of the room to find about 10 kids jamming together-- a young boy just entering 3rd grade, a teeny, tiny little girl, a junior counselor (graduate from the program), and others of various ages, who were all working together to find complementary parts. As soon as they saw me, they got so excited about sharing their composition! That moment, when I saw their pride in their collaboration will stick in my mind for a long time. This was what I was hoping would come from drumming together, building a sense of community. It was cool to see

the older ones working together with the younger ones. By the end of the week, we were able to perform together "Peace Will Come" with ensemble 1. I am hoping we will be able to have family drumming nights this fall with each of the choirs. That sense of "belonging to a community" is something we have been working so hard to build within our organization. I am excited to see how drumming together will help foster that.

Ann Deckert, Rapid City, SD

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In a message dated 8/25/05 3:41:00 PM, leanna@munsey.org writes:

Dear Will,

Thanks for this information. I also want to say "Thank You", "Gracias", "Merci", "Dankeshoen", "Grazzi"...and in every other language that I don't know...for the wonderful experience I had this summer at Lake Geneva. I am one of those who are already "off and running" with 3 weeks already gone. I have two performing drum groups this year (4th and 5th grades...approximately 30 in each group). The students are so enthusiastic and the parents can't believe that their children can do what they do. I owe a deep gratitude to you and the WMD teaching staff for helping to give new excitement to the Lake Ridge Elementary School Music Program! Have a great year. I'm already planning for summer #3 in Lake Geneva, 2006!! See you in June.

Leanna Baldwin, Johnson City, TN

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In a message dated 8/31/05 3:12:46 PM,

Leslie.Orvis@edmondschools.net writes:

I am busy incorporating WMDr into our curriculum \* very successfully I might add. The teachers said that the inservice I conducted prior to the arrival of students was ..."the only inservice I was disappointed it was ending!"

There seems to be quite a bit of interest in family drum night. I teach three grade levels - 6-7-8. I have about 95 kids in each grade level, and wondered how you would suggest beginning.

Should I send out a note for interest? Would you allow sisters and brothers, or adults only in the beginning? I guess the number interested would determine if I did one night for each grade level, but I got so many practical tips from the workshop in Frisco I wondered if

you could pass a few on. Thanks so much \* I love this new avenue of expression!  
Leslie Orvis, Edmond, OK

Responses:

In a message dated 9/3/05 8:13:18 AM, Micknjim@cs.com writes:

Leslie,

I try to do a parent drum night every semester. This is an invitation to the parents to experience what their students are doing in school. I have found people REALLY understand the skills and benchmarks that we develop through doing NOT observation. I do not try to do real difficult ensembles. I start by the echo patterns, Q&A, ensemble #1 and #2. I have the students assist the parents and the encourage the students and parents to get up and move. I have the students demonstrate a more difficult ensemble and then we discuss how to incorporate the drumming techniques, skills, and concepts into the family life. Enjoy! I love seeing the families work together and facilitating the love is very cool.

James Mader, FL

In a message dated 8/31/05 3:32:43 PM, WILLSCHMID writes:

Leslie,

Glad to hear things are going well. I'm not surprised about the inservice. Active learning is the best, and teachers respond just like students.

As to Family Drum Night (great idea!), I would think about these issues:

- You will probably have a really strong response, and if so, you could always break it into smaller groups later.
- One limiting factor will be the number of drums. You should have at least one drum for every 2-3 people. I suppose you could set a limit on the number and take people on a sign-up basis.
- You could have students help with the teaching
- I like the whole family approach with parents and kids.

Will Schmid, WI

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In a message dated 9/2/05 10:27:48 AM, mdavis@auburnschl.edu writes:

My name is Michael Davis, an 11-year music educator in the city of Auburn, Maine. I wanted to email you and pass on to you how much I truly enjoy working with your materials. Your World Music Drumming and New Ensemble & Songs are terrific resources to my classroom. Here in Auburn I teach k-6 general and choral music and use your ensembles often.

As a matter of fact I wrote a grant aimed at increasing the self-esteem of disadvantaged children of my school. This grant, awarded 1 year ago from the Maine Community Foundation, afforded my school the opportunity to purchase 22 Tubanos; Djembes, Standing ngoma etc... So I basically thrive on material that you put out. My children here at Sherwood Height School LOVE to drum. During the summer months I am Asst Director for a residential summer camp and these drums ( as specified in my grant) also go to camp where an additional 550 kids drum. Bascially over 1,000 different kids are able to drum each year on the drums we have.

Mike Davis  
Auburn, Maine

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In a message dated 9/4/05 6:37:38 PM, CBales8025 writes:

Will,

I'm so happy to be teaching again and the truth is that besides needing the income, I only went back because of the fact that I missed WMDrumming with my kids.

I am in Orlando, FL at a Title 1 school of 1273 students K-5. I see them all each week. I have "convinced" them of our need to use World Music Drumming and the intervention is provides. They have given me money for 40 drums and I'm looking for grant money for xylophones. I am writing a grant.

Do you know where I can look for used, even not perfect, instruments? I have ordered the packages again and starting over.

Linda Cook and I had good things going with all the instruments we wanted in Greenwood, IN, but now I'm starting over.

Thank you so much for changing my teaching forever. I loved drumming and I knew my students would, too. I have amazing stories of how drumming changed some of my student's lives and mine.

See you at workshops. I just wish I had attended this last summer.  
Carol Bales, Orlando, FL

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In a message dated 9/6/05 7:15:43 AM, fgalli@isa.nl writes:

I am using your World Music Drumming book in the International School of Amsterdam with lots of success.

Fabián Galli  
Amstelveen, Netherlands

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In a message dated 9/7/05 9:02:56 PM, johnaune@comcast.net writes:

My students are loving the songs that I learned from you in July, I'm glad to see they are now published as choir pieces. Thanks again for a great World Music Drumming class!

Rebecca Aune, Bedford, Texas

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In a message dated 9/16/05 1:29:59 PM, pbourne@nsd.org writes:

I had a cool "ah ha" moment today, with my 5th/6th graders -- teaching

Ensemble 3 -- highlife. They were dragging the drum part, so I had them say

"keep it up, take it down, keep it up, take it down" then add the hand motions for one or the other, air-drum style. When we got back on drums, it

sounded dandy! No more dragging..... Off to good start!

Patty Bourne, Bothell, WA

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In a message dated 9/29/05 3:34:23 PM, mblum@westmusic.com writes:

Hi Will~

I just wanted to share with you an experience I had today. I co-facilitated a drumming workshop with our Music Therapy Director. The workshop was just one part of a daylong conference for hospice care giving volunteers, and was at a retirement center in town. We had around 40 people there. Most were elderly, many had lost family members and that's how they first became part of the hospice network. Among other activities, I taught them ensemble 1 and "Peace Will Come." Many tears, but also much joy and nodding in agreement during the song.

At the end of the workshop we went around the circle, asking each person to say one word (and only one!) about their experience. We heard such things as, "fun" ,"delightful", "coordination", "mind-clearing" ,"surprising" ,"calming", etc. One woman was in her 80's, and only has the use of one of her hands (she played the high drum part with one hand, and did very well). I just wasn't sure how she was feeling about the whole hour long session. When we got to her for her one word, she got a huge smile on her face and said, "AWESOME!"

So, I thought I'd let you know how much what you've taught me touched a whole new group of people today~thank you! Hope you are doing well.

Take care,  
Melissa Blum, IA

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In a message dated 10/3/05 9:21:21 PM, janflynn@comcast.net writes:

Thanks for the '06 workshop dates, Will! Going to Lake Geneva has become a tradition!! I wanted to thank you again for the choral workshop that Nick and Lynn facilitated. I'm using several ideas for my choirs that have proven to work beautifully. They are individuals rich in experience.

This is my third year of drumming at the middle school level and I still love it -- I love teaching it, I love what it does for people. The faces of kids (who don't even know much about each other) light up with delight when they make music together.

Over the past two years, I've taken the middle school drummers into the elementary schools and performed (recruited!) each spring. Those

efforts began to bear fruit this year when I offered an after-school 6th grade drum program and 50 kids showed up! If I had had 50 drums, I would have filled them all up! (Gotta get serious about asking for donations for instruments...I'm planning to begin providing stakeholder opportunities for people.)

Kids this age have amazing capacity to do phenomenal work. In order to direct the after school groups, I'm doing a lot of listening (Sowah's CDs, Paul and James' CD, Hot Marimba) to hear in my head the musical map that is being used in the performance.

I could wax on and on...and it's all positive.

Jan Flynn, MI

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In a message dated 10/4/05 10:21:59 AM, kimbejot@esu17.org writes:

Hi Will,

Hope your fall is going well. Mine is off to a drumming start so is going great.

Erin and I are presenting at NMEA this year. Our session is called "Using Found Sounds to Enhance your Elementary, Middle School, and At-Risk Student Groups". We would like to teach Ensemble #1 using my B.E.A.T. percussion.

For two years I worked on a proposal to allow me to have At-Risk Middle School students in a Home Room situation, so we could drum the first 20 minutes of the day. The school finally agreed, and in addition to the \$1250 I had in grant money, they purchased the rest of set AA plus 6 more Tubanos and one extra Ngoma. My room is loaded!! Last year was our first year and after keeping careful track of kids behavior at school, staff and administration came to realize that I had a great thing going in my Home Room. (Most) of the kids were more attentive, more focused, and listened better. We ended the year with 14 students, and referrals for 28 more for this year. I chose 7 so we are up to 21. There is an actual waiting list for my class. Since we had 14 returning students and only 7 new ones, the students have progressed at lightning speed compared to last year. What we played December 1st last year was being played the 2nd week of school.

After about 3 weeks we still had kids who were still goofing off, and not showing much respect and the 8th grade girls had had it! They wanted to take class time to talk to the younger ones and let them know how important this class is for them - So, the next morning we set aside 15 minutes and I let them talk. With no prompting from me, they told the class that they were more focused because of drumming. It made them want to come to school. Their grades were improving because they listened better in other classes and they had such pride in knowing they were doing a good job and they loved to see the smiles on the faces of the audience. They also didn't want any younger kids ruining their last chance at this class, because as 8th graders, they will 'graduate' out of it next year. It occurred to me that I had never talked about all that and that they had 'gotten' it on their own. Just call me the proud momma!

Three of the new boys had always huddled into themselves and not participated in anything I wanted them to do. They absolutely come alive in Home Room and since we are drumming in their regular music class, they shine there and are looked on as leaders, a role they had never had before.

Since drumming is so engaging, I drum with 3rd through 6th graders. I have my own set of 'entry level' songs I use for 3rd and 4th graders, but they are picking up concepts so fast, I have the 4th graders drumming the basics of Ensemble #1. They are catching on to the concept of complementary rhythms so well that I think I will have them play their own original pieces in the Christmas concert.

Drumming brings not only joy to the kids, but I can't wait to get to school every morning!

Kim Bejot  
Ainsworth, Nebraska  
K-6 Music Educator  
B.E.A.T. Percussion Ensemble  
Destination ImagiNation Affiliate Director

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In a message dated 9/20/05 9:22:53 AM, Micknjim@cs.com writes:

Will,

I have just returned from the most amazing experience. Dr. Moore at the Cypress Creek Facility asked me to come up and work with her "students" at this LEVEL 10 juvenile facility. These are the 13 - 18 yr. old kids who have made some seriously poor decision making. A more

graphic and detailed description is better told in person. Think prison...for kids. It sours my soul that we need such facilities in our society. I think we are better than that. The administration has either witnessed or heard of a presentation of the benefits of the WMDC. They have ordered a package of the WMDC and are implementing it in there curriculum to rehabilitate the students.

I would like to share some of my thoughts regarding my personal observation of the effect that the WMDC had for those hours I was there. First, the level of hope and excitement to learn something new was evident the minute that students entered the room and setup. This hope and thirst for knowledge was not present in these students prior. Their ability to learn ensembles quickly and move to somewhat difficult ensembles was a defining moment for the administration of the facility as the WMDC demonstrates that intellect is NOT the problem with the "at risk" youth. The WMDC opened the door to a new learning process, not only for the students, but for the teachers as well. The teachers observing and participating began to understand a new way to teach the students. The respect that develops between the participants in the ensemble through the performance of the ensembles is very natural. Not forced. Everyone understood their role quickly and worked hard to maintain their status in performance. This sense of the saying "hard work pays off positively" was learned, demonstrated, and attained. The students at this facility needed that lesson. I believe it is the combination of immediate and gradual gratification that the WMDC provides individuals in an ensemble that broadens the mind through the stimulation for learning and the challenge to strive for a positive performance. In other words, students first love the grooves of the individual parts. They enjoy learning them and performing them (Immediate). They ENJOY putting the parts together (that is gradual and requires time and effort). As they learned to rely on others, the EFFORT part subsides in the wake of the awesome performance. Thus, analysis of the ensembles and the process of correlating the ensembles to academic class (math, science, social studies, language arts, MUSIC). I think the most important thing that the WMDC gives the students is fun through learning. The administrators at the facility said they have never seen the "students" (inmates) smile so much and have fun together as a team. These students do not require an education in being responsible, but rather how to trust others and ask for assistance in their everyday life. They have been responsible for their behaviors. Negative behavior, negative outcome. Would they be where they are if they had asked for assistance or guidance from a positive role model? These are just some thoughts that I wanted to share with you,

Will. Let me know what you think. Thank you, once again, for such a great summer and an awesome curriculum.

James Mader, FL

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In a message dated 3/26/05 11:24:39 AM, ponishi@attglobal.net writes:

It's always great to read about the success stories that have come from WMD.

I too have a thanks and a story. After hearing the exciting performance that Walt and his crew put together in Seattle last summer, I approached my district music supervisor with a plan. I told him how much impact the African style marimbas had when I saw Walt at the summer workshop. I explained that the existing 4-6 grade percussion ensemble I direct would adapt incredibly well if we augmented our instrumentarium with a batch of African style marimbas. After seeing Walt's marimba ensemble perform, one person was overheard saying "try cutting music programs after seeing a performance like this" (particularly after watching one of Walt Hampton's 5th grade kids playing with so much energy and passion it brought tears to my eyes). I explained to my supervisor that now more than ever we need to seize the opportunities given to promote the excellence and excitement that accompany quality programs like WMD and the Walt Hampton workshop. The energy and intensity in the marimba ensemble is the same that you and your staff at WMD bring to every workshop. So with my excitement about WMD and the whole marimba thing, he supported the purchase of an African marimba ensemble. Now with 20+ tubanos and accessories, we've added some major African style marimbas and we are going to rock.

If you have an opportunity, check out my somewhat musical website. [www.totallywiredmusicians.com](http://www.totallywiredmusicians.com). It was great to hear and see you and Sowah at All NW in Bellevue. Take care.

Phil Onishi

Edmonds, Washington

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In a message dated 4/25/05 11:03:13 AM, johnmonward@sbcglobal.net writes:

I have been having a ball at my new charter school - it's K-8 and this is the first time I've taught middle school students. My new principal was intrigued by drumming when I interviewed, so we ended up

getting 10 various tubanos, 1 djembe, 2 talking drums, 4 xylos and various related small percussion to start the year. The kids started the year and made it through the beginning of Ensemble 5 before we had to stop our drumming unit.

We recently did a 2 week return so that students could tune their brains before standardized tests. The level that they came back to was much higher than when they left. Taking a break is powerful. They now warm up on pieces that were hard before, like Ensembles 3 & 4! In no time, we put together Paul and James' Teakwe as well as your wonderful Desert Fire. Some of the students who had trouble in the beginning of the year were shining! I was jazzed.

I also have an audition drum group of 12 middle schoolers and will continue to have them as the years progress so students who are ready can move ahead. They are now working on The River, from James and Paul's book.

Although our 8th grade teacher sometimes finds it challenging to teach while we are drumming in the morning, it really moves her reluctant students out of their early morning middle school lethargy. Drumming is a good way to wake up, it seems to me!

Anyway, this year has been full and exciting. I couldn't wish for a job more perfectly suited to my talents. I had the chance this year to study for a few months with Mamady Kaita, a wonderful Djembe player from Guinea. Almost lost my mind with the alternation of drum hands, but he was a charming, exacting teacher, who at one point, said (in French), "You think too much!" (Welcome to America, dude.....) Feeling the music is a higher level skill, no doubt. It's so good to be a student when you're a teacher - keeps you humble.

Hope to see you next summer. I'll definitely miss drumming!

Monica Loebel-Ward, CA

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In a message dated 6/6/05 10:22:15 AM, day8638@comcast.net writes:

Our school is EXCITED about drumming! My first year in developing a drumming program was definitely successful! In May 2005, our third grade (our highest grade at this time as we are growing) presented an interactive drum circle for their parents (High/Low echo, Q&A, and

Ensemble I-modified slightly). We sang Funwa Alafia with hand clapping. The parents were thrilled, the kids were proud to share their knowledge with their parents, and the Head of School was ecstatic! It was a very special and rewarding event. Your materials, programs and subsequent support are great!

Sincerely, Bonny Day, Music Specialist, St. John's Parish Day School, Ellicott City, MD.

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In a message dated 6/6/05 12:07:24 PM, Brynnpn2 writes:

Hey there Will!

I hope all is going well with you. Things here in Ohio County are WONDERFUL! There were six teachers that traveled to Pleasantville, NY last summer to take WMD Level One, and we have all implemented the program in our schools. The children have never been more excited to come to music class in my building! I had one fifth grade class that came through this year, and they were excellent! They were quickly singing in three parts, and worked through all the ensembles in the book in about one nine week grading period. I was, needless to say, speechless. They just grasped the concepts SO quickly!

Thanks so much for this GREAT curriculum!

Bryan Sable  
Ohio County Schools  
Wheeling, WV

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a message dated 6/10/05 10:17:26 AM, mwermund@dce.k12.wi.us writes:

Should let you know that I did Harambe with my 5th graders for their spring program which had a patriotic, theme, so we could make up appropriate verses such as "fight for freedom" "pray for the soldiers" "freedom forever" "liberty always" etc. You get the idea. Also, in learning the parts, I added words which help me and the kids "get it together" They were low drum - "Now together. Get it" high drum - "Now get it?" medium drum - "now? (rest rest) Get it" What was nice was

that kids could always line up the "now" and then they would get it together!!!!!! Also a nice interplay of words between the high and medium drum parts : "Now get it? (rest) get it Now get it? (rest) get it" etc. Hope that is OK with you. Worked real well with the kids.

Marcie Wermund, Wausau, WI

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In a message dated 6/21/05 10:44:34 AM,  
keith.summers5@verizon.net writes:

Dear Will,

I am an old grandma with very little music ability and with a great love for music. I love the World Drumming Program and hope to be able

to use it with children here in Hawaii in many capacities. It is a wonderful program. God bless you. Kathy Summers

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In a message dated 6/23/05 12:30:19 PM, pwood@cheqnet.net writes:

It was actually 2003 when I took it for credit, I took level 1 again in 2004 just for fun and because I'm a K-5, I really wanted to get the concepts down. I am really glad I did that and look forward to taking level 2 next year. I'm doing guitar this year! I think you are awesome and I really admire your approach, your ideas and leading the way to more active music instruction for our kids!

Here's something cool, although someone may have already discovered this but just in case, here it is.

My 5th graders "invented" something really fun this year. They used the old Name Game on the tubano; Low Low High High as eights (r r l l) and 2 silent pulses with each hand for quarter notes (r l). I really liked the way it developed their sense of space and I really believe they did so well with concept of rests and their "inner hearing" because of this.

Peggy Wood, WI

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In a message dated 7/2/05 9:38:01 AM, mockman@cox.net writes:

Dear Will,

I just returned from Lake Geneva as a Level 1 participant. I just wanted to drop a note to say thank you for a 'life changing' experience. The music, the friends made, and the beautiful setting at the resort will forever live in my memory as a precious moment in time. I hope it will be possible to continue the journey next summer.

(Will I ever be able to chew my food or stir coffee as a normal person or will the bell and clave rhythm prevail?)

Janel Ockman, Marrero, LA

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In a message dated 7/21/05 12:55:59 PM, vette39@msn.com writes:

WOW.....great news. My husband and I were in the class in Geneva, WI. I'm the one who taught with Paul Corbiere from WPB, but now I'm in Illinois.

My husband, Larry is a Social Worker/Counselor. We had the privilege to start a drumming group with a group of Jr. High and one H.S. boys last night. Was it ever rewarding for them. They left with a positive attitude, they focused and listened throughout the session. This group of boys meet once a week at the counseling office for special help (ADD problems, plus many others) This is the first time something like this reached out to help kids at the office.

I just wanted you to know that this class helped us in so many ways. You and your staff are wonderful.

Alice Grubb, IL

+++++

In a message dated 7/22/05 11:51:25 AM, ajgross@velocity.net writes:

I would like to thank you for your vision and leadership in administrating these workshops. You have provided the means and the tools for my professional growth. The networking with fellow teachers and new found relationships with others has been life changing for me. Thank you.

-Andrew Gross

+++++

In a message dated 7/29/05 2:15:58 AM, keith.summers5@verizon.net writes:

Dear Will,

I am the grandma in Hawaii who has been teaching the World Drumming

Class. I have read the books many times and memorized a lot. I have most all the instruments though just one of the tubanos of each size but still it works and the kids love it. Thank you and all your friends for making such a program. i hope to come to a training next summer and

my plan will be to teach the program in a school one day that has little music available. i have had to work so hard to get it all into

my unmusical head but somehow it has gotten there and I know it is because it is written so people can do it. thank you so much. God bless you. Thirty eight years ago I taught art in a junior high school. We have 9 kids and 20 grandchildren and have spent our lives teaching and loving kids

Kathy Summers, Hawaii  
+++++

In a message dated 8/3/05 12:28:42 PM, Opus5300 writes:

I really want to thank you for the tremendous workshop last week in Leesburg! I had an outstanding time, met some wonderful new friends, and got to learn from YOU, a true master! I have been singing "Peace Drum Song", "Peace Will Come" and "Watch the Stars" for days now--I can't get them out of my mind! I am planning to use them with the school students as well as with the 2 choirs I direct at the church. The workshop really gave me a shot in the arm, and I feel ready to return to school with many great ideas, and with renewed gusto! Thank you, Will! You are a great mentor for us, and an inspiring example!

Wishing you much of the peace we sing about!  
Debbie Doyle, Fairfax, VA

+++++

In a message dated 8/3/05 12:35:00 PM, anne.burson@verizon.net writes:

Thank you for a fast-paced, action-filled, inspiring workshop. I can't wait for the chance to implement all the ideas presented (and developed) during the course of last week.

Anne Burson, MD

+++++

In a message dated 8/3/05 12:43:38 PM, Sarah.Land@killeenisd.org writes:

Thank you for such a wonderful training in TX. I really enjoyed the staff and learned from everyone that was there. My husband has been so impressed with how much I've improved!

I wish you the best,  
Sarah Land, TX

+++++

In a message dated 8/4/05 12:15:50 PM, fweingarten@rhnet.org writes:

I just spent 2 days writing curriculum with my middle school teachers, and today we unpacked Package A. I taught them how to play each inst, how to teach (without music), we did ens. #2, than "Take Time in Life", then ens #1 and Na Na Kru.

We tuned, played drums and perc, sang, moved (especially for the Shakere part) and had a great time. While we were 'practicing and singing' the bldg principal came in, lured by the fun we were having. She was very impressed, and excited for our students! (and I'll bet we have her support throughout the year!).

I'm surprised how much I mimicked your teaching - realizing what good techniques that are. My teachers are very excited, and re-juvenated - ready to teach music (not just drums, etc.)

Wanted you to know - 'so far, real good...."

I'm sure we'll get into recorders and movement as the year progresses. I know all of our meetings will have a new focus.

Thanks for a good week - I see results already.

Sincerely,

Fred A. Weingarten

Director of Music and Visual Arts Education

Pittsford, NY

+++++

In a message dated 8/8/05 7:37:16 PM, BishMus writes:

First I would like to take a minute to express my gratitude to you and your staff for a wonderful week of drumming, singing and learning. Time went by so quickly because of the great content and how you organized our daily sessions. I have to admit that the night of our last class, I actually had a dream that I was teaching ensemble three. I can't get these sounds out of my head - it is truly a part of me now. Thanks again for a wonderful and invigorating experience. I am now excited to return to school to "take action" and share what I have learned.

Melissa Bishop, Mt, Airy, MD

+++++

In a message dated 8/11/05 6:15:55 PM, dccates@sbcglobal.net writes:

Greetings from San Antonio.....Just a quick note to express my gratitude to Will, James, Michelle, Sowah, and all the staff from the workshop in Wisconsin this summer.....

Early this morning I was able to present to the certified and para-staff at the school where I teach music a brief overview of "WorldMusicDrumming".....can't tell you how I struggled with putting this together, but "by coincidence" an e-mail arrived on Tuesday from another teacher in our District (Lovena) who had attended your workshop in Dallas....she was "drumming up" a Drumming Circle!

Long story short, Lovena and I, together, did the workshop for staff (around 50) and then went to in-service meeting of Music Teachers from NEISD.....we were still floating on clouds from the wonderful sounds of the staff at Dellview and their openly expressed gratitude for bringing a sense of "peace" to the inservice....(Can you guess which song we closed with?)

We were then asked to do an inservice in September for the ENTIRE NEISD Music Staff on the WorldMusicDrumming programs.....I'll be in touch later for ideas and support, but wanted to get an early thank you to all of you for giving so much to all of us.

Blessings to all,  
Carolyn Cates  
Dellview Elementary School (NorthEast ISD)  
San Antonio, TX

+++++

In a message dated 8/15/05 8:08:49 AM, lbrock@charter.net writes:  
After I retired, I was hired to teach drumming at 2 afternoon classes at a, local elementary school, and at a Boys and Girls Club. The children are most from low income families who live in local 'project' housing. The grant money for the drums did not materialize, so I bought buckets at Home Depot. We use 12" dowel sticks for beaters, since it hurts to hit them with their hands. For the biggest drum sound, I use 20 gallon. plastic trash cans, turned up-side down, and we put tennis balls on the dowel sticks to get a more characteristic sound. Using your curriculum has worked well - even with a 'bucket brigade'! I scheduled a performance for the school board meeting -something new for all of these children- and loved watching their smiling faces as they performed.

I hope to get back to another workshop next year!  
Lynda Brock, LaGrange, GA

+++++

In a message dated 12/23/04 8:52:21 AM,  
ulrichwi@wauwatosak12.wi.us writes:  
Just a quick update on WMD. This totally shocked me. All of my  
classes  
were given three options on what to do this last day of school (before  
Christmas break):  
1. Play holiday drums... using either ensemble 1, 2 or 3, see how  
many  
Christmas carols would work with DRUMS!  
2. Guitar class. learn four simple holiday songs using G, C, D7.  
3. Watch a video.

All of my classes either chose Drums or Guitar!

Will Ulrich, Wauwatosak, WI  
Merry Christmas!

+++++

In a message dated 12/28/04 9:20:09 PM, Sjohn21852 writes:

I began my program (with evening sessions for parents and students)  
in October of 2003. We had 21 students at the opening session. In  
late November, we started meeting once per week, after school, with  
about that same number of students (some were new, since many of  
the ones at the evening sessions were older or younger than our  
target age of second and third grade.) By February, when we began  
the second club session, we had about 28 students, in two clubs per  
week. When we had club sign-up in fall of 2004, over 80 students  
signed up. We had to add a third club. Due to conflicts with other  
clubs and some problems with scheduling, we lost some students, but  
ended the session with about 56 consistent 2nd-4th grade members in  
the three clubs. I will be starting an upper-grade (4-6) club in  
February of 2005 (and continuing one beginning club for 2nd-3rd  
graders and the performance ensemble, which includes students in  
grades 2-4.)

Our performance ensemble has performed seven times (at Roosevelt  
and in the community) and has four future performances planned. A  
local church, whose members mentor many of our students at  
Roosevelt, donated the time and talent to make the vests that our  
performing ensemble wears.

Susan Johnson, IN

+++++

In a message dated 12/31/04 4:58:10 PM, seallen@syd.eastlink.ca  
writes:

Happy New Year. i have been having a blast sharing WMD with a adult group at our music school. They all requested that Santa bring them a drum for Christmas. I have been happy to receive updates on the 2005 season.

Shelley Allen  
Cape Breton, Nova Scotia

++++  
In a message dated 2/25/05 10:18:28 AM,  
RosemarieY@stlouiseschool.org writes:  
Observation by our principal:

"The drum ensemble jam was impressive. When Rosemarie pulled kids up one at a time to add the gankogui and shekere playing, while the rest of the class played three different drum rhythms, it was a notable accomplishment." Dan Fitzpatrick, Principal, St. Louise Parish School, Bellevue, WA.

The middle school kids are really enjoying the course. Hope to see you again this summer. Stay well.  
Rosemarie

++++  
In a message dated 3/17/05 12:14:28 PM, dneedham@cps.k12.in.us writes:

Thank you so much. My kids absolutely love World Drumming! This is the best way I have ever found to keep sixth graders engaged and on task! Thank you!

Darlene Needham  
Crown Point, Indiana

++++  
In a message dated 3/21/05 3:07:56 PM, siseminger@msn.com writes:

I am a director for the Young Naperville Singers where I direct the first level choir and the boy choir. Last month we held our third annual boys workshop for the community. We call it a Boys Power Sing. Our boy choir are the hosts and we invite boys from schools grades 3-8. I've always incorporated the drums with my singing selections. Some of the boys walk in a little nervous but they get all excited when they see my 14 tubanos and conga drums. This year I taught "Singabahambayo" with my own drum arrangement. The boys really enjoyed it. Later in the workshop, we had the men's section from a local college join us and taught them the African song as well.

Scott Houlne Iseminger  
Naperville, IL

+++++

In a message dated 3/24/05 4:40:19 PM, gagirlcd@hotmail.com writes:

I just wanted to tell you that I have managed to get quite a few more drums this year and I had an after school drumming circle with my third grades. They really like drumming and for our last PTO we were able to perform "Ensemble 2". The parents and the administration really liked it and I am happy to try it again next year. Thank you so much for your help this past summer. It added a new dimension to my teaching and is now on my professional growth plan!

Cheryl Dubberly

+++++

In a message dated 3/24/05 3:44:26 PM, annieeisenberg@yahoo.com writes:

I just found out the budget passed & I will be getting the drums for next year YEAH!!! Boy, how I have missed them. They are sooo grounding for middle school. I can't wait. Amen!!

Annie Eisenberg, NH

+++++

In a message dated 9/21/04 3:01:30 PM, brann@gw.lincoln.k12.mi.us writes:

It was great to hear from you. I attended the WMDrumming Level 1 at Interlaken last summer - had a blast! In August I put together a small drumming ensemble at the spiritual center I attend. We performed the first and second ensemble pieces with Peace Will Come and Peace Round. Everyone loved it!

After soliciting a local water bottler, I received 30 50-gallon water bottles to use for drums for my 6th grade music appreciation class. It is a 5 week elective in the middle school that covers a lot of different areas. We spend 1-2 weeks drumming and the kids are really responding to it. To my surprise, the staff is very supportive too - I was worried the noise would be a problem for the other classes.

In addition I'm expanding my drumming skills through a weekly drumming class with a local (Ryan Edwards) who teaches rhythms of Guinea, which he visits regularly.

That is so cool you have Nick Page on board for next year - as you know he is a capable, creative and charismatic leader. I will recommend his workshop to some of the choral directors I know. I

hope to attend either the Guitar or Level 2 drumming classes next year.

Be in Touch!

Craig Brann  
Ypsilanti, Michigan

+++++

In a message dated 9/22/04 10:11:45 AM, mzumbrunn@473mail.net writes:

I've had a great time using the drums this school year. The kids LOVE it when we have "drum circle" days-- I understand now what others have said about how the students improve their listening skills. We are getting pretty good on Ensemble #1 already (although singing AND playing is not there yet!!) I would like to attend Level II in Dallas if you are needing some early warning.... Josh (and his trio) are planning a day in my school (Nov. 1) and I can't wait!

Marlo Zumbrunn, Junction City, KS

+++++

In a message dated 9/22/04 8:59:13 PM, mccoyjm@prodigy.net writes:

Thank you so much for the updates! I just wanted again to thank you for a great experience in WMDr 1 in Lake Geneva! I can't thank you enough for all of the great material that I learned at this workshop! I have just started working at a new job teaching K-5 students at an elementary school in a Chicago suburb! Since the beginning of the school year, I have already used several of the songs we learned from WMDr with my second, third, and fourth grade classes, and will be performing some of the marimba ensembles in Paul and James' book with my fifth graders at our spring musical. I have had such a positive response from the kids already! The kids can't get the songs out of their heads, and the second and third graders are learning how to play the claves and maracas in simplified arrangements to Nana Kru, Water Come A Me Eye, Funwa Alafia, and Linstead Market. The fourth graders also loved Dance of the Nations! I'm sure you'll also be happy to know that every day in the fourth and fifth grade music classes, we begin class with a rhythmic question and answer "what's for lunch?" session on percussion instruments. The kids are hooked and beg for more each day! They have come up with very creative questions, as you can imagine (what's your favorite sports team/hobby/color/what's the weather), and are waiting in line to be the next person to ask a question. It is a big hit!

My principal is extremely excited about the world music drumming curriculum and its cross-curricular, multi-cultural perspective! Again, I thank you deeply for the great opportunity to share this material with my students and to educate them about other world cultures! My students love it and I have found it very rewarding to teach! Thank you again, and good luck in the upcoming year!

Maureen McCoy  
Clow Elementary School  
Naperville, IL  
+++++

In a message dated 9/24/04 1:34:36 AM, pianokeys88@earthlink.net writes:

How are you? Thanks for the wonderful new drumming ensembles. My students really enjoy Rock It.

At Back to School night last night, my 8th graders presented Ensemble I to all the parents (about 600 in attendance). They were phenomenal and the feedback from our interim principal and parents was incredibly positive. I have parents who want to take my class. The students were so proud of themselves and their performance. It was a great way for me to start my year.

Hoping to drum next summer with you. I've missed it.  
Susan Saposnik, NJ  
+++++

In a message dated 10/28/04 9:28:25 PM, Anchorworship writes:

just wanted to let you know that my honor choir gave its debut performance at our local 6th grade music festival. it was very well received to say the least. we did "funwa alafia" and a mamady keita thing called "kassa". the program is going very well. next week, some of my drummers will be performing with our junior high all-district honor choir on "o sifuni mungu".

i hope to send you some video and pics very soon.  
thanx -  
jared johnson  
muskogee, ok  
+++++

In a message dated 11/3/04 12:48:15 PM,  
marylynn\_miles@nccs.k12.nc.us writes:

I want to thank you for the wonderful workshop in Maryland. You have inspired and refreshed me as a music teacher. My 5th grade drum ensembles performed Drum Up the Sun and Sow it on the Mountain (from NEW ENSEMBLES AND SONGS) last week to rave reviews by parents, teachers, and administrators. I have been spreading the word about your workshops to anyone who will listen to me and I plan to attend again this year if funding is available.

Marylynn Miles, Newton, NC

+++++

In a message dated 11/4/04 6:32:02 PM,  
rgordenmercer@ferndale.wednet.edu writes:

The class has been invaluable to my teaching. My music classes are completely different, and I am having so much fun! Thank You!

Rachel Gorden Mercer

Ferndale, WA

+++++

In a message dated 11/7/04 8:13:50 PM, Djembedad writes:

I know I shared the story of a boy in my Beat For Peace that is an ESE (exceptional student education) student (EH - emotionally handicapped). It was about his showing up at a fund raising event with his mom and aunt. How he really had started to shine. Well, I wrote him up for a contest through the VSA of Florida - *very special arts*. the award was for "Exemplary participation in the Arts". He won runner up! He really has become a leader in the group that I can actually depend on. He plays low drum and leads that section (he is the BoBooBo kid!)

If you told me he would be this dependable and musical last year I would have thought you were crazy. This year we have 4 "EH" kids. It can get a little nutty but this child above really has become a role model. They are awesome!

Paul Corbiere, Boynton Beach, FL

+++++

In a message dated 12/10/04 11:43:16 AM, emelvin9@msn.com writes:

Greetings from Annapolis, MD! Just wanted to send along this article from my local newspaper, with a feature story on the WMD after-school classes I've been teaching this fall. I'm very happy that my plans to bring WMD to the community worked out nicely this fall -- I

worked on getting funding from numerous sources (unfortunately, few of them are mentioned in the article.) I also have some residencies lined up with two area schools for Winter-Spring 2005.

I think about all of you often and hope everyone is doing well. Don't be surprised if I contact some of you who live nearby to see if I can drop in on some of your classes! As a first-time "classroom" teacher, I can use all the pointers you may have.

So, here's the link:  
[http://www.hometownannapolis.com/cgi-bin/read/2004/12\\_09-08/LIF](http://www.hometownannapolis.com/cgi-bin/read/2004/12_09-08/LIF)  
Best regards,  
Elizabeth Melvin, MD  
+++++

In a message dated 7/7/04 5:59:34 PM, bobs@winfield34.org writes:

Bob Siemienkowicz and the Winfield Middle School Percussion ensembles were recently accepted to present their performance curriculum at the Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic in December of 2004. They have also been accepted to present at the Illinois Music Educators Association State Convention in January of 2005. Winfield will present their Concert percussion and World Beat ensembles. Bob uses WMD with both groups as well as incorporating some of the teachings from Level 3 WMD. The presentation will demonstrate a hybrid of Western and Non-Western instructional techniques that have been successful for their middle school program. For more information, contact Bob at bobs@winfield34.org.  
Winfield, IL

+++++

In a message dated 2/5/04 7:10:04 PM, ganderso@redwing.k12.mn.us writes:

Just a note to let you know how much better I am at teaching drums this year after being in Level II last summer at Lake Geneva. I am so much more comfortable with the curriculum now and we've had a great time in

class.

We've used them a lot in church, too. In January, we had a visiting pastor from Nigeria, so we sang Ise Oluwa and a Tanzanian piece arranged by

Mark Sedio called Ni Me Mwana Bwana. It's a great call and response piece that we did with the sr. choir and congregation. I put your "On the Mountain" ensemble with it and it was wonderful! We also did Sow it

on the Mountain the following Sunday when it was local mission -

great

tie in!

Thanks for all of your hard work and inspiration.

Gretchen Anderson

Red Wing, MN

+++++

In a message dated 8/30/04 7:51:45 AM, loreyh@earthlink.net writes:

I am also going to start using the drums at church, with a youth group we are going to call "T-Prayze." (You've heard of J-Lo, and A-Rod? Well, this is Teens (or Total, if we include parents) Prayer and Praise through bells, drums, and voices.) (The bells are handbells.) That starts with a pizza party on September 15.

Lorey Hodgson-Hallada, Cheverly MD

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In a message dated 12/31/03 9:13:45 PM, janflynn@comcast.net writes:

The middle school classes I teach are exploding with kids who want to pursue the drums. Several have purchased their own instruments (some

tubanos, some djembes). For the past two semesters, they have been sharing performances with the 7th/8th grade choir, because we weren't

ready to perform our own drum show. But the drum kids are NOT wanting

to share time with the choir anymore. They want their own show!

They

are clamoring for opportunities to drum as soloists. They're composing

their own COOL combinations of rhythms. The ideas are flowing and now

I need to provide an opportunity for them to play their own show.

After the holidays, the principals of several of the schools in our district are wanting to do an evening session designed for them!

Thank you, thank you for all you do. Through WMD, you've opened up a

world to me that has given me great joy. People ask me if I ever worry

about damaging my hearing, or if I go nuts teaching drums. I guess they just don't understand the wonderfully enriching sense of community

and music that comes through drumming.

Warm regards,  
Jan Flynn, Shelby MI

+++++

In a message dated 1/8/04 11:33:00 AM, fluteful@yahoo.com writes:

I took level one World Music Drumming at Lake Geneva last summer. I've really enjoyed using your curriculum with my third, fourth, and fifth graders.

In December, we accompanied an Amazon trickster tale with xylophones, recorders, African drumming, and Taiko drumming. Since our district requires the study of keyboard, recorder, and guitar, I have been integrating the World Music Drumming curriculum with the lessons of the other instruments. We have had many positive comments from students, staff, parents, and teachers.

Christina Pelletier, Columbus, OH

+++++

In a message dated 1/13/04 5:22:40 PM, mpokal@nycap.rr.com writes:

Thanks for forwarding these wonderful emails. I am student teaching at Oceanside High in a choral program and I am nearing the end of my teaching credential requirements, which will be finished in January.

This summer I was able to refine my teaching of part of WMD by writing a 15 week thematic unit to go through part of the curriculum, writing for literacy as well as musical purposes. I was amazed

that when I had to fill in each step of the unit (goals, objectives, skills, assessments and standards), WMD was well thought out at every turn. I am now able to appreciate how much you and the pilot group put into the curriculum now that I am evaluating and creating well-thought-out curriculum of my own. And it also helped the members of my credential class that whenever I had a presentation, the drums came in to enliven our lives.

When I started with my 6th graders this year, first we evaluated what good ensemble playing is, and how to help each other before they put a hand on the drums. They stood behind their chairs outside the circle and I had them say, "I am a great ensemble player" so that the thoughts that came in were direct and positive. Then they moved into the circle with intention.

During my student teaching, there was a young high school lady who never smiles holding a pair of drumsticks in her hand and getting into trouble during choir. I looked at her and said "You're a drummer, aren't you?" and she said, "No." I told her, "You are - you just don't know it yet....." The first smile I have ever seen from her crossed her face! I am looking forward to the day when I am teaching in middle or high school when I can really sink my teeth into all the ensembles instead of 1-3, but my elementary students are making an amazing showing for their age.

WMD continues to amaze me more and more. It's the unlimited well of the water of life.....

Hope you are well and happy! I look forward to coming to drum again someday soon!

Monica Loebel-Ward, CA

+++++

In a message dated 1/13/04 9:02:22 PM, LeH@friscoisd.org writes:

Hello, Dr. Schmid. This is Hong Le--from Frisco, Texas.

First, I wanted to thank you for allowing me to use your powerpoint last fall to give a 3-hour staff development on the World Music Drumming. I know it took some last-minute time to send the files to me, and to finally get it working properly. I truly appreciate your time.

Next, I wanted to let you know that my drum group was invited to perform at our School Board Recognition Reception last night. They were a huge hit. I noticed this evening that a picture of it was posted on our district's website, so I wanted to pass it along to you. The picture you see shows school board members on the left of the picture. Unfortunately, they didn't show the stars of the performance--the students! There were 50 students performing. The students on the floor are playing the high drum part on small tom drums (along with 3 students on the high tubanos), while the rest of the tubanos are being used to cover the medium and low drums parts.

You can see this posted on the following website: [www.friscoisd.org](http://www.friscoisd.org). It is the first headline listed.

Two years ago, I started with you knowing absolutely nothing, and now my group was invited to perform at a function where all school board members, every district administrator, and all campus administrators in the district were present. Thank you so much for your tremendous help!

I plan to attend the MENC conference and hope to see you there.

Thank you again,

Hong Le, Frisco, TX

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Mike Kane and Paul Corbiere, FL (<http://www.BeatforPeace.com>) gave me permission to print this from their district newsletter.

***BEAT FOR PEACE Collaboration, Integration, Accountability***

By Mike Kane, Starlight Cove Elementary

Tubanos sound through the school as cowbells, gankoqui and shakaree keep the timeline for **Beat for Peace**. Thirty fourth and fifth grade students are found sitting in a circle, many with a colorful tubano drum and the rest with various other instruments. Together they play an intricately woven ensemble of complementary rhythms that is as much a song as model for human interaction and communication. Established in 1995 at Starlight Cove Community

Title I Elementary School, **Beat for Peace** is a music-based intervention built out of the collaborative efforts of Michael Kane, School Counselor and Paul Corbiere, Music Teacher. We saw the need to reach a portion of Starlight Cove's student population who seemed to become increasingly disenfranchised with school at this early age. They recruited students with attendance, academic or behavioral difficulties, students with family conflict or dysfunction and those with poor self-esteem.

The **Beat for Peace** drum circle is based on a complementary relationship between resiliency research and the *World Music Drumming* curriculum. Along with musical rhythms, students learn the resiliency traits of social competence, school affiliation, self-concept, a sense of purpose and future, and the value and worth of diversity. Led by the circle leaders, students sit in a circle and play their way through the curriculum pausing to discuss how the ensembles and musical tasks can be applied to real life. In *Dunno* or small group counseling sessions more time is spent talking about matters of diversity, respect, goal setting and self-efficacy. Teachers rated their success with classroom focus, social competence and participation. The program is evaluated through a series of surveys and pre/post testing instruments as well as student self-reflection.

*World Music Drumming* is a cross-cultural curriculum designed by Will Schmid as a music curriculum that utilizes the motivation of hands on drumming to model and teach respect for diverse cultures. **Beat for Peace** recognizes the value present in the *World Music Drumming* curriculum as it relates to the resiliency literature. The collaborative use of the fine arts and school counseling in the process of building resiliency is our mission and goal. The Drum Circle is the vehicle in which we seek to accomplish our mission.

The success of **Beat for Peace can be** boiled down to the three key components of a successful guidance program: **Collaboration, Accountability and Integration**. We have learned the value of working together across disciplines. I have developed a greater degree of respect and understanding of music teachers as Corbiere has grown to appreciate and respect the role of a school counselor. We've experienced great success in collecting data, documenting successes and sharing those successes with colleagues and other professionals. Finally, we've brought our intervention into the mainstream by encouraging key academic skills in a manner consistent with the Sunshine State Standards. We continue to have it strategically recognized in our school's School Improvement Plan.

**Beat for Peace** continues to grow at Freedom Shores and Starlight Cove Elementary Schools. We currently involve school counselors, ESOL counselors, and a fifth grade teacher in the project.

+++++

In a message dated 1/23/04 12:46:56 PM,  
PBauer@northalleggheny.org writes:

Will:

The fruit of your labor continues to grow, plant seeds, and bear more fruit.

I received this today from someone I have never even met.

Yesterday, I

got a call from a teacher who student taught with someone else in our school district seven years ago who is in a position to begin a drumming

and guitar program, and earlier in the semester, I was contacted by someone who has just gotten drums for his school this year. Things are

still growing like wildfire around here!

I did a drum circle 2 weeks ago for a woman's retreat. They had a great

time and have already decided that this is a "keeper" for next year.

Hope you and Anne are both doing well. Hugs for both of you

Pat Bauer, N.Alleggheny, PA

-----Original Message-----

From: Daniel McElwain [mailto:mcelwaid@qacps.k12.md.us]

Sent: Friday, January 23, 2004 12:53 PM

To: Bauer,Patricia

Subject: Remo World Drumming

Hi Pat,

My name is Dan McElwain. I am a graduate of Slippery Rock Univeristy.

I currently reside on the Eastern Shore of Maryland on Kent Island. I am in my second year of teaching Elementary Music, Beginning Band, and

Beginning String programs, in a 3-5 elem school. When I was hired I was

asked by my supervisor if I had any ideas on how to involve the Africian

American and other minority groups in my building. Being a

percussionist I instantly thought of the Hand drumming. I had seen your presentation at PCMEA, PMEA, and at SRU when you taught it to one of Mrs. Hawk's Intro Classes. At the time my district didn't have enough funds to purchase the drum package. We borrowed random hand drums from the surround Elem, Mid, and High Schools. I was able to have an ensemble of about 10 kids. They performed at a concert in September of last year. Needless to say It was a huge hit. Every kid in the school wanted to be part of the group. This year we got a Fine Arts Grant and the first thing purchased was my drums. I just love them. After the concert everyone in the school wanted to be part of the group. I am up to 24 kids in my "World Drum Ensemble". I have also started to use it in some of my Gen. classes. So, to make a long story short... THANK YOU SO MUCH. You have, indirectly helped me more than you will ever know. I was also wondering...if you have any info to supplement the Curriculum and Student book I would love to have it. Please feel free to email me back any time.

Thank you again!

Dan McElwain

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In a message dated 2/4/04 3:05:59 PM,  
ulrichwi@wauwatosak12.wi.us writes:

I would like to share with you, an article on my world music club that was written by a sixth grade student, Meg Reid:

Boom, Boom, Boom, the drums. Shaka, shaka, shaka, the shekeres.

Ding, dong, ding the gankogui (double bells). Bing, bing, bing, the xylophones. This may sound like an African concert, but it also describes World Music Club, an after-school World Music program held on Wednesdays in room 234.

Twenty students participate in World Music Club, which is run by Mr. Ulrich, who also teaches World Music class, Music & Media and 6th

and 7th grade chorus. He developed the club for kids who had chosen another class other than world music - namely orchestra, chorus, band or daily gym.

If you had Mr. Ulrich in grade school, you would notice a difference now. Middle school World Music brings it to "the next level." Each meeting is spent learning and practicing songs that sometimes have as many as eight parts! Before the last concert, World Music Club learned three songs: "Banuwa", "Tatenda", and "Heavy Roller." World Music Club uses many different instruments. Small, medium and large drums are played, along with shekeres, which are like maracas with the beads on the outside making the noise. They are made from real gourds. Also provided are soprano, alto, baritone and bass xylophones. There are bells, similar to cowbells, and double bells. Mr. Ulrich actually made some of these instruments.

The World Music Club performed on Thursday, December 11th at the Winter Choral Concert at East High School. Most of the music was from Zimbabwe and other parts of Africa and is very rhythmic. The club will also perform at the spring concert as well as the Wauwatosa Choral Festival on April 27th, 2004.

Thanks! Will Ulrich, Wauwatosa, WI (willulrich@aol.com)

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In a message dated 2/5/04 7:10:04 PM,  
ganderso@redwing.k12.mn.us writes:

Just a note to let you know how much better I am at teaching drums this year after being in Level II last summer at Lake Geneva. I am so much more comfortable with the curriculum now and we've had a great time in class.

We've used them a lot in church, too. In January, we had a visiting pastor from Nigeria, so we sang Ise Oluwa and a Tanzanian piece arranged by Mark Sedio called Ni Me Mwana Bwana. It's a great call and response

piece that we did with the sr. choir and congregation. I put your "On the Mountain" ensemble with it and it was wonderful! We also did Sow it on the Mountain the following Sunday when it was local mission - great tie in!  
Thanks for all of your hard work and inspiration.

Gretchen Anderson  
Burnside Elementary  
Red Wing, MN

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In a message dated 3/28/04 7:37:15 PM, nthill@mac.com writes:

Hey Will,  
I had a chorus/Drum concert last Wednesday. I have 42 kids in the drum group and they rocked the house. We did YABA and and new piece called BReak-up and they really did well. The parents loved it. They did Ise Oluwa with the Chorus ( I have 110 kids in the Chorus!) and everyone loved it, including a parent from Yoruba, Nigeria who said it reminded him of home. What a cool experience.

-Nellie Hill, MD (WMDrumming TA)

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In a message dated 4/29/04 6:50:51 PM, dmdwhitney@yahoo.com writes:

Once in a while, there's a moment in the classroom when you know for sure you are doing the right thing in the right place. I had such a moment this week with my grade 6 Humanities I class (World Drumming in Disguise!). There are 20 in the class. For the last 10 weeks we have studied the music and literature of West Africa, the Caribbean, Ireland, the Middle East and the Native Americans.

We began by listening to a Belafonte recording from many years ago - Day-O (which they have learned to play on recorder and Orff

instruments). Then I read them a Caribbean tale "Dance to the River "(a Cajun tale in disguise!).

The mood set, I divided them into 5 groups of 4 each; a leader sat at each tubano with a clipboard and a rectangular piece of paper, which I had the leader grid into four columns down (for the four instruments - tubano, small maracas, guiros and frame drums), and four across, for the four beats. I told them they should devise a way to play on the four beats - whatever they decided - on whichever instrument they chose. I gave them 10 minutes.

After eight minutes, I went to each group and asked "Who has the "beat"?" Nobody had a beat; they all had a "timeline"! Cool!

Then I had them perform their ostinati (they chose the order), and as they hit the "groove", I added a vocal of a Caribbean tune which we are learning as part of a performance of TIGER SOUP, an Anansi Jamaican tale. The choices: Pay Me My Money Down, Mary Ann, Four White Horses and Banana Boat Song (aka Day-O). I was unable to shake them and we cruised together, each group endings the leader chose.

THEN the fun: we layered it, so we ended up with group on group! When all were in, I added "The Sloop John B " on the keyboard, and we rocked! I totally enjoyed the intensity with which they focused their performance! A+ for everyone I told them, and secretly hugged the experience to my heart.

What a vindication for your program! Composition, complement, ensemble, community, and, most of all, ownership! Carl Orff said it best: "Let the children be their own composers!" (Diane Whitney, Holy Comforter Episcopal School in Tallahassee; see you in June at Lake Geneva for Level 3!)

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In a message dated 5/9/04 10:40:01 AM, BlueyedMusicT writes:  
My fifth grade group played yesterday at a street festival and they were a huge hit. Most people couldn't believe they were only in the fifth grade. Paul has videos of his visit to Culpeper and they played very well! (At least I thought so) Because of the workshop last summer, Judy and I have full sets of drums and TWO more schools have them. Only one elementary school doesn't! :) We are playing for the school board on Monday night to let them see the importance of the program. The middle school music teachers are just not interested in the program, so I am going to offer it as an after school program to those who would like to participate. They can ride the bus from the middle school to my school and continue with their group. The parents were very concerned that they wouldn't have any "group" to belong to at the MS next year. My principal has been very supportive of the program and thinks that program has changed many of the students who are currently participating.

Looking forward to Wisconsin,  
Page Durham-Hays, SC

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In a message dated 6/2/04 8:29:03 PM, janflynn@comcast.net writes:

This has been an incredible year for me professionally. I've now been teaching for 2.5 years, the last two of which have been with WMD. I went to Level I in Lake Geneva two summers ago and came home all fired up about drumming. I had been looking for a program to work with in my middle school general music classes -- at the time, I only had a piano and some outdated books. That just wasn't working for me.

After I returned, I immediately set up a meeting with the District Curriculum Director to share my enthusiastic idea. She figuratively stood on her brakes and told me (in essence) "no way".

Subsequently, at her request, I sat through three curriculum meetings that summer with the music faculty, with other elementary, middle school and high school teachers, and with administrative people. I prepared a comprehensive report for the District Curriculum Committee meeting comparing the WMD objectives with the current curriculum framework with

the National Standards for Music. WMD was a hand-in-glove fit with the current frameworks and everyone was in favor of it. Everyone except the executive director. She saw significant dollar signs and said we'd

need to wait. So, at that point, I told her my husband and I had already ordered the instruments anyway (bit the credit card bullet on that one) and she cautioned me that that wasn't a good idea AT ALL.

But I personally resonated with the program and sincerely believed that the kids would absolutely love it.

What's that old saying? Where there's great risk, there's great reward! I've now been teaching the WMD curriculum for two years and the program has rejuvenated and revitalized the middle school general music program. In fact, kids are going to the counseling office and requesting music!

At the middle school, we have the 7th Grade "Thunder Drummers" and the 6th Grade "Drumfire!" after school programs. In the last two years, we've performed at the Oakland County Teacher of the Year Awards Banquet, the annual Farm Bureau Dinner, the annual Boy Scout Banquet, at all my vocal concerts, and recently at an all-day elementary activity where the classes rotated through the rooms and the little kids listened and participated with the presenters. We were recently asked to perform at an Elementary Reading Month Presentation, so we sang, "Take Time to Read" (instead of "Take Time in Life"!) They loved it -- the kids were singing, clapping, and generally rockin' out while the administrators were clapping their hands, tapping their feet, and grinning from ear to ear.

Over the past year, several newspapers have interviewed me about the program (local Oxford paper and Oakland County papers), so we got our pictures in numerous papers. I've had three visitations from other school districts to see what we're doing. So, we're spreading the word, Will! Holly Bowes, from Centerline Michigan, came to see the program and her district paid for the big package without a blink of an eye.

The kids are LOVING it. Most recently, I received a prestigious "Educational Excellence" award from the Michigan School Board Association for an innovative middle school program in the fine arts.

We were asked to go to Lansing to share our craft at the awards presentation luncheon with all 32 winners from across the state of Michigan (we were the only entertainment). I could only bring three kids, so I brought my most seasoned, capable drummers and they ROCKED.

In fact, we did about 15 minutes of hand percussion pieces, beginning with fairly simple pieces, then gradually getting more difficult ending in "Go Go Street"!!! The superintendent was there, the principal was there, the PR rep was there and they were beaming with pride. The superintendent hugged me at the end and said, "I feel like a proud parent!"

The women at the administrative offices want to start up a drum group.

I told them, "yeah, we could just have you bring a picture of someone you don't really like very much and you could paste it to the top of the drum and pound like crazy!" I've been reading on HealthRhythms (Remo website) how people in stressful jobs can lower their blood pressure, plus they experience a wonderful feeling of well-being when they're involved in a drum group.

A professor/counselor/therapist, whom I respect very highly, offered to let me drum at one of his bi-monthly "Lyceum" get-togethers. It's a well-educated, affluent group of professionals who meet for potluck dinners -- someone in the group prepares a verbal presentation, someone prepares an art presentation, and someone prepares a music presentation. When I brought the drums in March, they LOVED it. They had never done anything like that before and several of the adults just jumped right in.

Interestingly, once we started getting significant press for the program, the district coughed up the reimbursement money for the drums.

I wanted to ask the district for the interest on the note, too, but thought that might be pushing my luck. I know money is tight, so I'm trying to write grants and generate some funds for xylos so we can have melodic things happening, too.

Thanks for the heads-up about James' and Paul's new book and CD. My

copy of Music of the Village just arrived yesterday. The kids are learning quickly and they're hungry for new pieces - I can't wait until Level III. In fact, I'd love to eventually introduce puppetry and dance into the program. It just takes time.

Someday, I'd love to go to an Arthur Hull Drum Facilitation seminar in Hawaii -- he calls it his playshop. How cool would it be to get into the corporate world and make some money facilitating stress relief!

Enough chatter - hope you're doing well. Thank you, Will, for all you do. Your vision is reaping life-changing results. I often tell my students that one of the most incredible things you can ever do in life is make music with your friends. It's just good stuff.

Keep up the good work!

Jan Flynn, Michigan

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In a message dated 6/24/04 6:30:54 PM, mbrusca1@hotmail.com writes:

I participated in your workshop 2 years ago, in Los Angeles. I want to thank you and your assistants for the WONDERFUL opportunity you gave me. When the school year began (September 2002), no one at my school, let alone District A (in LAUSD), knew anything about this class. Students who were programmed in "The Drums" class did not know what to expect. Some of them wanted to check out of the class, until they played some of the introductory rhythms you showed us. The students stuck with it and at the Winter concert they blew everyone away. They got a standing ovation just like my Orchestra does. In the second semester, some of the 1st semester students wanted to stay. This year was even better. The word has gotten out, they want to stay. Students from the spring semester picked up everything so fast I had to research for more rhythm styles. I even included xylophone music (using Walt Hammond's books, they are GREAT!!). What makes this so exciting is all the students in the "drumming" class have never played an instrument.

Monique Brusca, Canoga Park, CA

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In a message dated 11/10/03 12:37:11 PM, iamtschur@shaw.ca writes:

Hello Will:

I have been able to secure public funds for a "diversity drumming club" This club will use some on the World drumming curriculum along with personal growth exercises and diversity training. I am piloting the program in the school my children go to and then? Who knows!?

Can you tell me which Silver Burdett level has the unit on Native American music. This is the unit that I am building myself and it is our greatest visible minority group in our area of central Alberta. We are blessed to have a drum keeper in Red Deer who is the keeper of the Red Deer Pow-Wow drum so he has been teaching me the stories of our people settling in our area. Wonderful!! We will also include an intertribal dance in our discussions of First Nations Music.

Thank-you again for your generous and patient spirit as a teacher and mentor.

I look forward to seeing you again sometime this year!! I'm not sure if I'll get to Chicago so I'm anxious to hear about other dates and locations.

Many blessings,

Tanya Schur- Drumcircle Facilitator  
Red Deer, AB Canada

<http://www.drumocracy.com/> [WS: Click on this if you want to see a cool website]

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In a message dated 11/12/03 1:10:16 PM, SSTILLMA@loudoun.gov writes:

I attended your Level 1 workshop last summer in Leesburg, VA and I loved every minute of it. My students at Lovettsville Elem. have been really enjoying the drums. My 4th/5th grade chorus will be singing at the Pageant of Peace at the National Christmas Tree in Washington, D.C.

on December 8, 2003. We are going to perform "Peace Will Come" with our wonderful drums. I know it is going to be great.

Thanks,  
Sarah Stillman, VA

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In a message dated 11/25/03 12:53:27 PM,  
ulrichwi@wauwatosa.k12.wi.us writes:

World Music class is going great. My fourth & fifth graders built their own drums in October. We played for the Halloween Festival at Wilson Elem. School. Made the Tosa Times.

Now my 6-8th grade students are building shekeres. So far 6 teachers are also taking the workshop. I found a website that sells gourds to teachers for a buck a piece (qty 30).  
Welburngourdfarm.com

Well that's all for now. Merry Christmas!  
Will Ulrich, WI

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In a message dated 12/2/03 9:53:12 PM, Micknjim@cs.com writes:  
Will,

It has been a long while since I have informed you of what is happening at Parkway Middle School of the arts. This year has been very busy thus far. Upon returning from the summer workshops I was asked to present in Naples, Florida for the Elementary music teachers inservice day. I can tell you that we had a blast. We covered most of the curriculum in the 9:00 a.m. till 3:30 p.m. workshop. The teachers were revived and excited to go teach their students at the end of the day. They were impressed by the lessons of the WMDC and how the cultures and music of the cultures were represented. I had also presented the curriculum with an FCAT friendly approach. We identified the benchmarks that the students are responsible for in Reading, Math, Writing and demonstrated how the WMDC addresses the needs. Most of all Character Education and inclusion of students with mental and physical "gifts" and the "at risk" student. It is amazing how the music teachers take ownership of their craft when we examine why music is in schools and how to effectively communicate the skills students are demonstrating, performing, and creating to fellow students, parents, fellow faculty, and the administration. Is it possible that the WMDC is the very epitome of the concept of leaving no child behind? I SAY AMEN.....DUDE!!! Perhaps that is what Jeb and George are missing.....Drums. Yeah they need some really good Kpanlogo.

I began the school year with more students than ever wanting to participate in the World Music Drumming Curriculum Classes at Parkway. Again, I find myself teaching 5 classes a day, 5 days a

week, for 18 weeks twice a year. This year, however, due to boundary changes we have a 85% African-American population and about 60% of the whole is level 1 or 2. I teach 196 "at risk" students a day. Largest class is 45, smallest class is 35. Has is taken a while for the "village" to come to order.....yes, but is has in a big way. I teach a club after school for the students that HAVE to drum. Most could not get in my class due to scheduling conflicts. We performed for the Broward Parenting and Counselors association Conference. They were impressed with the way in which the students carried themselves and performed. We performed BOBOBO(pardon the spelling) and Ensemble #1. We then performed for the Arts Teacher of the Year ceremony at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts. The students were excited about performing on a stage that they had seen big name acts on and it was they that night that would entertain. It was interesting having the World Music Drumming Ensemble side by side with a middle school jazz band. When the house went to black we began the BOBOBO. When the light came up on stage you could hear the audience gasp in awe! We then performed RHUMBA IYESA and BEMBE. The students did awesome! The jazz band that performed in-between our numbers was freaked out by the sound and intensity of the drum ensemble and the percussion section sat with jaws dropped. Following the ceremony there was a reception. I had to see some people and my students went to the reception ahead of me. I arrived and the students had said that so many people had sought them out to compliment their performance. They were so proud of themselves and rightly so. For my students where I teach, that was worth the tough days of "at risk" teaching and seeing them take pride in THEMSELVES is what I live for. All of the classes performed at the World Music Drumming Concert on 11/6/03. That night ROCKED! One sixth grade class performed ensemble #3 with Banuwa and Zangalewa. Another sixth grade class performed Teakwe(a drum and xylophone ensemble). 7th and 8th graders performed Reggae Talk, ensemble #4 with WATER COME ON ME EYE on the pan drums, Rumba Iyesa' into Bembe with Ise Oluwa, Bobobo with AYELIVE and Samba Batucada. It was a wonderful night of sharing with the parents what we do in our class. Why we do what we do and how it positively affects the learning in other classes and improves their learning skills. By taking apart ensembles and demonstrating parts and having the audience perform timelines and sing drum parts as well as sing the responses to the songs, the parents begin to buy into education in their child's school. I always tell my students "Your success is my mission." As music teachers we become the person that is giving their kids the GOOD stuff. As a side note, having the parents from Caribbean sing along on Water was magical. Numerous parents and

fellow teachers have stopped me and said how much fun they had at the concert and how much they learned about what their kids are learning. The next concert is in January and everyone is looking forward to that.

As for the classes we are almost done with the ensembles in the curriculum. We have 6 and 7 to go. We are now doing SIKYI and MUFASA'S MARCH. The next two weeks are a lessons in thinking(algebraically, geometrically, spatially), creating solos, understanding the importance of doing your task and taking pride in your job. I look forward to ending with Waters of Babylon. I still teach in Miami through a grant with the Miami Light Foundation. The residency this time is at the Intel Computer Clubhouse. Intel sponsors the clubhouses all over the globe. Kids can communicate with others globally and work on graphic design and create music in the computer studio. They share with all of the other clubhouses. It is refreshing for the students in this day of virtual this and that and computer this and that to do reality drumming.....not virtual.

I have taken enough of your bytes and must tend to my family now. Take care, Will, and thank you for the World Music Drumming Curriculum.

James Mader (WMDr TA), FL

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Thanks for forwarding these wonderful emails. I am student teaching at Oceanside High in a choral program and I am nearing the end of my teaching credential requirements, which will be finished in January. This summer I was able to refine my teaching of part of WMD by writing a 15 week thematic unit to go through part of the curriculum, writing for literacy as well as musical purposes. I was amazed that when I had to fill in each step of the unit (goals, objectives, skills, assessments and standards), WMD was well thought out at every turn. I am now able to appreciate how much you and the pilot group put into the curriculum now that I am evaluating and creating well-thought-out curriculum of my own. And it also helped the members of my credential class that whenever I had a presentation, the drums came in to enliven our lives.

When I started with my 6th graders this year, first we evaluated what good ensemble playing is, and how to help each other before they put a hand on the drums. They stood behind their chairs outside the circle and I had them say, "I am a great ensemble player" so that the thoughts that came in were direct and positive. Then they moved into the circle with intention.

During my student teaching, there was a young high school lady who never smiles holding a pair of drumsticks in her hand and getting into trouble during choir. I looked at her and said "You're a drummer, aren't you?" and she said, "No." I told her, "You are - you just don't know it yet....." The first smile I have ever seen from her crossed her face! I am looking forward to the day when I am teaching in middle or high school when I can really sink my teeth into all the ensembles instead of 1-3, but my elementary students are making an amazing showing for their age.

WMD continues to amaze me more and more. It's the unlimited well of the water of life.....

Hope you are well and happy! I look forward to coming to drum again someday soon!

Monica Loebel-Ward, CA

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In a message dated 9/4/03 5:27:55 PM, jason\_and\_anna@yahoo.com writes:

Will

So excited to see that this program is growing. I appreciate the e-mails. I first took the class when I lived in Michigan, started a World Music Drumming Class for 7th and 8th graders after I took it.

When I moved to Texas 2 years ago, I started this program (plus some Geography, cultural paper and project, STOMP, and some Middle Eastern Drumming) at the High school level. This year I now teach World Music Drumming at the Middle School as well. I have 2 sets of drums, so I don't have to transport them!

We have played at the Multi-Cultural Festival here for the last 2 years. I have had many people, including other music teachers, administration, and parents, tell me how neat a program this is.

Thanks for doing what you do!

Anna Fuqua, TX

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In a message dated 9/4/03 6:31:52 PM, corno11915@optonline.net writes:

I am very excited to begin the curriculum again this fall. Not only am I working with students in my middle school, but the Hoff-Barthelson Music School (a prominent community music school) has obtained the drums for me to use in a "musicianship" (beginning theory) class once a week for 5th and 6th graders who study privately in the school. This group will probably really take off as these kids are motivated as well as musically interested. I will keep you posted.

Still keeping the beat,  
Karen Froehlich, Cortlandt, NY

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In a message dated 9/5/03 11:54:25 AM, dietrich79@hotmail.com writes:

I just wanted to let you know about my best day ever with WMD!  
today Friday 9/5, my 8th graders finished the 2nd to last lesson of Ensemble 1 early so i asked if anyone knew the parts well enough that they could lead the group. i had a bunch of kids who thought they could but they were shy. then i had 3 boys try and they did AWESOME. The best part about it is 2 of them are very low students, one almost did not make it to 8th grade last year and the 3 guy is a 15 year old 8th grader who will turn 16 during this school year. he was held back this past year. They knew every part from the conversation between the high and low drums and the Gankogui part which they learned today! it was the best thing i have ever done!

Thank you so much!

Sarah Dietrich Milwaukee Academy of Science downtown  
Milwaukee, WI

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In a message dated 9/10/03 5:17:22 PM, juliek@new.rr.com writes:

9/27 I will be presenting units 1&2 to 55 members of a community organization at a "Caring and Sharing" conference which really could be called team building and how to get along as co-workers. Believe

me we will sing "Peace, peace will come, let it begin with me." I couldn't think of a better closing for my 90 minute time slot.

Julie Kaye, Marinette, WI

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In a message dated 9/10/03 6:24:10 PM, pmahigi1@nycap.rr.com writes:

I had a seventh grade class (who did 10 weeks of drumming last year with Jolene) today. I told them how level two could jump in with any ensemble after the timeline was played for one "measure". They were so pumped to prove that they could do it and they did. *It was great.* Thanks for everything!!!

Peter Mahigian, NY

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In a message dated 9/10/03 6:59:17 PM, morrisl@baker.k12.mt.us writes:

Our local extension service is planning a Positive Choices Day with our middle school students, and I've been asked to do some half hour drumming workshops. I plan to do some echoing, question and answers and call and responses and relate these experiences to everyday dealings with our fellow human beings. I'll use the poem "When I Get Mad I Beat My Drum," to focus on positive means of getting our emotions in control.

Laura Morris

Baker, Montana

PS I am happy to report our drum collection in the Baker elementary schools is growing. Last spring I was disappointed when our superintendent announce that each teacher had only \$150 to spend. I spent most of my allotment on a single small tubano, but held a concert in which I appealed to the audience for donations to help buy a couple more. We raised enough money to buy a middle-sized tubano. I was excited when I informed our superintendent.

When he realized how serious I was about using the drums in my classes, he decided to find moneys to purchase a large tubano. We have now doubled our collection of tubanos since last spring.

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In a message dated 9/23/03 5:07:47 AM, janflynn@comcast.net writes:

We have our first gig of the year with the Oxford Middle School "Thunder Drummers"! We're going to play at the Farm Bureau's annual dinner on Thursday night! (How cute is that?) The community LOVES

these kids that drum and play and sing.

Jan Flynn, Shelby MI

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In a message dated 10/22/03 7:53:59 AM, dwhitney@Holy-Comforter.org writes:

I have an exciting experience to share with you. It WAS personally one of the most fulfilling times of my teaching career (since 1964!) I owe it all to the Drum Workshops and you!

I teach piano in the afternoons and we frequently use the drums for rhythmic study (and emotional joy too!). I had, due to a schedule mix-up, 2 first graders and 2 fifth graders together yesterday. I sat down, told them all to go to a drum, and declared Alyssa the teacher (fifth grade). I then became invisible to them, because they totally ignored me for 30 minutes!

Alyssa proceeded to assign parts (using four different drums), lead them in improv and build a four part drum ensemble! One was on the beat, two played patterns which she created and showed them, and one improvised. I sat in total admiration and awe, because I realized I was watching them do what I did in class, complete with reminders about proper drum technique! (e.g.: "Now remember: hot stove! Hot stove!")

The Lauren took over, and did equally well. The 2 girls were patient, took into account the first graders' limitations and the results were as good as anything we have done in class! None of the four girls looked to me for anything! And that was good!

It was inspiring and humbling. I felt as if I were watching interns and I was, to be quite blunt, very proud!

I have also realized this year that we are moving MUCH faster in 6th grade and I attribute it to the fact that I began working on the basic patterns and techniques in 5th grade. I can only imagine what I will have in a couple of years, since I am introducing those patterns and techniques beginning in Grade Two!

Thanks again for the great program! I can't wait until next summer!

Diane Whitney, Tallahassee, FL

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November 3, 2003

Hi Will,

Just wanted to give you an update on my WMD classes.

I just finished nine weeks of WMD with three 8th-grade classes. As a finale, we performed our music and songs for the school kids and parents in two different assemblies.

I had 3 different 8th grade classes to teach, and each class was a little different from the other. The 5th period class was the regular, happy group. The 6th period class had a more special needs kids, and a lot of big ornery boys. The third class had a lot of instrumental kids, somewhat refined and talkative.

For our performance, each class chose an ensemble to play and sing. My 6th period class did Take Time in Life. Check this out - one of my big tough boys offered to sing the entire song, solo. So he did. Three of the boys played xylophone/bells. Another girl sang a solo, too. The rest all played drums. I think they were the best performers of all, considering that I had to get on their cases about 10 times each class.

My 7th period class did Ensemble 3 with Banuwa and Saturday Night on Xylophones. They did very well, no problem. They even loosened up enough to have fun.

My 5th period class walked in on the first day, wanting to sing. So a bunch of the boys sang The Banana Boat Song along with Ensemble 4 (I'm not sure how authentic it was, but they had a great time and all the girls danced). We had a blast. My 5th period guys decided 2 seconds before the assembly to all do the spoken part to Funwa Alafia together (with my heart, I welcome you) and were the hit of the whole performance.

When we performed, I sat ALL the classes together in three curving rows of about 25-27 each, kind of like a band set-up. The front row would be the performing class, playing the drums or xylophone parts. All of the other kids behind them were the singers. **Now, this is the part where the moon turned blue, and I checked to see if pigs were flying.** They all sang together, every song - even for the school performance. On the first day of class, when I told that they we would be singing and playing the music of Africa and the Caribbean, they looked at me like, "Yeah, right!"

Sitting them in 3 rows gave them confidence, and strength in numbers. Because all the 8th graders were lined up together, none of them were in the audience laughing at each other. None of the 6th or 7th graders dared to laugh either, because all the 8th graders were looking out at the audience and would catch any of the younger kids making fun of them. Of course, no one made fun of anyone because they all thought it was so cool.

They blew away the entire school population. Even better, they blew me away. I don't honestly know how I got them all to sing, but on the last day of class, I took an exit poll (say one thing about the class, and get a Halloween treat). Many of them remarked that they honestly liked the songs.

The kids also said they loved playing the drums and other percussion equipment, liked learning about new cultures, liked learning to play the xylophone and bells, and really liked not having to do dumb worksheets and word puzzles about music.

I will also send some of the "press" we have gotten over the last few weeks (happy, happy administrators!). Even better, the reporters captured the essence of the class and reported correctly.

One of the reporters who came to our final spent two years in Ghana in the Peace Corps. He was totally amazed to see our suburban kids playing authentically. He had a blast, and will be getting together with me to coordinate some ideas.

A few ideas that I came up with during the last 9 weeks:

Fun Game: "Don't break the chain" - one student comes up to the Ngoma and plays an echo pattern. He or she plays about 4 - 5 times. In the meantime, the next student has come up and is standing alongside the first, ready to play when the first kid stops. Don't stop! Don't break the chain! We go around the whole class, keeping in the two-beat pattern, and the kids focus so hard on not breaking the chain.

Class Projects: Each student had to complete a project for their grade. They had a choice of one of three projects to work on. 1. Make an instrument and tell whether it was an idiophone, etc., describe how it was made, and play it. 2. Write a drum ensemble using complementary rhythms and teach it to the class. Write it down in our

"class notation". 3. Write a "drum story" around one of the ensembles they learned (like the Safari Rap.)

Class notation: I had the kids write out every ensemble they learned using our special class notation which has a grid square for every beat. As you can see, parts line up to the time line. This is another way of the students showing understanding of what they have learned, and helps them visually recognize that certain parts line up against each other.

<b>Cowbell</b>	clang		clang		clang		clang	
<b>Gankogui</b>	hi	low	off		hi	low	off	
<b>Med Drum</b>	low			low	hi	low		low
<b>High Drum</b>		hands			off			keep the rhythm
	go-ing							
<b>Low Drum</b>	low		hi	low		hands		off

I'm not sure if I was typical or not, but in a 9 week time period, we learned the first four ensembles, spent 3 – 4 class days demonstrating our projects, and about a week polishing the ensembles and songs for our performance.

When I do the class next year, I think I will be able to pace it a little better, and think that the kids will be able to get to ensemble 5 and 6.

On the last day of class, the kids asked me if they were going to have free time since they had had their performance the day before. I told them no, we still have stuff to learn. I made up a quick ensemble using some of the techniques and rhythms that Josh taught us in Gahu, and then taught them "Dance for the Nations" as a round.

I had a great time with these kids. Since this was a new school for me, the WMD program helped me fit into a new situation and come out on top. The kids, parents, administrators were very happy. One of the 8th grade teachers told me that this is exactly what the kids in our school needed.

I started the 5th grade music classes today. We will be doing Recorder Karate for about 5 weeks (learn a song, earn a yarn belt to tie on your recorder) and then move on to the drumming.

Will, I want to thank you and all the other contributors for putting this curriculum together. As a band teacher, the thought of teaching general music was absolutely frightening - especially to 8th graders in a new school, new job and new situation. Each day I felt invigorated, and more confident in myself. It made me realize that I **am** a good teacher, and helped me remember what I love about teaching - inspiring kids to be better, to learn more, and to understand and accept others with all their differences.

Keep in touch and keep the music coming!

Jan Weiland  
Darien, IL

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In a message dated 8/30/03 7:10:21 AM, LDMolnar writes:

I was at the Leesburg, Va. workshop this summer and thoroughly enjoyed it. My principal had sent me after I gave her a copy of the teacher's book for World Music Drumming and she was fully supportive of this new direction for our school. We ordered package B from West Music and the drums arrived 3 days before school opened on Aug. 11. The students enrolled in the classes were in awe. After 3 weeks of school the students have mastered many techniques and have shown improvement in listening and teamwork. The 7th grade group is also involved with helping a mentally challenged class that comes to visit and work with us every 10 days.

The principal stopped by to listen at day 8 and was amazed by what the students had accomplished and the obvious fun they were having in an educational setting. She then went to the superintendent of the school system and insisted this lady give us a visit. She did yesterday and is completely sold on the program. She told my principal she wants this in every middle school. She was amazed at how intently the students watched me during the Echo part of the lesson and also while we were doing Ensemble 1. I had 2 xylophones set up and one of our biggest troublemakers in the school (he is repeating 8th grade) volunteered to play and did it perfectly. He even helped the other student who volunteered with a section that was giving him trouble.

We have a rough population at the school and my biggest supporters are the fellows who would rather do gang signs than be in a class listening to a teacher. I have absolutely no problem with them and they keep things moving and interesting. Their rhythmic abilities

amaze me. If I presented sheet music to them they would be lost and causing trouble but guiding them through this program and giving them time to work together on their own ensembles has provided them with a place to succeed and feel good about themselves. In the past I have done regular general music with this population and it was a constant struggle. This program has been nothing short of amazing. The students get to class on time and immediately are at work. They respond to the "call to class" and we begin. The period goes too quickly but we get much done.

I wanted to let you know how things were going. We are in the midst of the annual school fundraiser and the principal told me on Thursday that the first purchase she makes with the profits are 10 more drums. Thank you for developing this program and for the workshop. I am thrilled to be a part of this successful program.

Debra Molnar  
Lowes Grove Middle School  
Durham, NC  
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In a message dated 9/2/03 8:25:27 PM, Majorskale writes:

Dear Will,

Out in Villa Park (IL) today, something amazing happened, something never before seen in my life time!

What was this miraculous occasion, you ask?

It was EIGHTH GRADERS singing the "Peace Song" without moaning and groaning, enjoying themselves, getting into it. Not only did they SING the Peace Song, they sang the unison part along with the counter melody while playing the shortened version of Ensemble 1.

Even more amazing, we have only had 4 days of music class. I was the only teacher to get to curriculum the first day of school.

"And on the first day, we drummed." We did, we really did!

I will have the 8th graders every day for nine weeks. I am probably the only teacher in the State of Illinois who looks forward to teaching 8th graders every day. We are having a blast!

I am the band teacher whose school district lost a referendum, and had to make massive cuts in the budget. I was supposed to teach general music in my former school district, but after the drum class, I was hired by another school district to teach band and general music.

I know that having the drum curriculum under my belt is what helped me get hired. The superintendent's secretary is a parent of an 8th grader, I later found out, and she was blown away by the drum curriculum when I explained it to her. Thanks to my enthusiasm about the drumming class, I got hired by a really nice school district and got a raise, too.

Again, thanks for sharing everything with me. I will keep in touch as the year progresses.

Jan Weiland  
Villa Park, IL

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