

## NETMCDO 2010 Conference Sessions Part 1 (open space session reports in separate document)

*The opening conference session had several goals: to meet each other, to work with the kinds of financial issues that music endeavors face these days, and to consider how schools might help students to develop skills appropriate for those issues.*

*So we started by working in small teams with brief case studies, each team acting as a music endeavor facing financial challenges. The assignment was to make as long a list as possible of ways to meet the challenge. Only a brief time (under 10 minutes) was allotted for this, so groups had to work very fast. After generating their lists, the teams then considered the processes they had used to create ideas; they made another list of kinds of thinking they had used. Then all the participants worked together to make big lists (given here) of the kinds of thinking they had used, and of obstacles to the process.*

### **Small group scenarios--used in brainstorming exercises**

**# 1 You are the Executive Committee of a community music school** that has lost 20% of its 600 students in the past year due to the lousy economy. Develop recommendations for the Board about how to reduce expenses and how to increase revenue. (The Executive Committee consists of the chief administrator and leading board members.)

**# 2 A touring vocal quartet** (self-managed) pays its players salaries (the mainstay of their income), about \$30K each per year. Of this salary, about 30% (\$10K) of each player's pay comes from their educational "outreach" work in the NYC public schools. Most of this work was cut last year. Come up with a plan for the quartet—and for the individual members—that keeps them together as a group and still bringing home salaries. (Feel free to invent the other scenarios for the extra income each player brings in.) You are the members of the quartet (no matter how big your team is.)

**# 3 You are the senior staff in charge of an orchestra**, and you have been unable to raise the necessary donations or unable to sell enough tickets this year, so financially, the orchestra is in trouble. The board (who are your boss) says you can either cut \$100,000 from next year's budget, or shut down, putting the orchestra out of business. Develop a plan to present in response to the board.

**#4 Chamber music series.** You are volunteer board members who run a 10-concert chamber music series without professional staff. You have been developing a plan to hire a part-time administrator, but the hard times have reduced your donated income (from individuals, businesses, and foundations) by 30%. Develop possible plans for reducing expenses and for increasing revenues.

**#5 Music Entrepreneurship Program** at a university is 3 years old, just starting to make a name for itself. You are the Director of the program, and you developed the program for performance majors. The university has asked all programs to cut 20%, and in addition all faculty and staff face a 10% wage reduction. How will you manage the cuts? Develop plans to present to the university.

**#6 Your Internet Music Download Service** is about to launch, but the business plan no longer looks realistic in this economy. You are the investors, and are nervous about the \$20,000 you have invested. The founders are your young relatives. Without an extra \$10,000, the business may not be able to launch. Next month the business is

supposed to add new hires to design and launch the web site. What to do? Develop recommendations and/or requirements for the founders: what do you want them to do to adapt their business plan to current realities?

**#7 A Jazz Presenter** has grown a respected series at a local museum, but the board of directors of the museum, in a cost-cutting move, has decided not to fund the concert series any more. The jazz community is outraged, but the museum board sticks by its decision. 90% of the series funding comes from the museum, along with venue and publicity. There's lots of enthusiasm for continuing the concerts somehow. What will you, the organizers of the jazz series, do?

**#8 You are a freelance musician who** combines teaching, performing with local orchestras, and other part-time performance work with selling real estate. The declining economy means that all your income streams are shrinking. You develop a health problem, and the landlord raises your rent. You'd like to spend more time playing music. Create a workable plan that leads toward that goal.

*After working in these small groups, we considered the kinds of thinking we had used in working on these scenarios. We came up with:*

**Kinds of thinking used in effectively brainstorming solutions for career dilemmas:**

Synergetic  
Prior Experience  
Anecdotal  
Collaborative  
Student-Generated  
No Editing  
Naïve  
General  
Time-Limited  
Cross Disciplinary  
Low Risk  
Goal-Oriented  
Abundant  
Generative  
Expansive  
Practical  
Impersonal  
Detachment  
Attentive  
Non Hierarchical

**We then considered what promotes this kind of thinking:**

No Ground rules  
No Resources  
No Radical Solutions  
Creative Enough?  
No Role Assignments  
No Textbook Approaches  
No Spying

Not Analytic  
No Categories  
No Time/Reflection  
Development  
No Independent Scribe

**What were obstructions to working with these problems?**

Tangents  
Proximity/Shape  
Racket  
Loquaciousness  
Imprecision  
Jargon  
Preparation  
Preconception  
Self-Interest  
Multiple Perspectives/Agendas or Politics  
No Time Frame  
Criticism  
Value Systems

*After a break, participants formed new teams to tell each other how they had learned one of these ways of thinking. Then the teams, again in a very short time, generated lists of ways the curriculum could help students learn these ways to think and approach real-world problems. Afterward the full group of participants listed their favorite curriculum ideas.*

**We brainstormed for components and attributes of the ideal curricula for learning these ways of approaching problems:**

Projects:

Diverse Groups  
Multiple Ways of Thinking

Opportunity for Failure:

Low Risk

Time for Reflection

Funding for Projects

Collaborate with Other Schools

Community Building-type experiences:

Switch Instruments

Vegetable Orchestra

([http://www.gemueseorchester.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=46](http://www.gemueseorchester.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=46))

Obituaries (students writing their own--what do they want to accomplish in life)

Shadowing

Improvisation

Role-Playing

Marketing

Networking:

Cross-Disciplinary

Alums

Real World Outcomes

Collaborate:

Other Arts  
Other Majors  
Disciplines  
Service Learning  
Co-op  
Successful Profiles: Stories  
Apprentice:  
    Solving Problems  
Interviewing:  
    In and Out of Field  
Teaching  
Fun  
Different Ground Rules

*In the next session of the conference, six conference participants facilitated mini-workshops called "Teachable Moments," demonstrating interactive and creative learning strategies. The sessions were:*

**Survive and Thrive!                      with Dawn Bennett**

A feather boa can help create a sustainable career in music. Find out how in this colorful and novel activity that will feature a smorgasbord of props to help participants engage in creative idea-sharing about building a successful music career.

**Play Time!                                with Kathy Covert**

Theatre improvisation is an excellent imagination catalyst. Fun can ignite inventive courage. From stay-in-your-seat exercises to a combination of speech and movement games, we will experiment with the idea of "play" as a conduit for better performance, promotion, and production.

**What's Wrong?                            with David Cutler**

From "my boyfriend broke up with me" to "health care," grouped participants will stimulate creative dialogue and highlight meaningful opportunities for musicians as they brainstorm problems facing various communities (college students, senior citizens, our country, etc.). Participants will then be challenged to imagine musical/artistic solutions that help solve their assigned problems.

**Composing Your Life                    with Mary Kinder Loïselle**

Create a holistic context for designing a balanced, fulfilling and successful career. Participants will use The Wheel of Life to rate their current levels of satisfaction in 8 different areas of life (career, health, family, recreation, etc.) and identify "What's Most Important to Me" with the ultimate goal of a single, integrated career/life plan.

**How Do You Rate Music Careers?    With Janet Rarick**

Participants will rate by stream-of-consciousness a list of diverse music careers. Group discussions on consensus and ratings criteria will follow. This activity helps participants gain a wider perspective on their futures and gain insight into the importance of considering how their talents might fit the needs of society.

**I Have a Dream (Job)                    with Thresa Swadley**

From Music Entrepreneurship Czar to Dean or to Director of Development, participants will pick their "dream job" from a set of current job advertisements and discuss what it will take to get the job and why or why not the position is truly a good fit.

*After the Teachable Moment workshops, everybody gathered to list the strategies that presenters had used to foster learning. (The idea here was that learning depends not only on the teacher or presenter, but also on the receptivity and engagement of the learner—so what helps to foster receptivity and engagement?)*

**What strategies did presenters use to create an atmosphere conducive to learning?**

Participatory

Props

Smaller Groups

Safe Environments

Short Assignments

Changing Perspectives

Fun

Enthusiasm

Familiarity

Structure

Pacing

Analysis

Clear Instruction

Unexpectedness/Surprise

Meaningful/Relevant

Broad Applicability/Holistic Approach

Open Ended Questions

Creative/Innovative

Playfulness

Visual

Authenticity

Performance

Physicality

Passion

Empowered