Using the Guitar to Teach & Motivate Your “Tween” General Music Students
Are you excited about music class?

How do you motivate the unmotivated?
“If there is anything that we wish to change in a child we should first examine it and see whether it is not something that could be better changed in ourselves.”

-Carl Jung
My Observations

A. Students are “Too Cool” to sing
B. Classroom keyboards & percussion are too childish
C. Hands-off book learning approach is boring
D. Classroom texts out of touch with the modern “tween”
E. Music class has no relevance to student
Guitar Class
A. Embrace their impact – They are here to stay
B. Relate physical learning to the video games
C. Teach them “riffs” from the video games
Education

A. Take an MENC/GAMA/NAMM sponsored Teaching Guitar Workshop: June 12\textsuperscript{th} – 16\textsuperscript{th} in Gahanna, Ohio

B. Learn the fundamentals of Guitar Playing (easier than you think)
   i. Local music store or guitar teacher or friend
   ii. Internet – websites and YouTube
   iii. Itunes & Garageband – Apple Software!
C. Find someone with Guitar Hero or Rock Band, .......and try it!

D. Listen to “Guitar Hero” type songs to find correlation to concepts you already teach.
   
   i. Syncopation: **Viva La Vida** by Coldplay, **Tom Sawyer** by Rush
   
   ii. Call & Response: **My Generation** by The Who, **Raise Your Hands** by Bon Jovi

   iii. Ostinato: **Message in a Bottle** by The Police, **Sunshine of Your Love** by Cream

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Impact to the Music Class

A. Cooperative Learning
   i. All students share a guitar with their partner
   ii. Problems are addressed by partner before addressed by teacher
   iii. Learning is reinforced by repetition with partner
   iv. Students with previous knowledge are classroom “Guitar Heroes”
Impact to the Music Class

B. Students are always involved – with or without a guitar
   i. Students are expected to be focused – even without the guitar in their hands
   ii. Students clap rhythms, call out notes names, and sing (yes sing!) without guitar
   iii. Assist those with guitars

C. Enthusiasm & Attitude
   i. Students are eager to come to music
   ii. Students are willing to follow all directions in order to play
   iii. Students find value in their accomplishments
   iv. Unsolicited parent comments on how much “Johnny” likes music.
Impact to the Music Class

D. Integration of Standards (some ideas)
   i. Historical, Cultural & Social Contexts

   - Pick the right book, and part of this is already there for you!
   - Introduce Guitar Legends alongside “Idols” from hundreds of years ago!
     - *Songs from the Labyrinth* – by Sting
     - *Liverpool Oratorio* – by Paul McCartney
     - *Fantasies & Delusions* – by Billy Joel
Impact to the Music Class

D. Integration of Standards (some ideas)
   ii. Creative Expression & Communication

   - Singing and Playing should take care of itself
   - Students will read music from the very beginning
     - After teaching 3 notes, it’s time to improvise!
       - Best of You – by Foo Fighters
       - Where is the Love – by The Black Eyed Peas
         - Just the Two of Us – by Will Smith
       - Hallelujah – by Leonard Cohen (many versions available)
Impact to the Music Class

D. Integration of Standards (some ideas)
   iii. Analyzing and Responding

- Students should still learn proper notation and terminology, but mix in some real world music slang ie: gig, lead sheet, axe
- Students can play with emotion – Dynamic and Tempo are possible
- After teaching a I, IV, V progression, have students listen to pieces
  - *I Love Rock & Roll* – by Joan Jett
  - *Hound Dog* – by Elvis Presley
  - *Rock Around the Clock* – by Bill Haley
Impact to the Music Class

D. Integration of Standards (some ideas)
   iv. Valuing Music/Aesthetic Reflection

- Students may not express a love for Beethoven, but will appreciate his music the first time they play “Ode to Joy” successfully
- Students can reflect with their partner after playing for a critique
- Connect form and style with similar pieces from old made new
  - Pictures at an Exhibition – by Emerson, Lake & Palmer
  - Hook – by Blues Traveler
  - Love of My Life – by Dave Matthews & Carlos Santana
Impact to the Music Class

D. Integration of Standards (some ideas)

v. Connections, Relationships & Applications

- Students will multi-task – holding and playing the guitar while reading notes & chords and singing music
  - National & World history is visited through the song styles, origins and composers
- Discuss jobs in the music industry including: performer, composer, publisher, arranger, engineer, etc.
- Home recording, arranging publishing, etc. with common software applications
  - Even elementary students can do it
    - **Enter Sandman** – by Metallica
    - **Signs** – by Five Man Electrical Band / Tesla
      - **School House Rock**
Grants & Resources

A. Use your local music store
B. Grandmother’s attic
C. Classroom/Curriculum funds
D. Local grants and agencies – Especially those for literacy
E. Professional Organizations – NEA, MENC, ASCAP, NAMM
F. Internet based grant sites
   www.grantsalert.com
   www.schoolgrants.org
   www.donorschoose.org
Supplies

A. Guitars – models, styles, sizes, etc.
B. Supplies – what is necessary to get started
C. Texts – which do I use, and why

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Conclusion

A. What teaching guitar has done for my 5\textsuperscript{th} & 6\textsuperscript{th} Grade students
B. Don’t be afraid to embrace video games to hook students
C. Getting started is easier than you might think
D. Questions?