

Name of Preservice Teacher: Stephanie Mueller
Cooperating Teacher: Betsy Werner and Paul Soulek
School: St. John Lutheran, Seward, NE
Subject and Grade Level: 5th music; 6th-8th band; 7th-8th choir
Projected Beginning and End Dates: 1/19/2012 – 2/15/2012

Date	Hours	Description
1/19/2012	45 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> observed choir rehearsal sang with women's chorus
1/20/2012	30 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> worked one-on-one with two 5th grade flutists practiced with 5th grade choir
1/22/2012	1 hour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sang with 5th grade choir in church
1/23/2012	1 hour 45 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> worked on pitch-matching with individual students played in 6th grade band played in 7th-8th grade band
1/24/2012	45 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> observed choir rehearsal sang with women's chorus
1/26/2012	45 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> observed choir rehearsal
1/27/2012	35 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> worked with two 5th grade flutists
1/30/2012	1 hour 55 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> made posters of the verses of the hymn of the month worked one-on-one with 8th grade flutist
1/31/2012	50 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sang with choir rehearsal
2/2/2012	50 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> taught melody and words of new hymn to choir
2/3/2012	35 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> worked one-on-one with two 5th grade flutists
2/9/2012	1 hour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reviewed new hymn and taught new verses conducted "Fairest Lord Jesus"
2/10/2012	35 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> worked one-on-one with two 5th grade flutists
2/12/2012	1 hour 30 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> conducted and played with 7th/8th grade band at the St. John 8:30 am service
2/12/2012	1 hour 55 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> voice tested individual 5th grade students played with 7th/8th grade band
2/14/2012	45 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> taught a setting of "Jesus Loves Me" conducted "Festival Sanctus"
2/17/2012	30 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> finished voice testing individual 5th grade students

Executive summary:

I had a fast but incredibly educational experience in the past month. I completed all of my hours in just four weeks and was able to observe and work with three different teachers and three different ensembles. Primarily I worked with Betsy Werner in 5th grade general music and 6th-8th grade band, but I also worked with Paul Soulek and Angie Ratcliffe in 7th-8th grade choir. I was able to observe a lot of important teaching techniques that are specific to performance ensembles and general music classrooms.

One of the most interesting experiences was the individual voice testing for the 5th grade students. In a different room from the rest of the class, I would sing some short melody patterns on the word “la” and ask a student to sing back to me what they heard. Then we would sing “Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow” together. Some of the students had excellent pitch matching skills, including some of the boys. A difficult aspect of pitch matching with adolescent boys is that many of them think that singing in their higher voice, or singing at all, is not a masculine activity. Some of the boys I worked with tried to sing in a low voice even though their voices have not changed, and some of them seemed embarrassed at singing in a high voice. I was surprised, then, to hear that many of the boys had appropriately developed pitch matching skills in a high voice, better than some of the girls. Of course, this is a small testament to the excellent teaching of Betsy Werner and Paul Soulek. Another interesting part of this experience was that some of the students could accurately sing back to me what they heard me sing, but when we sang the hymn they did not sing it correctly. This indicates that they certainly have the ability to match pitch if they are actively engaged in learning a new melodic pattern, but when they sing something that is already technically familiar to them they are not actively listening to themselves.

I was also given the opportunity to teach two hymns to the 7th-8th grade choir. The first one was called “These Are the Holy Ten Commands,” originally written by Martin Luther to teach the Ten Commandments to catechumens. I began teaching the hymn by working on the most difficult sections of the melody. Then the students sang the entire melody a few times through on the neutral syllable “doo” and I fixed a few trouble spots. Then I talked with the students about the specific verses of the hymn and how it ends by stating that we are incapable of keeping God’s Law, so God sent Christ to win our salvation for us. Finally I had the students sing through the first verse with the words. This lesson plan worked very well and both Mr. Soulek and Mrs. Ratcliffe were very pleased with my teaching. They were especially happy that I talked about the meaning of the verses and why Martin Luther wrote them the way he did. This successful lesson plan gave me encouragement and affirmation that I have good potential as a future music educator.

The second hymn I taught was a setting of “Jesus Loves Me.” I worked with just the boys first, teaching them their part, and then I worked with the girls. This day was not nearly as successful as the other hymn. The boys immediately started acting up until Mr. Soulek walked in the room. They were reluctant to sing for me and it was a little difficult for me to teach them their part because I cannot sing quite as low as their notes went. I also did not have enough time to teach the girls both of their parts; we only got through the alto part. I felt flustered through most of the lesson, partially because the boys were being disrespectful. However it was definitely a good learning experience, maybe even more so than the other hymn I taught more successfully. I put more planning time into the first hymn because I was really nervous about it, and the planning definitely paid off.

Overall, it was a very busy, jam-packed experience but the opportunity to observe three different teachers for three different types of music classes was incredibly useful and helpful. As I look towards student teaching next fall, I know that some of the teaching I observed and experienced in the last four weeks will definitely help me to plan lessons.