

Colleen M. Conway and Thomas M. Hodgman.
***Teaching Music in Higher Education.* Oxford: Oxford**
University Press, 2009. 256 pages. \$39.95.
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The expanding pedagogical literature has lacked a resource specifically for graduate students preparing to teach undergraduates for the first time.¹ Colleen M. Conway and Thomas M. Hodgman's book fills this gap laudably, and it is an invaluable resource no novice professor should be without. The book's thirteen chapters are divided into three parts. The first, "Course Planning and Preparation," begins with "Designing an Undergraduate Music Course," in which the authors establish the book's underlying philosophy of learner-centered teaching and address foundational concepts like instructional models and course goals. Chapter 2, "Assessment and Grading in Music Courses," explains the differences between these two types of evaluation and describes several types of assessments. Conway and Hodgman argue that student-generated rubrics reverse the role of traditional assessment to "encourage a focus on learning rather than the grade," while also allowing students to invest more in the course (p. 31). The third chapter, "Understanding the Learners," discusses various factors motivating a student's intellectual growth, as well as the roles played by motivation, gender, and culture in student learning. Throughout the book, the authors combine their experience with student-written vignettes, allowing novice instructors to understand the classroom from multiple perspectives and demonstrating that new professors teach more effectively if they hear and understand the rich polyphony of the classroom experience. Eight samples of syllabi conclude the book's first part. Since the samples from music education are considerably more detailed than those from other disciplines, the examples are somewhat uneven, but the

¹ James Davis's new collection *The Music History Classroom*, while still a significant resource for new teachers, addresses a more general audience of "graduate students, adjunct instructors, and full-time faculty." See James A. Davis, *The Music History Classroom* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), xxii.

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resources provided should help floundering rookies as they create their own documents.

The second part of the book, “Issues in Teaching and Learning,” opens with one of the book’s most substantive chapters. “Creating a Culture for Learning” tackles issues ranging from the formation of a teaching personality to the lived experience of power, control, and identity in the classroom. Detailed directions for a successful first class may alleviate a particular source of tension for fledgling educators (and perhaps for experienced hands as well). The chapter concludes with helpful suggestions regarding weekly class preparation, meaningful interactions with course materials, and strategies for resolving difficult situations. Chapter 6, “Instructional Strategies for Academic Courses,” addresses lectures, discussions, and writing assignments. While remaining firmly behind their learner-centered principles, the authors understand that most academic music courses rely primarily on lectures, meaning “it is [as] important . . . to develop and deliver a good lecture” as it is to “make lectures more engaging” (p. 107). The practical advice on planning and delivering lectures and leading discussions will help ensure success on both fronts, especially when augmented with material from Chapter 7, “Strategies for Active Learning in Music Classrooms.” The authors suggest several types of group work and problem-based instructional methods, stressing the link between learner-centered teaching and active learning.

One strength of the book is its wide applicability to anyone teaching music in a college setting. Though the authors step outside their areas of expertise with “Teaching Applied Music,” they draw extensively on comments from experienced colleagues about one-on-one instruction, a healthy studio culture, and the logistics of applied teaching. Part II concludes with “Learning Technology in Music Classrooms: A Catalyst for Deeper Learning and Creativity” by Mark Clague, who maintains that no matter what technology is used, it must serve an instructor’s larger educational goals. He provides examples from his own pedagogical practice, including listening blogs and the LivingMusic Project.² While the chapter contains many useful tips, I wish Clague had covered basic lessons that new teachers often learn the hard way, such as the necessity of preparing backups for instances when technology does not work according to plan.

Part III, “Growth in Teaching Practice and a Future in Higher Education,” reveals Conway and Hodgman’s broad conception of their topic, as they range from information about the hiring process in “The Job Search in Higher Education” to the link between reflection and development in “Learning from

2. Mark Clague, “Publishing Student Work on the Web: The LivingMusic Project and the Imperatives of the New Literacy,” *Journal of Music History Pedagogy* 2, no. 1 (2011): 61–80, <http://www.ams-net.org/ojs/index.php/jmhp/article/view/48/81>.

Student Feedback.”³ “Navigating a Music Career in Higher Education” includes a sample tenure and promotion document from the University of Michigan. Because novice teachers can be overwhelmed by the day-to-day running of their courses to the detriment of research and service, this chapter helps young professionals better understand their career’s expectations. The final chapter proposes a threefold method for “Professional Development and Improvement of Teaching”: reading, hearing (and discussing), and seeing. The authors implore tenured faculty and administrators to use their secure positions to support the growth of their junior colleague’s practice.

Conway and Hodgman use the apparatus of the book itself to demonstrate the cornerstones of superior teaching. Each part concludes with further reading, illustrating that the importance of diligently studying the pedagogical literature is a best practice. The end-of-chapter questions have a comparable function; while likely intended for classroom discussion, they are also suited for individual meditation, demonstrating the importance of thoughtful introspection about one’s teaching. The vignettes use students’ voices to reinforce the virtues of obtaining timely feedback about one’s course. Through these models, a beginning pedagogue will understand that research, reflection, and assessment are the necessary best practices for improving one’s teaching.

While I heartily recommend the book, I found three areas for criticism. The discussion of teaching larger classes could have been considerably expanded, or at least addressed with additional readings.⁴ In the second chapter, the topic of assessment seemed out of place given the authors’ endorsement of learner-centered principles in Chapter 1.⁵ A better illustration of learner-centered principles would have, at the very least, modeled the changing role of assessment by placing it after chapters devoted to “Understanding

3. The suggestion to include more frequent evaluations, such as Stephen Brookfield’s Critical Incident Questionnaire, is particularly welcome. For more on the Critical Incident Questionnaire, see S. D. Brookfield, *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995), Chapter 6, available at http://stephenbrookfield.com/Dr._Stephen_D._Brookfield/Critical_Incident_Questionnaire.html.

4. While the authors are correct to claim that “it is fairly rare for music courses to be extremely large,” they do observe that “survey courses for nonmajors” can often expand past the hundred-student mark (p. 132). These types of teaching experiences are particularly relevant to musicologists, and there can be fewer anxiety-inducing experiences for a brand-new professor than standing in front of 100+ students. Most of the suggested strategies presented in the book will work on a greatly expanded scale, but the issues of power and control are especially relevant.

5. One key aspect of learner-centered practice is a fundamental shift in the role of assessment. Formative and/or self- or peer-generated assessments become pivotal, while summative assessments (and the professorate that administers them) lose their controlling grip on the classroom. For more on assessment in learner-centered teaching, see Maryellen Weimar, *Learner-Centered Teaching: Five Key Changes to Practice* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 119–45.

the Learners” and “Creating a Culture for Learning.” Finally, the authors neglect adjunct instruction, a troubling omission since most current graduate students will spend at least a portion of their careers in such positions. When discussing the hiring process, tenure, and promotion, Conway and Hodgman assume that one has tenure-track employment. While this type of position is the likely goal of the book’s readership, the authors are remiss for omitting substantive consideration of the challenges of working as an adjunct lecturer.⁶ While effective pedagogical strategies and best practices will increase student learning regardless of the instructor’s professional level, ignoring the role of adjunct instructors in American universities paints an unrealistic picture of the business of college-level music instruction.

These issues aside, the book is an outstanding resource. Accessible writing, a solid basis in current research, affordability, and its singular standing as a work designed for graduate students in music make the book valuable for recent graduates, current students, and music (history) pedagogy courses. While rookie teachers heading into classrooms this fall would benefit from a copy, I would also recommend it for experienced professionals unfamiliar with the considerable literature on teaching and learning. *Teaching Music in Higher Education* can help form the bedrock of a long and successful teaching career.

6. For example, while the authors stress the importance of continuing education, they offer no suggestions for adjunct teachers lacking support and development programs. Many helpful suggestions have been made in the literature on adjunct teaching; for more, see Richard E. Lyons, *Best Practices for Supporting Adjunct Faculty* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007); Richard E. Lyons, *Success Strategies for Adjunct Faculty* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2003); and Bryan A. Booth and Lorri E. Cooper, *The Adjunct Faculty Handbook* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2010).