



**The TEACHER CENTER of Broome County**  
**Teacher Study Group Grant Award**  
**2003-2004**

**FINAL REPORT**  
**DOCUMENT PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES**

**STUDY GROUP TOPIC:** Expanding the Use of Technology in Music Education at Whitney Point High School

**GROUP MEMBERS:** Nancy Summers Kristen Gilbert

**The final report must be word-processed and submitted both in print and on disk using this form. Include information under each of the following headings.**

**Describe the initial goal of the group noting any adjustments that had to be made as time passed.**

**Describe the ACTION PLAN that the group followed.**

Our goal was to facilitate more effective, broader use of the technological resources we already have on hand, in order to engage students more actively in the learning process.

Minor adjustments had to be made in scheduling, to work around the custodial projects being done in the building. The only significant adjustment that had to be made was in the amount we were able to cover...When writing the initial grant proposal we decided on several topics we wished to address in the maximum 20 hours. The grant we received was for 16 hours. I guess we did a good job with the initial planning, because there was about 1 days worth of work we did not have time to do. We hope to be able to spend some individual time on those points before the school year starts.

We used our initial grant proposal topics list as an outline, scheduling specific topics to be addressed (in order of priority) on each of four, four-hour workdays.

**Describe how the action plan was implemented.**

On Day 1 we began by writing down our ACTION PLAN. We then took informal inventory of the hardware and software we already have access to through the department and the district. We also took time to 'share and compare' with each other the past uses of technology we had found particularly effective in the classroom.

On the subsequent work days we chose four years worth of sequential Music Theory lessons which can be done by both Chorus and Band students on computer. The lessons can be done either during the school day or at home. They are self correcting so the students gets immediate feedback and correction. They are also constructed in such away that the student must have 'mastered' each skill before being able to submit a report to the instructor. We decided on a minimum that would be acceptable for each of the four potential years a student could be in Chorus or Band. Two advanced, open-ended programs were then chosen which can be used by students who (a) finish the four levels with time to spare, (b) desire to learn more (c) need extra preparation for a Music Major in college.

We also learned how to use the Digital Mini Disk Recorders we each have, and determined the A to Z step by step process to go from (A) recording an individual student within the context of a large-group rehearsal to (Z) handing that student a portfolio CD.

Finally, we physically 're-arranged the furniture' by moving some of the computers to the Chorus Room, which will have more student 'traffic' than the Band room this year; and are using more of the kind of computer desks that enable students to use a piano-type keyboard for curriculum-specific applications.

**How has participating in this study group changed you as a teacher? Have any of your teaching practices changed?**

I feel much better about the quality of instruction I will be able to offer this year in chorus. I am more excited than ever about getting them started this year...the new technology pieces are both 'rigorous' AND a lot of fun! With only a small increase in daily teacher-time there will be a BIG increase in accountability.... I will know a lot more about each individual student's skills, progress and areas needing extra attention, and will have good data and 'hard evidence' to back up assessments in a field that, up to now, has been too subjective to explain to non-musician parents, counselors and administrators in a way they can really understand. \*\*

**What evidence is there that student achievement is improving as a result of participating in this study group? What kind of differences are you observing in your students?**

As the school year is still weeks away, of course we do not yet have proof of improved student achievement, but I can tell you what I anticipate based on many years of experience: I think the students will feel that more attention is being paid to them as individuals. They will appreciate the expanded curriculum...I believe they will have a greater sense of accomplishment and that all of them, from the least talented to the most gifted will have more confidence in themselves as musicians. . I think the students are going to have a sense of more direct participation in and more control over their musical training.... that they will feel more 'invested' in their own success and the success of the ensemble.

I anticipate a leap to a new high in the 'esprit de corps' of the Band and Chorus and in their musical performances as a result of the increased confidence of individual members.

**What evidence is there that the goals of the study group have/have not been met?**

Six out of seven of our initial grant application "**Topics to be addressed**" were very

specific, and can be checked off as being Done. In abbreviated form they were:

1. The informal inventory
2. share and compare past successes
3. learn how to use some recently acquired hardware and software
4. Develop lesson plans that include student use of technology
5. Improve physical arrangement of equipment for better student accessibility
6. Figure out how to use mini-disk recorder to assess individual members of large ensembles

The only topic we didn't get to was the last one: "Look for ways to include technology-supported pieces in more aspects of the curriculum" which basically meant: "After we finish with the Performing Ensembles, let's move to the other courses we teach, such as Music in Society, and see what we can come up with there in terms of students using more technology in the Lessons." We did not get to that. If we had been granted the fifth day, we would have begun to address that, but perhaps that would be better tackled as a separate project. Perhaps that could be the subject of a study program for *next* summer!

#### **Comment on the value of the study group process? Did it work for you?**

It was WONDERFUL! Every year we dream of all the great improvements we're going to make over the summer, and usually they don't really get off the ground. Having the little bit of extra incentive of the Structure required by the Grant process, as well as the financial reward, was all it took to get us in there, get down to business and really get some good work done. It worked VERY well for us. I think you have done a great job in asking for just the right amount of structure and accountability.....enough to get people focused and clear on their intentions and follow-through, but not so detailed and involved as to discourage people from wanting to apply and see the process through.

#### **How can we make the study group program better?**

I do not have a good answer for this. We both really felt we got a lot out of this grant and are very happy with what we were able to accomplish. The amount of paperwork is not

prohibitive, nor does it seem like unnecessary red tape. Of course more money would be nice, but it's enough to feel good about. Probably if you made each grant larger, meaning for more hours, you would not be able to give so many, but I guess if I were going to make a "Wish List", that's the one thing I would put on it. We could have very happily put in several more sessions. Thank you for this opportunity.

Nancy Summers  
Saturday, August 9, 2003