



**PERPICH**

TEACHING IN AND  
THROUGH THE ARTS

## PERPICH AT PLAY

by Jessica Leibfried

*“Tell me—I forget.  
Show me—I remember.  
Involve me—I understand.”  
(Chinese Proverb)*

This Chinese Proverb beautifully states what music educators have been doing for years—creating a culture of play. I use the term play in its broadest sense here: physically making music on an instrument, body, or with the voice and the spontaneous, organic, joyful way of investigation. Instead of telling or showing a student “this is a quarter note,” we’ve actively involved our students to experience the quarter note through their voice, instrument or body. We’ve guided them in exploring, improvising and creating with that quarter note, allowing students to “play” with concepts and construct meaning.

So, why aren’t we better at creating a culture of play for ourselves? We live and breathe active involvement and constructivism on a daily basis until it comes to our own professional development. All too often, teachers are given a task and a timeline (e.g. create a curriculum map for your course by next month) and told to create a product. We turn it in like an assignment and never look at it again. Yet it’s assumed that the creation of that document has somehow improved our teaching. If we’re lucky, a consultant comes during a staff development day and shows us how to work on this project. We may even create a fabulous document and learn something of value in the process. But, is that enough?

How can we as teachers, take charge of our professional development? How can we challenge ourselves to explore, think, reflect and seek out a sustained process of involvement in the daily duty that is professional development? Here’s a start:

Perpich Center for the Arts is the state agency for arts education in Minnesota. Located in Golden Valley, MN, Perpich is home to an arts high school (grades 11-12), and two institutions that serve teachers like you: a library of resources, and the professional development and research branch.

The Perpich library includes books for professional development, video and sound recordings, and student-friendly materials for your music room. These materials are available for checkout and can be mailed directly to you at no cost. The librarians are friendly and helpful and the collection is catalogued online so anyone in the state can find and request resources. Can’t find what you’re looking for in the Perpich library? Email me at [Jessica.leibfried@pcae.k12.mn.us](mailto:Jessica.leibfried@pcae.k12.mn.us).

The professional development branch has a staff of specialists in music, visual arts/media arts, dance, theater, and cultural context who regularly work with teachers all over the state. Staff members have assisted teachers in their work with the national and state standards, new frame-

works of curriculum design, arts in a cultural context, 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, integration, differentiation, and more. The professional development team also hires presenters from around the country to provide high-quality workshops on current topics. If you haven’t been getting updates on those workshops or you have questions regarding professional development or resources, email me at [Jessica.leibfried@pcae.k12.mn.us](mailto:Jessica.leibfried@pcae.k12.mn.us).

Happy teaching and learning to all of you and don’t forget to play!

*Jessica Leibfried is the State Music Education Coordinator for Perpich Center for the Arts. She earned her undergraduate degree in music education from St. Olaf College and her M.A. in music education with a concentration in Orff-Schulwerk from the University of St. Thomas. She specializes in elementary music education and is a violinist in the Northern Symphony Orchestra and Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra. Jessica has taught in Hong Kong, Japan and several districts in the Minnesota. As a member of the Perpich professional development team, she is focused on building relationships with teachers and administrators, connecting with professional music organizations, and creating new partnerships. ♪*