

## TURNING POINTS: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

[1] "Every middle grade school should offer a core academic program and should expect every student to complete that program successfully. The broad outlines of the curriculum are the responsibility of state and local school authorities. But middle grade educators can fashion a full academic program for all students that integrates English, fine arts, foreign languages, history, literature and grammar, mathematics, science, and social studies." [p. 42]

[2] "Completion of the core instructional program, however, should not be the only criterion of a successful middle grade experience. Middle grade schools must strive to offer each student opportunities to exhibit excellence and to gain the confidence and personal satisfaction of becoming expert or very good at something. For many young people, mastering the core academic program will provide these opportunities. For others, opportunities to exhibit excellence may lie outside the core program in exploratory courses or athletics, or outside the schoolhouse through youth service or other community-based activities. [p. 49]

[3] "The core middle grade curriculum can be organized around integrating themes that young people find relevant to their own lives. For example, separate courses in English, arts, history, and social studies might be grouped in to the humanities, organized around an integrating theme such as Immigration." [p. 48]

[4] "Grouping students by classes according to achievement level is almost universal in middle grade schools. . . . In practice, this kind of tracking has proven to be one of the most divisive and damaging school practices in existence. . . . Because minority youth are disproportionately placed in lower academic groups, tracking often serves to reinforce racial isolation in schools, helps to perpetuate racial prejudice among students, and may increase alienation toward school among lower achieving students. This consequence is especially damaging in the middle grades, when young people's impressions regarding the value of those racially and culturally different from themselves begin to become entrenched."

## PRINCIPLES WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR GENERAL MUSIC TEACHING:

[1] "The current emphasis on coverage of a large quantity of information must yield to an emphasis on depth or quality of the student's understanding. Schools can choose the most important principles and concepts within each subject, and concentrate instruction there." [p. 43]

[2] "Teachers will be called upon to promote a spirit of inquiry and to stimulate students to think about and communicate ideas. Far greater reliance will be placed on learning techniques that allow students to participate actively in discovering and creating new solutions to problems." [p. 43]

[3] "Cooperative learning has been shown to help students to learn course material faster and retain it longer and to develop critical reasoning power more rapidly than working along. Cooperative learning also requires students to get to know and work with classmates of different ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds, setting the stage for requirements of adult work life and for citizenship in a multi-cultural society." [p. 50]

[4] "Developing a discipline of mind requires a radical departure from traditional classroom instruction. Above all, it requires a shift in long-held beliefs that the role of teachers is to transmit knowledge to students." [p. 43] . . .