



Pinnacle Reflections – Peter Murnane

Like a group of year 1's ready to try percussion for the first time, passionate educators gather ready for what will be an enthralling week. The buzz in the room is electric and filled with excitement! The week unfolded with singing, dancing, moving, laughing, instruments, swimming, more laughing and inspiring teaching and learning.

This was my first national conference, and it exceeded every expectation. I feel so honoured to have been in the company of so many passionate educators, mentors, learners and advocates for quality music education for all. Every presenter showed nothing short of 100% commitment for their sessions, all the way to the final electives and closing ceremony on Thursday.

It struck me that everyone is there to give and there is no hierarchy among this family of educators. There is an unspoken deep respect that all of us are there for the greater cause of excellent music education for our fortunate students. We are all mentors and students at the same time, always ready to hear new perspectives and have our minds opened to new ways of thinking.

I have come away with a new awareness of the phenomenal neuroscience of what's happening inside the brain during music making and learning. Robyn Staveley's crystal clear explanations into plain language and concrete examples, followed with teaching as an exemplar of what this looks like in music education was brilliant. How empowering for the value of what we teach!

From deafening chair drumming to deliciously layered barred instrument ostinati to magical spoons to whispered peaceful poetry and interpretive movement, every single presenter believed in what they were sharing as excellent practice. I couldn't help but be swept up in the experience and feel that energy and passion of each session. The baton to take this teaching material to our own schools has been generously passed.

As a peak presenter, I personally had to overcome a huge case of imposter syndrome. Do I deserve to be presenting here? The smiling faces that greeted me gave me resounding confidence that yes, what I had to offer was indeed material that will be useful in many different settings. Phew! Let's normalise that this self-doubt is common, regardless of experience, and remind ourselves that positive self-talk of how we are a profession of educators who actively seek learning and growth is the antidote to these intrusive thoughts.

Finally, some timely reminders that hit home throughout the week:

- We've all got something to offer.
- Mistakes are part of the fun. No one cares and we all have empathy that it's all part of our profession.
- Music making, movement and the creativity offered by this framework is SO joyful.
- Leaning into discomfort or vulnerability can lead to immense growth, even in the space of a 4-day conference.
- We have the best job in the world!

Thank you WAOSA and Pinnacle committees for the inspiring conference and offering support of regional delegates! I can't wait for Flow 2027!

