

Moving to the Music | CEHS

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Children at USU laboratory schools were pleased to receive a visit from one of the top elementary music educators in the country this week. Dr. Wendy Valerio, a professor of music education at the University of South Carolina, spent time with faculty and students in the early education program during her visit.

Rather than lecture, “Ms. Wendy” participated in the classes, sharing her expertise by example. Valerio has developed a number of activities that get young children rocking, twisting, stretching and walking, all while singing different rhythms.

One of the activities required the children to move their hands from in front of their body to behind. The hand motions, accompanied by a song about bluebirds flying away, help the children improve their motor skills. “These children learn by playing,” Valerio said. “I always tell my students we can’t teach anyone. Instead, we create environments where the children can learn.”

Among the classes she joined was a daycare session with parents and their children that allowed parents to see some of her strategies. She also joined a preschool group at the Adele and Dale Young Child Development Laboratory on campus for a 45-minute session with the children and student teachers. “Dr. Valerio brings a level of experience and knowledge that we don’t have here,” said Dr. Lisa Boyce, the executive director of the Dolores Doré Eccles Center for Early Care and Education.

Valerio is the director of the Children’s Music Development Center at USC, in addition to her role as a professor. Her research focuses on beginning music development and the intersection of music and early childhood development.