Music Instruction (Other than Performance)

Burstein, Scott. University of Southern California, Los Angeles. Popular Music Instruction Observations by Experienced Music Teachers. PPI

One of the many benefits of using popular music in the school curriculum is the way it utilizes the cultural capital of the students and gives them a voice in their own educational experience (Bourdieu, 1984; Kindall-Smith, McCoy, & Mills, 2011). However, just the inclusion of popular music isn’t enough, as many teachers are unfamiliar with the genre’s traditions and the informal learning styles associated with the creation of the music (Wang & Humphreys, 2009; Green, 2002). Therefore, it is important to examine current teacher’s views on popular music teaching, training, and biases in order to discover how to not only match the curriculum content with the appropriate tool for instruction, but also breakdown barriers in learned philosophical assumptions (Wright, 2011).

The purpose of the present study was to look at the observations of experienced instrumental music teachers after watching a popular music lesson in an elementary public school classroom. Four experienced instrumental teachers watched three short video clips of a 45-minute lesson taught by a general education teacher. The clips showed three sections of the lesson: a warm-up designed to show that the previous lesson topics had become familiar, learning new material, and the end results of the combination of new and old elements of instruction. The students in the class played guitar, bass, vocals, and drums, incorporating non-traditional music notation such as tablature and lead charts, and focused on approximation rather then technique.

After viewing the clips, the experienced music teachers were interviewed about their observations using open-ended questions. Teacher responses were examined to see if there were biases towards traditional instruction, and the results were looked at in terms in terms of relation to equity, access, and ramifications for music education. Most of the participants viewed the instruction through the prism of their own educational experience, focusing on technique, class management, and goals based on their own educational ideals rather then the experience of the students themselves. Their own unfamiliarity with informal learning and popular music instruction as well as an adherence to particular national standards such as music reading and recitation over approximation and improvisation showed clear bias towards conventional music streams of orchestra and wind band.

Implications lead to a re-conceptualization of the way teachers look at and teach the unfamiliar, needing to expand teaching methods to include informal learning and familiarity with popular music, as well as a heightened discussion about the goals of music instruction in schools. With the emergence of new national standards for music education, this study further highlights the need for re-thinking the focus, balance, and anticipated results of music instruction.

Carucci, Joseph. Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, TN. A Transcription and Analysis of Three Solos by Gerry Mulligan

Much can be learned about a jazz musician’s improvisational style by transcribing and comparing multiple solos performed on the same arrangement. Analyzing the placement of melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic elements over multiple solos and how they fit into the overall structure of the arrangement provides an understanding of the improviser’s musical language and approach to the process of
improvisation. This understanding is crucial to developing improvisers who can then apply the elements of the transcribed solos to their own personal musical language.

This research demonstrated the transcription and comparison of three baritone saxophone solos by Gerry Mulligan (1927-1996), which are performed on Johnny Mandel’s arrangement of Black Nightgown. All three recordings that will be discussed were recorded live in 1960 by the Concert Jazz Band and can be heard on Live at the Village Vanguard, Live at the Olympia Paris 1960, and Zurich 1960. The many parallels between these solos are indicative of Mulligan’s preparation and approach. In two of the solos, the transcription reveals very similar contour, which begins in a lyrical style, climaxes in the bridge, and ends with an anticipation of the ensemble’s figures. As a composer and arranger, Mulligan understands the importance of connecting his improvisational ideas to Mandel’s arrangement.

The variety of Mulligan’s improvisational language and how he utilizes it has a distinct effect on creating each solo’s distinct feel. As he implements diatonic and blues scale ideas, the solo has a tendency to take on a more lyrical context. The chromatic motives and melodic arpeggiation have the opposite effect as the diatonic and blues elements. He also uses the effect of anticipation to give the solo forward motion and builds a sense of expectancy for the listener. The comparison of Mulligan’s solos on Black Nightgown demonstrates important improvisational techniques and a distinct approach to the process of improvisation. How and when he implements melodic ideas during the solo process and what effect these ideas have on the character and flow of the solo is examined. The balance of diatonicism, chromaticism, arpeggiation, and the blues is an important part of Mulligan’s improvisation language. By manipulating these ideas, Mulligan has the ability to create great lyricism, strong tension, anticipate musical phrases, and connect his improvisation to the original arrangement.

Heath, Julia. Florida State University, Tallahassee. An Investigation of Specific Nonverbal Behaviors Associated with High and Low Ratings of General Music Teachers’ Effectiveness

The conductor-teacher has been the focus of the music education research on nonverbal behaviors associated with teacher effectiveness. The purpose of the present study was to observe and code nonverbal behaviors demonstrated by three expert general music teachers in classroom settings, and to compare those behaviors with the teachers’ ratings of effectiveness. Three-minute teaching episodes of the general music teachers were used to create the stimulus video. Participants (N = 52) viewed the teaching episodes while using a Continuous Digital Response Interface (CRDI) dial with an overlay divided into three zones (low, medium, and high) to record formative ratings of teacher effectiveness. The researcher, using SCRIBE 4.2 software, coded specific nonverbal behaviors exhibited by each of the three teachers during their teaching episodes. Based on the effective teaching research literature, the specific nonverbal behaviors observed and coded were: gestures, proximity, student-directed gaze, changes in facial affect, and vocal inflection. Using the summaries of the SCRIBE and CRDI data, associations were found for specific nonverbal behaviors and the highest ratings of teacher effectiveness. The three nonverbal behaviors that were exhibited at the highest ratings of effectiveness for all three teachers were: gestures, student-directed gaze, and changes in facial affect. The behaviors associated with low ratings of effectiveness occurred when teachers’ engaged in low frequencies and durations of proximity and high frequencies and durations of neutral affect. The teacher who received the overall highest ratings of effectiveness engaged in gestures during 80% of her teaching episode.
Hickman, Jean. University of Florida, Gainesville. Undergraduate Student Achievement in a Blended Learning Music Appreciation Course

The landscape of higher education is shifting. Today’s college students bring to the classroom increased technological savvy, an expectation of immediate response to needs and questions, a reliance on social media, and an increasingly fractured time schedule. The traditional face-to-face instructional model may not be equipped to adequately address this changing dynamic. Likewise, a completely online format may not fully address the learning needs of undergraduate students, particularly in music classes where shared listening experiences and aural identification of musical elements are crucial. Researchers have found that blended learning experiences, those that combine online and face-to-face instruction, are actually superior to face-to-face or online only learning environments (Means et al, 2010). The purpose of this study was to examine student achievement in, and attitudes toward, an undergraduate music appreciation course offered in a blended learning format. Participants were 186 students in six sections of undergraduate music appreciation classes at a state college in Florida. Class members were in their freshman or sophomore year in college, and all were non-music majors. Gender breakdown was 59% / 41% female/male. Course delivery utilized a combination of physical and virtual environments, with synchronous, instructor-led interaction balanced with asynchronous, online, independent learning. The blended learning course was developed in a manner whereby (a) face-to-face and online learning opportunities were thoughtfully integrated, (b) student engagement and higher level thinking were optimized, and (c) traditional class contact hours were restructured and partially replaced with independent online learning opportunities (Garrison and Vaughan, 2008). The online portion of the course utilized discussion boards, Facebook, YouTube videos, ePortfolios, Prezi, Google presentations, and Google forms. Face-to-face sessions included group active learning projects, cooperative presentations and guided listening sessions. Students met 75 minutes per week face-to-face, with online learning activities designed to replace an additional 75 minutes of class time per week that was previously held in a traditional classroom setting.

The effectiveness of the blended mode of delivery was assessed by student mastery of course material, student evaluation of the blended mode of instruction, and instructor evaluation of the successful completion of course objectives. Eighty-nine percent of the students mastered the essential factual material of the course, as measured by a score of 80% or better on the end-of-course exam. Ninety-one percent received a grade of 80% or better on the final listening exam. Ninety-seven percent of the students rated the blended course delivery method at a 4 or better on a 5-point Lickert-type scale, with 1 being “strongly against” the blended mode of delivery and 5 being “strongly in favor” of it. The blended mode of course delivery used in this study was highly effective for these undergraduate music appreciation students.

Further study could be undertaken to indicate which ratio of face-to-face/online delivery is most effective. The elements of each mode of instruction could also be studied to determine which are most effective and well-received by students.

References:


Meyers, Brian. Adelphi University, Garden City, NY. The Collective Conception and Creation of Music to a Video Game Sequence

For years, music has been composed and performed to accentuate and accompany all manner of theatrical productions, whether Greek tragedy, Japanese Kabuki, Shakespearlean drama, or today’s motion pictures. Music serves to guide the audience through the story, emulating and informing the mood and tone of the action being viewed. This interaction between music and action has undergone a shift in recent years with the growth and development of video games. Instead of static, linear compositions, composers for video games must create repeatable segments, or stems, of music that can be manipulated, layered, or removed according to the dynamic evolution of the individual game player’s in-game actions. This results in a soundtrack that is unique according to each gameplay experience. This paper presents findings from a recent project, completed by the researcher and a university concert band, in which the members of the band collectively conceived and created a music soundtrack to a video game sequence. Band members participated in creation sessions during their weekly band rehearsals over a 14-week period, culminating in a live performance of the soundtrack while an audience member played the video game sequence on a large cinematic screen. Interviews, reflective journals, and video footage were utilized to collect data regarding participants’ perceptions of the creative process within a cooperative group context. The ways participants interact with one another throughout the creation process was of primary interest, including the discussion of important dramatic elements of the game, the interactive group conception and development of musical ideas that coincide with these events, the layering of ideas in reaction to in-game occurrences, and the subsequent performance of the creation in a live venue.

Results indicate that while not always agreeing on musical or dramatic elements, participants developed a mode of interaction, including verbal and musical aspects, which allowed disparate voices to be heard, often combining ideas into new iterations that satisfied multiple views. Results also indicate that, with adjustments, similar activities could be used with ensembles of various levels to deepen musical understanding and provide an avenue for creativity.

Mueller, Alicia. Towson University, MD. The Effect of Movement-Based Instruction on the Ability of Early Childhood General Music Students to Perceive Melodic Concepts. PPI

The purpose of this study is to assess the effect of movement-based instruction on the ability of early childhood students to perceive certain properties of melodic concepts. These properties include register (high, low), direction (upward, downward, repeated tones), and progression (steps, leaps, repeated tones).

The early childhood students will be selected from pre-kindergarten and kindergarten-age classes, with one group receiving movement-based instruction in conjunction with melodic concepts, and one group receiving instruction of melodic concepts through other means. The instructional unit will consist of two 30-minute sessions per week for six weeks. Movement gestures formulated as part of the movement-based instruction will represent the melodic properties of register, direction, and progression. If selected as a session, participants will experience a sampling of the two types of instruction focusing on...
the perception of melodic concepts -- instruction with movement and instruction without movement. Additional classes before and after the six-week instructional period will be used for the administration of the pre- and post-assessments. Melodic achievement of the students will be assessed using the revised melodic subtests of Richard Colwell's Silver Burdett Music Competency Tests. It is hoped that scores will improve from the pre- to the post-assessments, and daily observations and reflections will also be maintained.

Since young children kinesthetically respond to instruction, it is inferred that the melodic perception of students in the early childhood class with movement-based instruction will be strengthened and increased. The results of this study will provide practical information for music, dance/movement, and physical education teachers and researchers interested in the subject.

Parker, Elizabeth. Columbus State University, GA. An Intrinsic Case Study of Six Southeastern Public School Music Educators’ Classroom Management Development

Classroom management acts as a stressor for teachers, particularly new in-service teachers. Numerous extant studies have explored classroom management issues including coping techniques (Lewis & Romi, 2011), the effectiveness of positive interactions in the classroom (Cavanaugh, 2013), and responsive teaching (Kronenberg & Strahan, 2010). Music education research has addressed the stress of classroom management for in-service teachers (Gordon, 2002), effective management of classrooms with exceptional children (Darrow, 2009), and the social intelligence of exemplary teachers (Juchniewicz, 2010). One apparent area of deficiency, however, is the lack of studies exploring the classroom management development of public school music teachers. The purpose of this intrinsic case study was to explore the classroom management development of six southeastern public school music teachers. Research questions included (a) how participants describe their classroom management development, (b) how participants articulated the challenges and successes of managing their classrooms, and (c) how classroom management development influenced participants’ teaching careers.

As researcher, I utilized a constructivist orientation, which attributes an individual’s actions as products of social processes. Using a constructivist orientation not only requires investigating how individuals come to form their beliefs, but also why they form these beliefs. This requires very close relationship to their experience (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). This study also incorporated a pragmatic paradigm because learning more about teacher development may assist retention efforts in teacher education programs. The intrinsic cases within this study were bound by interview, written and observational data regarding the school music community. Participant sampling was heterogeneous, and participants represented mid- and late-career professionals in a variety of music contexts, including two elementary general music teachers (one male teacher who has taught for 20 years and a female teacher, for 28 years), two middle school teachers (one female strings teacher who has taught for 11 years and one female choral teacher, who has taught for 18 years) and two high school instructors (one female band teacher who has taught for 7 years and one female choral teacher for 12 years). The data collection included two interviews; the first interview was approximately 50 minutes in length. After I conducted four 45-minute observations in each classroom, I interviewed participants again for approximately 20 minutes.

In the longer paper, each participant’s profile is described in detail. The five themes developed from data analysis included (a) finding myself as teacher, (b) building trustworthy relationships with students and families, (c) seeking and finding support, (d) establishing classroom routines, and (e) sharpening
pedagogical skills. Each participant articulated that they ‘found themselves’ through teaching in the same setting for several years, trying on different personalities until they reached a comfortable place. They worked diligently to build communicative relationships with students and families, in order to support each student in their program. Participants stressed the importance of creating management systems that aligned with their teaching style. They honed their pedagogical skills, connecting their passion for music teaching with the long-term desire to engage as professional educators.

Rose, Paige. University of Central Arkansas, Conway. Effects of Movement and Tempo on Steady Beat Accuracy among Preschool Students

Music education has often embraced the use of movement and kinesthetic response in teaching music concepts and skills. Movements, such as clapping, tapping, walking, marching, and dancing are often used in the primary grades so that children may experience music through interactive and physical means before engaging in theoretical learning. Teachers have also utilized movement to explicitly assess students who are demonstrating music skills. Teachers often ask students in primary grades to demonstrate steady beat using manual (hand) movements; however, some teachers and their approaches advocate for use of pedal (foot) movements as well. In addition to the movement type, tempo of the music is another variable that has been examined with regard to accuracy of steady beat in children. Teachers should be aware of how motor skill development can influence the musical skills of their students in these contexts. The purpose of this research is to examine the effects of manual and pedal movement and tempo on the accuracy of steady beat among preschool students. Participants (N=120) of this study will include male (n=60) and female (n=60) preschool students from rural and suburban preschools and child study centers. Children will be asked to demonstrate steady beat by patting their hands simultaneously (manual movement) and by stepping in place with their feet (pedal movement).

In addition, children will be asked to demonstrate steady beat using a segment of music played at three different tempi: slow (80 beats per minute), medium (100 beats per minute), and fast (120 beats per minute). GarageBand 6.0.5 was used to create the music that features an acoustic guitar playing steady, running eighth note rhythms, and a drum set playing a simple pattern with an apparent steady beat. Each participant will be asked to perform steady beat at all three tempi and under both manual and pedal conditions, for a total of six different tasks. Order will be counterbalanced to control for effect. The researcher will model the movement for four counts, then continue modeling the movement with a verbal prompt of, “1, 2, ready, go.” Students will then demonstrate the steady beat for 16 counts while simultaneously imitating the researcher. This process approximates an authentic classroom experience where students observe their teacher and perform tasks while simultaneously imitating their teacher. The researcher demonstration also ensures that the assessment is measuring the student’s capacity to perform the motor skill, rather than the student’s capability to discern the steady beat in music. The preschool students will be performing on a malletKAT controller for manual movements and a DrumKat 3.8 for pedal movement. Data from childrens’ performances will channel directly into audio editing software that provides comparative notation with the steady beat. This study will be completed in the early spring in order to obtain the maturation and motor skill development of the average preschool student in the spring semester before entering kindergarten. In a previous and similar study, the researcher examined the effects of manual and pedal movement, gender, and tempo on steady beat accuracy among kindergarten students, with findings revealing a need for the current study. Participants (N = 119) consisted of male (n = 63) and female (n = 56) kindergarten students who were randomly divided into two groups of manual or pedal movement condition, counterbalanced with
regard to school, homeroom, and gender. Participants performed steady beat by either patting with hands or stepping with feet using MIDI controllers. Each student was asked to synchronize to the steady beat of the researcher while musical examples were played at slow (80 beats per minute), medium (100 beats per minute), and fast (120 beats per minute) tempi. Results of the two-way mixed ANOVA revealed a main effect for movement grouping \( F(1, 111) = 11.35, p = .001 \), with manual participants \( (M = 42.39, SD = 7.48) \) scoring higher than pedal participants \( (M = 37.81, SD = 7.05) \). The current study will examine whether these results also extend to the preschool age, prior to formal schooling and classroom music training. The researcher will also discuss steady beat among preschool students with implications for early childhood music instruction. Results will also yield insight into what music teachers can anticipate from incoming kindergarten students. By focusing instruction in ways that are developmentally appropriate, music teachers can create a learning environment that anticipates motor skill development and fosters students’ engagement and success.

Smith, Raychl. Minnesota State University Moorhead. *Shaping Perceptions of Musical Identity: An Ethnography of Non-Music Majors’ Experiences in an Undergraduate Music Course Focused on Cultivating Creativity*

The purpose of this study was to investigate what “being a musician” means in an innovative, improvisation-based music course. Participants in this study were non-music majors enrolled in the course, MUS 2022: Cultivating Creativity through Music. Instructor and creator of the course, Dr. Liz Rose, Associate Professor of Music Education and Music Therapy at Appalachian State University in North Carolina, was also a study participant. By studying the classroom culture as it evolved throughout the semester, and by reflecting on the experiences of students enrolled in the course, I was able to gain an understanding of how students make meaning of their experiences with creativity and improvisation. By focusing on regularly recurring classroom practices, teacher and student behaviors, and socially constructed meanings of musicianship in the classroom, I present an idea of what ‘being a musician’ means in this particular classroom of students who have varying degrees of formal training in music. Several forms of data were collected, including participant observation, analysis of video-recorded class sessions, individual interviews with student and teacher participants, focus group interviews with students, analysis of student assignments and reflections, and examination of course documents. To find emergent patterns and themes relating to participants’ acquisition of meaning throughout course experiences, field notes, observations, and interview texts were reviewed multiple times. Students enrolled in MUS 2022 felt that being a musician in this particular classroom community meant expressing themselves, taking risks, and recognizing the musician within self and others, regardless of the extent of previous musical experiences or formal musical training.

Stafford, Karen. University of Kansas, Lawrence. *A Comparison of Three Teaching Approaches on Pitch Notation Reading for Elementary Students*

The purpose of this research project was to compare three teaching approaches that introduced pitch notation on the treble staff and reinforced printed notation recall:

1. introducing songs through listening-audiation-imitation process on recorders prior to introducing and decoding pitches on the written staff
2. introducing songs through listening-audiation-imitation process on barred Orff instruments prior to introducing and decoding pitches on the written staff, and
3. utilizing direct teaching strategies to introduce printed notation prior to playing recorder.
The study addressed the following research questions: (1) Are there differences in the student scores on written pitch notation assessments that relate to particular teaching methods: that of learning intervals aurally, performing these intervals utilizing imitation on recorder or barred Orff instruments through the audiation process, then decoding intervals visually; or learning treble lines and spaces visually by name prior to reinforcing that knowledge by instrument performance? (2) When children learn a set pattern of absolute pitches aurally and demonstrate a mastery of their intervallic relationships through performance on instruments, will they be able to transfer that knowledge to the printed staff by deciphering unknown note names when given one pitch? (3) When learning intervals aurally prior to learning written pitches, is there a difference between interval/pitch recall when performing on a recorder versus performing on barred instruments?

The subjects were all fourth graders (N=68) who attended a Midwestern public school. Prior to observed activities, the children participated in a survey to determine how many had previous experience in reading written pitch. Participants then took a practice test using remotes and Smart Response™ interactive software to determine if they understood the assessment process. After the trial, the researcher administered a pretest on notes on the staff using the software, consisting of 18 questions in which the subjects had to enter the letter name of each note they viewed. The pitches included A-G, each used twice in the assessment. All three classes participated in their assigned activities for learning written pitches on the staff during 15 thirty-minute class sessions. The control group students were introduced to names of the lines and spaces of the treble staff using games, Music Ace software, and worksheets. At the conclusion of five class sessions, copies of three B-A-G recorder songs were distributed to the children, who learned songs individually in progressively more difficult order, based on the Recorder Karate system of working at self-pace. At the beginning of the 15 instructional class periods, the students in the first experimental group began with recorder. The researcher introduced the fingerings for B, A, and G, then demonstrated the same three songs used in the control group through imitation, without providing printed music. The participants were asked to use audiation, or “inner hearing,” to recall the songs by thinking the songs inwardly before duplicating it by playing. They then decoded aural interval patterns of steps and skips, using the Recorder Karate system. During this process, the first experimental group was guided in the discovery of the correlation between the aural intervals and fingerling patterns with the holes. Once students demonstrated the ability to play the three songs, they received printed copies of the music and were assisted in determining note names on the staff based on their prior experience with performing the songs. When they were able to identify B, A, and G on the staff, the researcher allowed the children to use this knowledge to notate the rest of the lines and spaces. The second experimental group followed the same procedures and used the same literature as the first experimental group, but utilized barred Orff instruments instead of recorders, visually assessing interval distances between B, A, and G bars. A comparison was made to determine if there would possibly be differences in the recall of intervals and pitches from feeling the holes in recorder fingerling patterns or noting interval differences by observing bars of Orff instruments.

At the conclusion of the 15th lesson, all groups completed a post-activity survey and a post-test (identical to the pretest with questions in a different order). Preliminary findings show that the control group scored higher on the post-test than did either of the two experimental groups, based on general calculations provided by the software.

This study and subsequent studies on this topic could be significant to music teacher education courses based on the way staff notation can be taught. (I am in the process of analyzing all data, but hope you will consider this study for poster presentation based on the preliminary findings).

This ongoing investigation of 52 fourth and fifth grade students in a general music class examines the social dynamics present in a small-group composition project. Drawing upon transcribed recordings of student conversations over the course of twelve weeks of composing, the analysis seeks to understand children’s processes of decision making and to document the collaborative learning outcomes which can emerge from such a project. Using democratic citizenship education (Parker, 2003) and multicultural education (Banks, 2004) as frameworks, the study examines the possibility that non-musical outcomes such as cooperation, deliberation, and consensus-building might be seen as core elements of group composition activities. Rather than taking a subsidiary role to the musical outcomes of compositional knowledge and instrumental skill, these social outcomes might be seen as ‘ends in the themselves’, forming a potentially useful justification for music education amidst the broader sphere of education in an increasingly multicultural democracy.