

SPA-259

Seeking Quality: Comparative Study of Elementary Music Classrooms in the USA and Japan

Shinko Kondo
Bunkyo, University

Abstract

What are the qualitative aspects of teacher-student interactions that teachers should employ in the 21st century? Understanding of the importance of relationship and interaction to learning is not new. Sociocultural theorists stress that learning is largely a social endeavor in which our interactions with others not only support the learning process but are inseparable from it. More recent research has shown that far from being a mere nicety, attention to building a strong teacher-student relationship plays an important role in supporting student achievement and in particular the development of creative and critical thinking. In music learning, relationship plays a pivotal role, too, and the nature of the relationship is revealed through interaction. Do the qualitative aspects of teacher-student interactions vary among different social groups?

In order to seek what kinds of interactive experiences will bring out the best in students and allow them to reach new heights in learning, I conducted a qualitative analysis of teacher scaffolding during the musical activities in four elementary general music classrooms in the USA and Japan, where wonderfully exciting music learning was taking place. Paying particular attention to what types of questions the teacher asked and how it impacted student learning process and product, I carefully observed 24 music classes between February 2017 and November 2019. Data were collected through video observation, field notes and formal and informal interview. Analysis included the construction of narrative vignettes from these data.

In the cases presented in this study, teachers used facilitative questions as vehicles to foster supportive environment, fostered the articulation of ideas, valued learner voice, connected their prior experience, used strategies for making thinking visible, and so on. Teachers also used nonverbal and musical cues to foster student musicianship.

Conversation is a medium that brings us into contact with the thinking and perspective of others and thus fosters new insight. Through dialogue, we develop trust as we care for others and learn to be cared for by them. The study also explores the issue of the essential element of pedagogic competence, the power structure of the activity, pedagogical thoughtfulness (Van Manen, 1991), and centrality of *Learner agency* (Kondo, 2019) *in music learning process*.

I hope this study offers a call for teachers and researchers from many different countries and social groups to exchange ideas and to rethink music teaching practices and music education perspectives in order to support quality education for the future.