

SYM-258

Student Agency in Collaborative Composing

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Abstract

The term “student agency” continues to be at the forefront of educational discourse around the world. In music, personal agency and musical agency are central issues for all music learners. Student agency refers to an individual’s feelings of self-determination in a particular context—how much control an individual feels over his or her own circumstances and ability to act. Wiggins et al. (2006) emphasize that learners must know “their ideas are valued and central to their learning process” (p. 90). Learning music is an interactive, meaning-making process through which learners construct their own meaning through the lens of their prior experiences. In music learning, Kondo & Wiggins (2015) noted the presence of agency amongst young learners through collaborative problem solving in the form of (a) kinesthetic movements, (b) ways of playing instruments, (c) musical communication with peers, parents, and teacher, and (d) in their performances. These forms of musical agency in young learners insinuate the vital connection between learning music and musical agency.

In this panel discussion, 3 current elementary music teachers will present their first-hand encounters of musical agency within their classrooms. They will discuss these findings in the context of the theoretical framework explained above and will provide a teacher-researcher’s perspective relevant to agency in the music learning process.

Each teacher has developed an original lesson plan around the composition “The Clock Orchestra”, which is a 1-min. composition following the hands of an analog clock.

Presenter 1

Elementary school music teacher (6th grade)

Collaborative composition by using Japanese instruments “Toki no Ohayashi”

Presenter 2

Elementary school music teacher (5th grade)

Collaborative composition by using I-IV-V-I (C-F-G-C) chords

Presenter 3

Elementary school music teacher (5th grade)
Collaborative composition by using "Togaton" (Filipino instrument)

Presenter 4&5
Agency and Self-determination

Discussion
How can teacher nurture student agency?

Conclusion