

Prescriptive or Emergent?

An exploration of the use of preservice teacher generated questions as the basis for music teacher observations.

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“Ethnography for Teacher Education”

(Frank & Uy, 2004)

- ♦ Varied & complex contexts, coupled with rapid decision making . . . “make the classroom vulnerable to criticism by those who do not understand the complexity of what is occurring.”
- ♦ Preservice teachers often base interpretation and critical evaluation on little evidence and their own experiences.

Why ethnography?

Frank and Uy found that when preservice teachers . . .

- ♦ . . . use observational tools (rating scales, checklists, counting measures), they may look for what “should be” rather than “what is.”
- ♦ . . . use an ethnographic lens, they delay critical evaluation and use field notes as evidence for interpretation of classroom events.

Ethnography . . .

- ♦ literally means “writing about the cultures of groups of people.”
- ♦ focuses on patterns and traits that constitute a people’s culture. (LeCompte & Schnesul, 1999)
- ♦ originates from the anthropological practice of examining cultural patterns through long-term immersion.
- ♦ focuses on description and interpretation of what people say and do. (Glesne, 1999)

Tools of Ethnography

- ◆ Field notes
- ◆ Interviews
- ◆ Artifact collection
- ◆ Peer review
- ◆ Memos
- ◆ Transcripts
- ◆ Data record
- ◆ Report

Developing the tools:

- ◆ *Present the idea of ethnography to students as going to study and learn about a group of people.*
- ◆ *Demonstrate how to do descriptive and interpretive notes using a two-column model. Provided additional options (e.g., diagram of classroom).*
- ◆ *Practice taking field notes in class using video excerpts.*
- ◆ Practice peer review in class.
- ◆ *Introduce memos and reflective notes.*
- ◆ Describe artifact collection.
- ◆ Data record
- ◆ *Final report or project*

Previous Studies: Ethnography & Observations

(use of Schwab commonplaces as guiding framework)

Study One

- Miranda, Cooper, Hancock, & Stauffer, 2005

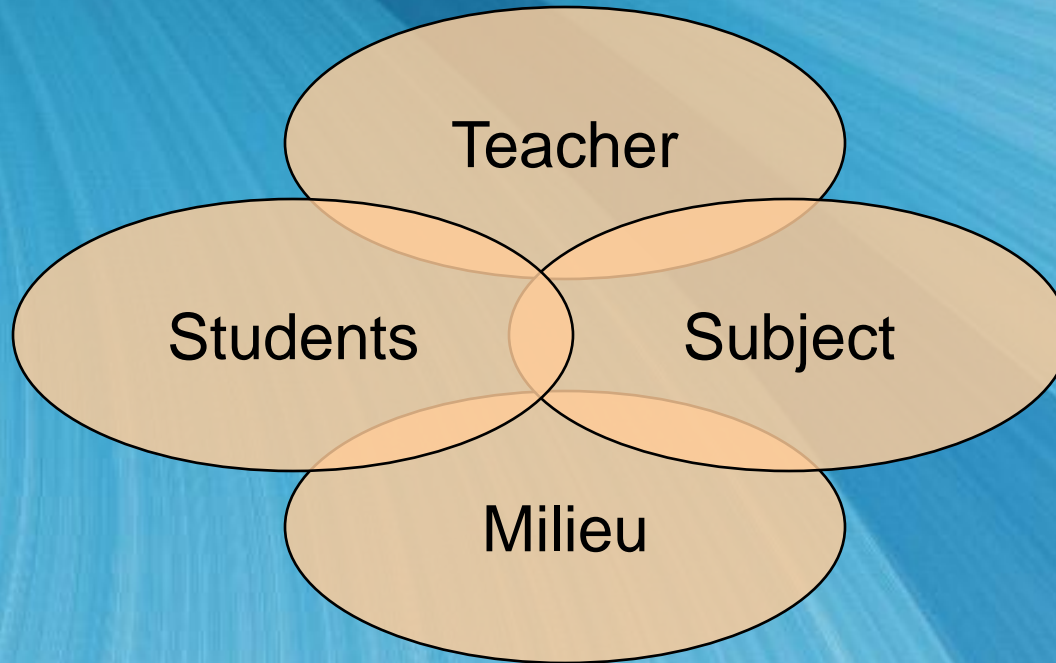
Study Two

- Miranda & Cooper, 2007

Study Three

- Miranda, Robbins, & Stauffer, 2006

Schwab's Commonplaces



Guiding Questions

- ◆ What might result if preservice teachers used ethnographic techniques in their observations of the general music classroom?

Along with . . .

- ◆ Specific sub-questions for each study such as:
 - ◆ Efficacy of approach
 - ◆ Nature of the contextual picture
 - ◆ Use of portraiture as medium for reflective writing of findings.

Findings consistent across all three studies

- ◆ Efficacy of the ethnography approach
- ◆ Usefulness of the Schwab curricular model
- ◆ Attentiveness to detail and nuance
- ◆ Identification of interactions within a “multi-layered” environment
- ◆ Shift from rushed criticism to contextual evaluation
- ◆ Emerging confidence & teacher identity

Additional Findings

Portraiture

- ◆ Insightful learning (interconnections: respect & relationships, motivation & management)
- ◆ Clarification of career goals
- ◆ Appreciation of the unexpected
- ◆ Changes in perspective

Nature of the “Contextual Picture”

- ◆ Evidence of an emergent model that may indicate a developmental continuum:

----Functional Conceptions----Insightful Understandings---

Who Are We Teaching and What are They Thinking?

Eve Harwood, *MLR I*

“. . . part of our development as methods teachers entails sharing ways we have found to make the thinking of our students visible, to see them more fully . . .”

Theoretical Perspective: Constructivism

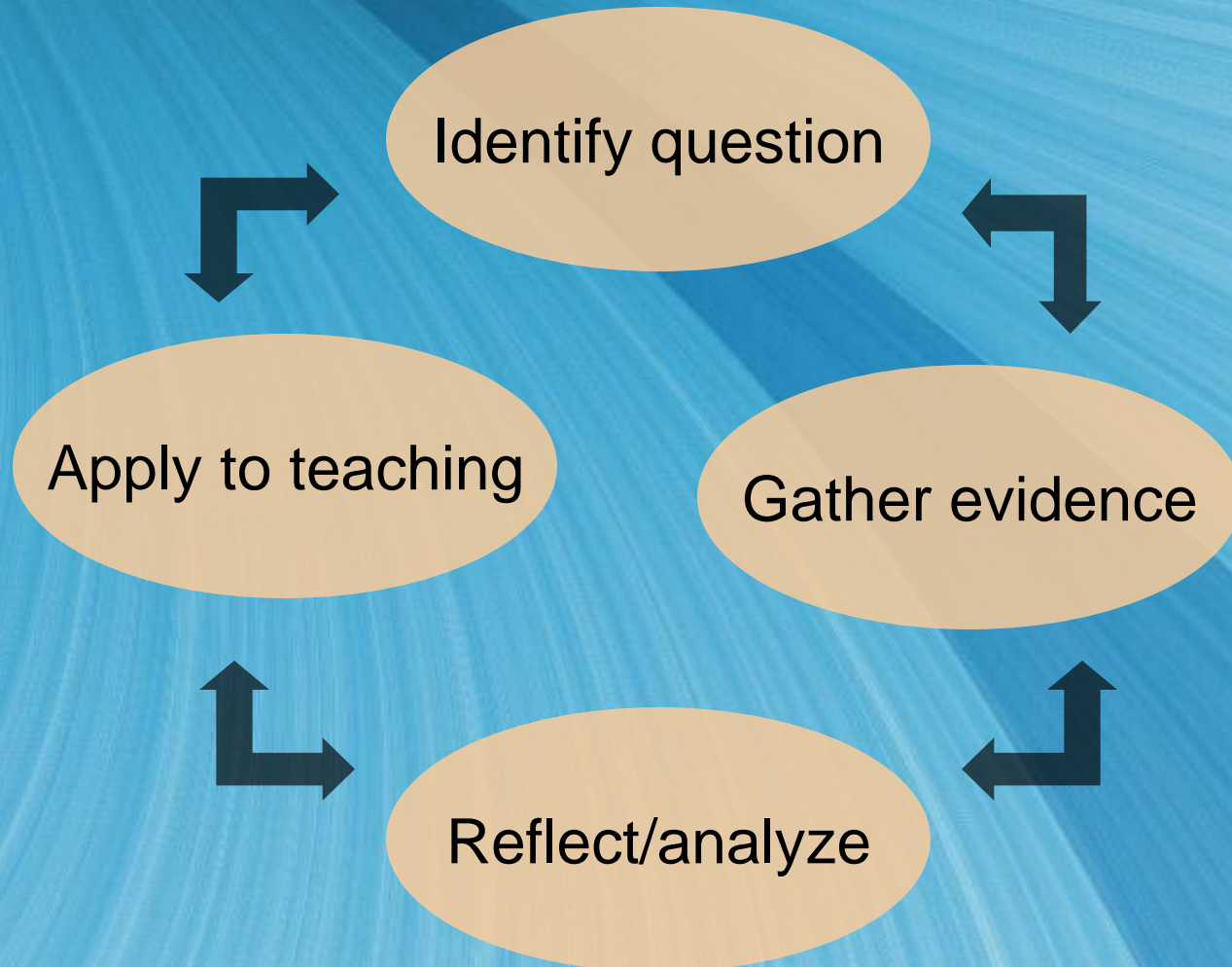
Constructivism “calls for students to construct their knowledge as **active inquirers** in to the subjects they are studying.”

Reflective Teaching (Henderson, 1996)

The teacher's role within this [an inquiry] framework is . . . to help learners actively explore their **own questions** and cultivate the critical thinking skills on which they will need to draw throughout their lives (Weber, 1991).

“The Power of Questions”

(Falk & Blumenreich, 2005)



Brooks and Brooks (1993): Five Principles of an Inquiry Framework

- Students should engage in active inquiry activities that are based on *meaningful problems*.
- Inquiry material should be organized *holistically*, through the use of broad concepts, so as to encourage diverse problem-solving styles and strategies.
- Teachers must encourage students to *cultivate their own points of view* on the instructional topics.
- Curriculum materials must be *responsive* to students' problem-solving suppositions.
- *Evaluation* should be authentically linked to student's inquiry experiences.

Prescriptive or Emergent? (Miranda, 2007):

- ♦ Purpose: To explore an emergent framework for classroom observations based on the use of questions developed by the preservice teachers.
- ♦ 15 PST completing 10 hours obs. (EGM)
- ♦ Data: assignments, notes from discussions and debrief interviews, projects (midterm & final)

Project Components

- ◆ Ethnography project turned in at the midterm point (FN's, reflections).
- ◆ Final project: designing and teaching a unit as a site-based team, maintaining a reflective journal - in place of FN's. Application of insights from field notes & reflections. Lesson plan design: What do the students need? (e.g. extension of a current idea, inclusion of a "missing" experiences)

Student Generated Questions

- First day of class discussion
- Second week of class; with first observation discussion
- Fourth week of class discussion

Day One: *Group One (3 students; 2BME, 1, MME+)*

Logistical

- ◆ What time does class start?
- ◆ Where is the classroom?
- ◆ What is the schedule of the students?
- ◆ How large is the classroom?
- ◆ How long is the class period?
- ◆ What musical knowledge do the students have?
- ◆ What are they learning in their other classes?
- ◆ What is the social/cultural background?

Philosophical

- ◆ Is it ok to just throw in a movie?
- ◆ Diff. from regular teacher?
- ◆ Balance of listening & playing?

Day One: *Group Two (4 students; 2 BME, 2 MME+)*

Students

- ♦ How big is the class? Ages?
- ♦ Know demographics and IEP's
- ♦ Know about testing scores.
- ♦ Where are they at in the curriculum?
- ♦ Classroom management?

Community

- ♦ Religion?
- ♦ Involvement of parents and others?
- ♦ Socio-economic status?
- ♦ Community liaisons?
- ♦ Community resources

School

Resources: Instruments, space, funding, time, furniture, technology

Admin: Support from staff? Know principal. Who is informed, go to person.

Job Expectations

- ♦ Playground duty, etc.
- ♦ Performances
- ♦ Travel
- ♦ Planning period
- ♦ Expenses

Day One: *Group Three (4 students; 3 BME, 1 MME+)*

(no categories)

- ◆ Community and parent support?
- ◆ Any extra-musical activities after school?
- ◆ What materials/resources?
- ◆ School culture?
- ◆ What's the budget?
- ◆ How many classes? How big?
- ◆ What grades?
- ◆ Has there been any collaboration between subjects?
- ◆ Demographics?
- ◆ Any special needs students? What support do they have?
- ◆ Room size? Cart?
- ◆ Payment? Benefits?
- ◆ Set curriculum? (guide/benchmarks)
- ◆ Why did that person leave?

Set One: *Group 4 (4 students; 3 BME, 1 MME+)*

Musical Resources

- ♦ Instruments/Budget

School Schedule & Procedures:

- ♦ How long/when?
- ♦ School policy and philosophies?

Student Histories

Classroom Management

Staff Admin/Resources

Student Expectations

Question Set #2

- ◆ Hypothetical Situation (with visual image response - draw your classroom)

What if I walk in today and am suddenly the teacher? What are some questions I have? What do I need to know?

Characteristics:

- ◆ Admin/logistical items are important
- ◆ Repetition from other categories
- ◆ New areas: age-appropriate concerns (communication, activities, concept introduction)
- ◆ Specific techniques (how to . . .)
- ◆ **CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT**

And as one student said . . .

**“As much as possible about
everything!”**

Question Set #3

- ◆ Hypothetical Situation (after 2-3 observation visits)

You've now been teaching for three weeks! We've already identified questions about lesson plans, logistics, and basic responsibilities. What would you like to know to be really good at teaching general music?

Characteristics:

- ♦ Moved beyond admin. & logistical
- ♦ Refinement (e.g. age-appropriate for rhythm)
- ♦ Repetition as a heading, followed by several detailed questions

For example; teaching style, modes of learning, are children engaged & challenged, pacing

- ♦ New ideas: assessment, sequencing, specific goals

And as one student said . . .

To be a very good teacher

- ◆ What are the students like?
- ◆ What do they respond to?
- ◆ How does it change?

Areas for Consideration

- ◆ Elementary GM has received attention in these studies, but what might result in other methods courses?
- ◆ Instead of focusing on one methods class, what might result from a coordinated effort across all methods courses to incorporate inquiry
- ◆ *This type of research is "messy" and requires time to support the learning of the PST; What areas of the curriculum can receive less attention?*
- ◆ *Would a restructuring of the course (matching the 3 phases of questions) be more effective?*
- ◆ Can we live with emergent and unpredictable conclusions?

Top 5 key principles . . .

A few examples:

- ◆ Let the children be active learners.
- ◆ Persistence - teachers see unlimited potential in their students.
- ◆ Plan, but always be prepared to move away from it.
- ◆ Make it meaningful!
- ◆ Patience & flexibility
- ◆ Respect the kids, they're tiny people.

And finally, "Just do it! Kids don't want to hear you talk about music all day. They just want to dig in and experience it for themselves."

In Conclusion:

The integrated and complex nature of teaching and learning in the music classroom calls for further attention. We may have a good sense of what the PST is thinking, based on past experience. Yet, our students may need additional scaffolding experiences to make stronger connections with the ultimate goal of creating “habits of questioning” that can contribute to life-long teaching and learning.