

ROOTS OF TEACHING EXPERTISE: A COMPARISON OF THREE NOVICE MUSIC TEACHERS

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This comparative case study is part of a longitudinal research project on the development of novice teachers. In an earlier paper, I followed the growth of three program graduates in their first year of full-time teaching. To teach elementary string classes, they used similar strategies, but differed in the skill, effectiveness, and depth of conceptual understanding with which they applied those strategies. Data analysis suggested both that they took many ideas from their university coursework, and that they developed their own unique interpretations and applications of their learning. In these three cases, neither cooperating teachers' practices, district mentors' supervision, nor prior teaching experience completely accounted for the observed differences, while effort and readiness to learn appeared to contribute to their varied understandings and applications of course-based learning.

In this study, I continue to explore the processes by which these teachers adopted instructional practices from their experiences in their university courses. As preservice teachers, they took classes and worked with me in a variety of contexts. This paper builds on the earlier study by focusing on data collected during the participants' student teaching and university coursework. Through analysis of written assignments and videos, I identify patterns in the development of their skills and beliefs over four to five years. This study contributes to the scant literature on individual teachers' longitudinal development. It may also increase teacher educators' understanding of why preservice teachers in our classes do not always seem to learn what we thought we taught them.