



# Roots of Teaching Expertise: A Comparison of Two Novice Music Teachers

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# Prior study (Schmidt 2007)

## Participants

- Karen, 23, double bass major
  - 3 elementaries, 1 middle, 1 high school
  - Math teacher mentor
  - Classroom management, staying organized
- Jennifer, 23, violin major
  - 3 elementaries
  - String teacher mentor
  - Students' learning, relationships
- Jing-Wei, early 30s, guitar major
  - 3 elementaries
  - String teacher mentor
  - String pedagogy, managing paper work



# Findings: Song-teaching practices

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- Used similar strategies
  - as learning activities
  - as applications of principles of learning
- Demonstrated varied levels of teaching effectiveness



# Accounting for differences

(Schmidt, 2007)

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- Cooperating teacher practices
- District mentor supervision
- Prior teaching experience
- Readiness, “need to know”
- Effort
- Learning style, specificity of planning



# Current study

## Purpose

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- What differences are apparent in the work of two preservice teachers in the same course and in their String Project instruction?
- What might account for these differences?



# My real question

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- Why do students appear to learn different things from the same course experiences?



# Current study

## Participants and data

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- Jennifer and Karen
- Observation notes, videos, discussions from 2002-03 String Project teaching
- Written assignments, videos from 2004-05 methods course



# Observable differences

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- Amount and organization of work
  - Completion of assignments
  - Spelling, writing skill



# Planning vs responding

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- “I was able to stray from my lesson plan to address issues that arose.” (Jennifer)
- “I think that the lesson plan itself was good, but I barely followed it. This is something I often do. If I feel that something else needs to be worked on I will work on that, and then move on. I think that this is acceptable as long as I do two things. I have already written and rehearsed what I want to do in the lesson and the major objectives/goals are still reached by the end of the class.” (Karen)

### Personal Objectives:

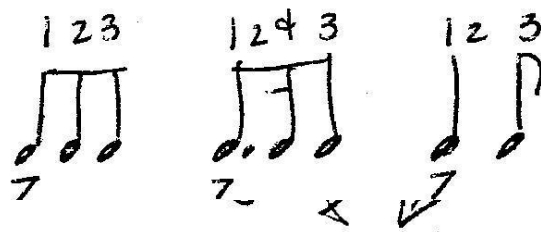
- ❖ Ensemble together from 4 to 6, especially the violin 1 and violin 2 parts
- ❖ Pizzicato together and not rushing in viola, cello, bass from 1 to 4
- ❖ Show the music more in my conducting, conduct phrases, dynamics, and cues

### Behavioral Objectives:

- ❖ TSW clap and count correctly 3 rhythms
- ❖ TSW play these 3 rhythms correctly on their open strings and then in the music (4-6)
- ❖ TSW pizz. Open G and D strings as conducted
- ❖ TSW follow the conducting and pizzicato with the stick
- ❖ TSW play the passage with pizz. Together from 1 to 4
- ❖ TSW stay together on the run through and watch the conductor for cues and tempo changes

### Procedures:

- ❖ 3 Rhythms on board



**Objective:** TSW play both minor sections in Farandole as written.

*in tune? with correct bowing?*

**Assessment:** TSW play both the g minor and e minor section with accented and weighted bow strokes where necessary and a staccato where necessary. They will also play the dotted eighth and sixteenth rhythm in time and together.

**Personal Objective:** Limit talking between playing. Give short to the point directions.



# Teacher talk

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- Teaching cycle (Price, 1992):
  - State what to do, and how
  - Have students do it
  - Provide feedback



# Teaching cycle: Instructional skills

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- Karen: “Now we’re gonna play a one octave g major scale, this one is going to be a little more tough. I want you to play grace notes before each note so it is going to go (demonstrate) so you’re gonna play, g ga ab, ok? One octave and if you wanna slur, what ever bowing is easier for you, I don’t care. OK. Actually, I’m sorry, down down-up up-down. (play) Good!” – feedback too minimal!
- Jennifer: “Class, how do we play an accent? Raise your hand if you can tell me how. Jacob? A fast bow. Marie, what else? More weight into your bow. There’s one more thing. What about bow placement? Would you put your bow here [demo at tip] for a down bow accent? No, right, that’s not going to be enough bow. So we want to start at the frog for down bows and at the tip for up bows. So everyone experiment with down and up bow accents right now on an open string. Yes. Great. And bass, you’re probably going to use a little less bow so you can really grab the string. So let’s all play the rhythm on the board with 8 notes, accents on every one. Really accent the up bows. It’s like this [demo]. You can pick your D or A string. 1, 2, 3, 1, ready play. [play] Good! Which was easier, up or down bow? We’re accenting only the second beat [demo].”



# Sequencing instructions

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- Ability to anticipate student errors
- Ability to sequence instruction
- Revisions



# Assessment of student learning

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- Karen: “I would gloss over parts of the piece, I played through them and did not force the students to play everything that I wanted them to.”
- Jennifer: “An activity I did on the spot in the middle of my teaching was having them play p, mf, f, and ff. I wasn’t satisfied with their forte’s earlier. After this exercise, I could hear on the tape that the forte sections were, in fact, better.”



# Responsibility for student learning

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- “I talked a lot, hardly looked up from the score, not confident enough in myself to be able to cue, or change moods in the piece. When rehearsing I did not show that I really wanted them to do the task at hand.” (Karen)
- “I noticed that it is good to model. . . . This causes a fast easy flow to a lesson and set up the students for success.” (Jennifer)



# What are the roots?

## Possible influences

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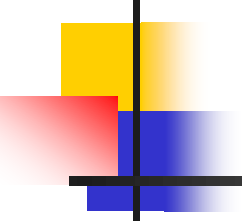
- Self as student (e.g., Holt-Reynolds, 1991; Lortie, 1975)
- Self as teacher (e.g., Knowles, 1992; Wolfgang, 1990)
- Development concerns (Fuller & Bown, 1975)
  - Survival, tasks of teaching, student learning
- Instructional skills
  - time management
  - teacher talk
  - classroom management
  - skills on piano and secondary instruments
  - conducting skills
  - use of instructional sequences



# Other influences

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- Methods courses (Clift & Brady, 2005)
- Field experiences and student teaching (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981)
- Mentors and peers (Bullough & Draper, 2004)
- Making meaning from feedback and experience (Dewey, 1938; Ferguson, 2006)
- Learning style
- Effort, desire to make changes



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“Everyday I have focused on [my personal objectives...; in my field experience, in practicum lessons, and in my private student lessons. Let’s just say that I still catch myself, but not as often because I have had much practice. Dr. Schmidt said to focus on a few things and then once I mastered them, to focus on a few more. It gets you bogged down if you try to do it all at once. That is why I chose two aspects to change and I will soon be choosing two more once I feel completely confident with the others.”



# Questions

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- How do these factors interact?
  - Does the chicken or egg come first?
  - Do some of them more easily affect change in others?
- How can these issues be effectively studied?
  - What relationships exist between what preservice teachers think and what we see them do?
  - What are they *not* telling us?



# Questions

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- Are expert teachers born, not made?
- “I have learned that when I am teaching a classroom full of students, not every one will play perfectly. I can only do so much, and after so much of my time, the rest is up to the kids. I have to be all right with the fact that not all students will play as well as I’d like them to.” (Jennifer)
- Where do we begin untangling the knots?



# Berliner's (1995) theory

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- Novice: gain experience, learn general rules
- Advanced beginner: develop knowledge base of episodes and cases
- Competent: develop agency, can identify important features
- Proficient: develop holistic view, respond intuitively
- Expert: develop fluency, respond arationally