

The Role of Inquiry-Based Practice in Preservice Music Teacher Education

PRESENTED BY

- Cathy Benedict, *New York University*
- Brian Bersh, *University of Delaware*
- Suzanne Burton, *University of Delaware*
- Joanne Rutkowski, *Pennsylvania State University*
- Katherine Strand, *Indiana University*

INTRODUCTION

- The Boyer Commission Report on Undergraduate Education (1998) charged higher education to make research-based learning a priority for undergraduate students.
- Collaborative learning experiences pose a framework to engage preservice music teachers in inquiry through the mentoring of higher education faculty.
- In what ways is music teacher-inquiry expressed in music teacher preparation? Why do music teacher educators engage in inquiry with their students? What benefits and costs are a part of these collaborations?
- What do preservice and inservice music teachers say about their research experiences?



EXAMPLES OF INQUIRY

CATHY BENEDICT

- No honors research at Steinhardt, NYU
- Research takes place in the first year
Foundations of Music Education Course
- Independent Studies – Dean's Research Grant
- Symposium for Research in Music Teaching and Learning, University of North Texas (Donna Emmanuel)



EXAMPLES OF INQUIRY

SUZANNE BURTON

- Undergraduate Research Program
 - Fellowships
 - Summer Scholars' Program
- Service-Learning Program
 - Course embedded
 - Summer Scholars' Program
- Methods course embedded
- Senior thesis=honors capstone



EXAMPLES OF INQUIRY

JOANNE RUTKOWSKI

- Schreyer Honors College
 - Required to complete an honors thesis to graduate with honors
 - Begin to develop interests via a seminar first semester junior year
 - Based on their own interests
 - Read UPDATE articles and previous honors theses
 - Group sharing important
 - Peer feedback important
 - Ceased seminar for 2 years – students had more difficulty completing thesis
 - Reinstated Fall 2009



EXAMPLES OF INQUIRY

KATHERINE STRAND

- Undergraduate research fellowships
 - Funds students to participate in research
 - Student assisted with research
 - Co-wrote a practitioner article
- Student teaching seminar
 - Action research projects
- *Teaching contexts affect the climate for engaging students in inquiry*




ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE PRESERVICE TEACHERS—TUCKER (CB)

- As a Freshman, worked on a project regarding spirituality/religion (was considering a career in church music)
 - Interviewed music educators who regularly work with religious music
 - Completed a paper and gave a presentation to peers

There is much research left to do—this is a work in progress!

We can't blindly follow any article that is published concerning music. We must challenge and question old practices, and experiment and research new techniques.



ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE


PRESERVICE TEACHERS—CARA AND TUCKER

(CB)

Cara

- I was able to have personal philosophical discussions with some of my classmates that I had barely even said hello to.

Tucker

- It was really nice to bring all of Music Ed together, to look at projects that we, the freshmen, had done.
 - Our classmates seemed excited to see our presentations, and they really opened their minds to what we had to offer them.
- 

ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE

PRESERVICE TEACHERS—KAREN (SB)

- Studying why people believe they are or aren't musical
- UGR Summer Scholars Program was suggested by faculty advisor
 - Participated for two summers
 - Writing a senior thesis
- Learned how to
 - Conduct literature review
 - Develop, pilot and distribute a survey
 - Begin writing a senior thesis
- *I...hope to continue [research] as part of my career in the future.*



ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE

PRESERVICE TEACHERS—BRIAN

- Examined the efficacy of a Department of Education sponsored immersion-based professional development cluster on steel pan through the unique lens of Csikszentmihalyi's flow theory
- UGR Summer Scholars Program
 - Participated for two summers
 - Wrote a thesis
 - Presentation at the RIME conference in Exeter, England
- Developed
 - Critical thinking and analytical skills for reading research articles
 - Concept and method for collecting and analyzing data
 - Confidence in presenting research in a conference setting

ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE

INSERVICE TEACHERS—NEAL (KS)

- Action research in student teaching
 - Ascertain a connection between musical elements and affects or emotions.
 - Students listened to previously unheard music and needed to identify musical elements such as tempo, mode, instrumentation, etc. that led them to experience a specific emotion
- Got a feel for the process of research and how to pose a question and collect data that answered the question

- As a practitioner:

I do not engage in research in my current position. I do read journal articles of other people's research to inform and change my teaching practices. I also feel that my question-asking strategies in class are more specific as a result of my research experience.



ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE

INSERVICE TEACHERS—AMANDA (KS)

- Worked on two studies and an action research project for student teaching
 - Possibilities for teacher training
 - Nurturing young composers
- What she learned
 - How to set up a research scenario
 - How younger students think musically
 - More than she could have imagined!
- Benefits
 - Worked with children under an expert teacher in a safe place
 - Presented research at the Thompson Symposium and on her campus

This kind of mentoring relationship is a positive one for a preservice teacher. It gave me the opportunity to observe a master teacher teach, and I got to see how teachers plan activities as well as teach them.

ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE

INSERVICE TEACHERS—CHRISTINE (CB)

- Received Dean's Research Grant
 - Multiculturalism and its implementation in music classrooms
- Researched teacher-student reciprocity and how communication provides space for transformation
- Conducted research with her students

I learned that there needs to be more research in music education. We are not just teachers, we are learners and we have to constantly question and encourage our students to question. I can't even begin to stress the importance of undergraduate research. It allows us to get our feet wet and see what we really want to investigate. It allows for us to begin to make change in music education. It is a must.



ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE

INSERVICE TEACHERS—JUSTIN (CB)

- Entry into research began as a Freshman
 - Researched relationship between uniforms and performance
 - Prompted him to begin research and continue on into teaching and graduate work.
- Learned about
 - Process of inquiry
 - Designing interview questions
 - Conducting interviews
 - Challenging assumptions brought forth from the problem statement and questions
- Currently working on research started senior year on socialization and acculturation of new teachers
- *Through my participation in UGR I learned that as a music educator, it is my responsibility to constantly explore the field. We will or should always be active researchers and life long learners. As such, continuing to research and review literature affords the space for influence in our own pedagogy and professional practice.*




ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE

INSERVICE TEACHERS—EMILY (SB)

- Service-learning inquiry led to senior thesis
 - Explored how other teachers used multicultural materials, and what their students got out of their multicultural music experience
- Learned of deficiencies in how teachers incorporate multicultural music in the curriculum
- After graduation
 - Grad school:
 - Full fellowship in ethnomusicology
 - Working on an action research project along the same trajectory as her undergraduate research

Without my basis in multicultural music education research, I would not have been able to incorporate the knowledge of educational practices and ethnographic practices that are part of my new project.



ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE INSERVICE TEACHERS—RENEE (JR)

- Honors College – Thesis
 - Explored the creative process that my mother experienced while writing a collection of children’s poetry; set a selection of favorite poems to music
 - Themes were found through analysis of the interviews and compared to experiences of other creators
- State conference poster session
 - Distributing my thesis abstract to others, explaining the process of my research, engaging in conversation with highly-esteemed professors, and inquiring about others’ research was a valuable experience
- After graduation
 - Teaching band, grades 5-8
 - Beginning 3rd year
 - Grad school:
 - Began Summer 09
- Working on research project designed during summer study


Undergraduate research truly shaped my future in music education.



ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE INSERVICE TEACHERS—HELEN (JR)

- Honors College – Thesis
 - My research focused on the members of the Penn State's pop a cappella groups – most specifically their motivation to participate in a musical activity during college. The culmination of the project was the development of a survey and its administration through Survey Monkey. I reported my findings in my undergraduate thesis titled *We Are Still Singing: The musical backgrounds and motivations of participants in collegiate a cappella groups at one university.*
- After graduation
 - Teaching general music, grades K-3
 - Beginning 2nd year

After reading many other theses and dissertations during my literature search I am familiar with scholarly language and feel comfortable getting information from such sources. Once you understand what you're reading, it's not very hard to apply in your classroom..



ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE

INSERVICE TEACHERS—AMY (JR)

○ Honors College – Thesis


- My thesis was a case study of three elementary aged students who were diagnosed on the Autistic spectrum. I researched the impact of Suzuki violin lesson participation upon the behaviors and abilities of the three students that I worked with. I completed an honors thesis. Film clips and video reviews by myself and a reviewer from another state were included in my thesis.

- *I am constantly reflecting and inquiring about my students and their learning. I am always trying to process, reflect, and learn what is going on in my classroom. Although I have not been involved in any formal research project, I feel that on a day to day basis, I am doing informal case studies on the students in my classroom, to help them learn, and to help myself become a better teacher for them.*

○ After graduation


- Teaching general music, grades 1-6
 - Beginning 5th year

I learned that I love doing research! I also discovered how crucial it is for educators to keep asking questions and finding new solutions, as there are still so many students with great needs in music education, and the educational field at large. I also learned what “real research” is, developing a great respect for true, accurate research. I felt more prepared by the research that I did for my honors thesis than by the research I was given to do in my Master’s degree program.



SUMMARY

TOPICS OF RESEARCH PROJECTS

- Effect of tonal pattern instruction on 2nd grade children's vocal improvisations.
 - Perceptions of what it means to be musical.
 - Implications of language literacy on music literacy pedagogy.
 - Teachers addressing aural, visual, & kinesthetic learners.
 - Collaboration between music teachers and other content teachers.
 - Working with mainstreamed students.
 - Pedagogy on playing music with expression.
 - Flow theory and immersion in professional development
 - Spirituality and religion in music education.
- 

SUMMARY

TOPICS OF RESEARCH PROJECTS

- Effect of uniforms on performance.
- Socialization and acculturation of new music teachers.
- Case study of the creative process.
- Why young adults choose to participate in extra-curricular music ensembles.
- Strategies for working with special needs children.
- Music as an instructional tool in the ELL classroom.
- Arranging, writing and transcribing music for MS and HS ensembles.



IN SUM...

*Everyday is a research project
in the life of a teacher!*

-Amy – PSU, May 2004



RESOURCES

- Boyer Commission. (1998). *Reinventing undergraduate Education: A blueprint for America's research universities*. Retrieved October 1, 2009 from <http://naples.cc.sunysb.edu/Pres/boyer.nsf/>
- Burton, S. L. (2004). Where do we begin with inquiry-based degree programs? *Journal of Music Teacher Education*.
- Burton, S. L. & Reynolds, A. R. (2009). Transforming music teacher education through service-learning. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*.
- Strand, K. (2005). Learning to inquire: Teacher research in undergraduate teacher training. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*.