

An Online Community of Interns: Examining the Music Student Teaching Seminar in a Virtual Setting



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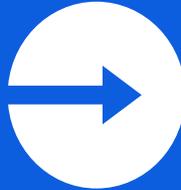
Review of Literature

- Communities of practice offer a wide variety of opportunities and interactions (Wenger, 1998)
- Use of blogging can be effective in building communities of practice (Fitzpatrick, 2014)
- Videos and reflections should be used to support and enhance seminar experiences and interactions (McLoughlin & Lee, 2010; Zeichner & Liston, 1996)



Need

- Prominence of distance learning in higher education (Seaman et al., 2018) and music education (Bowman, 2014)
- Recent developments in distance/virtual mentoring (Harasim, 2000)
- In-depth examination of a virtual approach to instructing the music student teaching seminar may lead to newly cultivated perspectives and practices.



Purpose

The purpose of this instrumental case study (Stake, 1995) was to describe students' and instructors' experiences in a virtual music student teaching seminar.

- Interns' perceptions of the virtual environment
- Instructors perceptions of teaching such a course
- Overall challenges and benefits
- Comparisons to traditional "brick and mortar" settings

Participants

Music Student Teachers (MSTs, $N = 20$)

- Instrumental ($n = 17$); Vocal/General ($n = 3$)
- Completed elementary and secondary placements (8 weeks each)
- Placed at varied distances from campus (max = 120 miles)

Instructors ($N = 2$)

- Taught seminar course for 9 and 5 years
- Previous experience using virtual technology for the seminar
- Served as researcher-participants in order to gain instructor perceptions of their experience



Seminar/Setting Description

Virtual

- Weekly seminar meetings ($N = 15$) via Zoom
- 1 hour long; Mondays @ 4:30

In-Person

- 1 pre-internship meeting at the end of fall semester
- 1 mid-semester on-campus PD day
- End-of-seminar wrap-up



Data Collection

Instructor Focus Group Interviews

- Occurred before and after semester ($N = 2$)
- Both non-instructor researchers facilitated interviews

Student Focus Group Interviews

- Occurred after Weeks 1, 10, and 15 seminar meetings ($N = 3$)
- Both non-instructor researchers facilitated interviews
- Expanded from 2019 study



Supporting Documents

- Written reflections
- Facebook group communication
- Seminar Syllabus

Weekly Virtual Seminar Observations

- Instructors co-taught each seminar ($N = 15$)
- One other researcher observed & took notes
- Saved “chat” for analysis

Data Analysis

- Interview transcripts, virtual text chats, observation notes, and supporting documents analyzed using both *a priori* (Baumgartner & Councill, 2017; 2019) and emergent coding processes.
 - Researcher-participants analyzed course materials and seminar chats
 - Lead researchers analyzed interview transcripts, chats, & observation
- Each Pair^{notes}
 - Individual analysis of 20%, discussed codes, split remaining data (Baumgartner & Councill, 2019); combined into themes (Creswell, 2013)
- All Researchers
 - Met virtually to discuss & review analysis; combine into superordinate themes (Smith & Osborne, 2008)



Seminar Technology

Zoom

- Interface comparable to Skype
- Allows for screen sharing and multimedia interactions
- Chat function allowed multiple, concurrent conversations; voice for students



Facebook Group

- Secret group for all members and instructors

GroupMe

- Student-organized text group

SWIVL

- Recording and archiving software that allowed students to share videos with their colleagues & seminar instructors



SWIVL



Filters ▾

Comments (39)

Notes

▶ 00:08:08 **Owner**

Question: Besides general reminders like this, how can I remind everyone to participate? I have found that proximity doesn't help too much if it moves you out of the view of students. They get confused. What do you suggest?

~ 2 replies ~

00:10:30 **Owner**

I love that some of them had the song so well that they were humming along as I sang it.



Commenting is not available for this project because the owner does not have sharing privileges on Swivl cloud. Please contact the owner and let them know they can enable two-way commenting by upgrading to a Pro license or higher.



9:24 / 27:14

Normal



360p

1x



Findings: Seminar Structure

MSTs

Technology Pros/Cons

- Engagement, distractions, multi-tasking
- Learning to use the tech (screen-share instructions)

More in-person/back to campus meetings

- “I would have loved if we could have met once a month, even though that is a drive.” (Amanda, FG 3)

Instructor

Addition of Chat was helpful

- Engagement, discussion, community building

Zoom/Swivl Combination

- Allowed for shared video viewing

Weekly Seminar Meetings

- Consistency of MST development
- “The biggest challenge this year is going to be the number.” (Ruth, FG 1)



Findings: Seminar Content

MSTs

- Classroom management, licensing, resumes, administrative, culturally relevant pedagogy
 - Aligns with previous research (Baumgartner & Councill, 2014, 2017)
- *Choose* reflection topics based on need
- How to use tech as a *teaching tool*
- High-stakes assessment (portfolio) a major focus/source of apprehension
- Want flexibility in lesson plan format
 - Supports need to continue (Conway & Hodgman, 2006)

Instructors

- Adjusting the order of content
- Inclusion of more integrated portfolio instruction and reminders
- Continued evolution of the video reflections
- Refining special topics to needs of the students



Findings: Purpose of the Seminar

MSTs

- Feedback (initial) vs. Reflection (later)
- Professional Learning “Community”
- Application of knowledge = “bridge”
- Learn vicariously through each others’ experiences
- Overall perception of purpose appeared unchanged, but MSTs projected how the internship would impact the seminar community and their own learning

Instructors

- Reflection/Reflective Practitioners
- Seeing themselves as “lifelong learners”
- Enhances and supplements the student teaching experience
- Platform to collaborate
- Sense of connection, community
- Analyze & Respond



Implications: “To virtual, or not to virtual?”

Distance Limitations

Pre-existing/Established Community

- “...having people know each other in real life and kind of knowing the nuances of people's personality is definitely kind of a good thing for understanding...So I really think it's good that we kind of have that personal connection outside of this to, to base all of our interactions off of whenever we're having these discussions.”
(Danny, FG 1)

Navigating Large Class Size

- 20+ students is a lot to navigate
- Chat function promoted continued interactions
- Break off into smaller groups?



Implications: “To virtual, or not to virtual?”

Which Platform?

- What’s most applicable *beyond* the seminar classroom?

Device Availability

- Equity issue
- Need the proper devices to make the tech work (e.g., iPads, SWIVL stuff)

Student Engagement

- Convenience and comfort of being at home vs “I wasn’t as engaged...”



Implications for Music Teacher Education

Professional Development Plans (PDPs)

- Allow MSTs to have a voice in their assessment, goal-setting, etc.

Importance of a MUED Seminar

- MSTs appreciated being together with as a “music” cohort
- Most seminars reflect this structure (Baumgartner & Council, 2017)
- Content-specific seminar may be most effective (Okraski & Kissau, 2018)
- How can ED seminars meet the needs specific to MSTs?

Lesson Planning

- These students appreciated writing plans, and wanted to adapt/use their own/different formats
- Still need to do it (Conway & Hodgman, 2006)



Questions?

