

Student perceptions of and reflections on a technique-class graduated peer-teaching experience

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Abstract

This research poster is based upon the reflections students shared upon completing a graduated peer-teaching project in a strings techniques class. The project consisted of 5 lessons in the following format:

- *Lesson 1 (Paired Private)*: Rote lesson – set up bow hand and rest/playing positions, bow rhythms on open strings. (20-25 minutes)
- *Lesson 2 (Paired Private)*: Rote lesson – set up the left hand and teach a tetrachord song by rote. (20-25 minutes)
- *Lesson 3 (Sectional)*: Rote lesson – Develop an exercise to focus on sound and tone production, and apply it to a tune. Use a song of your choice from your text or a rote song. Be able to accompany the group on the piano. (8-10 minutes)
- *Lesson 4 (full class warm up)*: Develop a warm up exercise to introduce or reinforce a particular skill within a specific concept area. (5 minutes)
 - Concept areas: Aural skills, Right hand skills, Left hand skills, Musical skills
- *Lesson 5 (half class, full instrumentation)*: Rehearse a full string ensemble on a small portion of a given score, focusing on musical and technical skills. (10 minutes)

The purpose of the peer-teaching experiences were to allow the students to implement their newly formed understandings and knowledge of playing a stringed instrument to various teaching situations that were aligned with the knowledge and skills they were developing. At the conclusion of all five lessons, the students wrote a reflective summary of their experiences, synthesizing and remarking on various aspects of the project and their learning. Upon reflection, the students remarked upon a number of areas of learning and teaching development including sequencing instruction, teaching modes, student assessment, transference of skills and knowledge, recognition of teaching techniques implemented by peers, and personal teaching strengths and weaknesses. The gradual sequence of this particular set of peer-teaching experiences may provide students with the opportunity to make meaningful connections between pedagogy and practice within the confines of a scaffolded teaching sequence.

Conclusions include:

- Providing multiple practice-teaching opportunities within one class may contribute to a student's sense of self-efficacy and accomplishment.
- Providing small, medium, and large teaching formats in a sequential order may prepare students for the challenges the settings might present with regard to student assessment and communication.
- Building in peer review/critique may encourage students to evaluate their own teaching more regularly and critically.
- Providing homogeneous and heterogeneous peer teaching settings may challenge students to prepare and teach for the teaching context, as well as synthesize and demonstrate connections between content and skill during teaching episodes.

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