



Abstracts from Symposium Presentations

Informal Learning and Cultural Transmission

PUB SESSIONS, GARAGE BAND AND LESSONS AT HOME: MUSIC TRANSMISSION IN INFORMAL SETTINGS

Kari K. Veblen

Abstract

There is a growing body of research that documents community contexts of music transmission. Although each situation is unique, recurring themes are emerging. For instance, in the interplay of formal and informal learning contexts there is emphasis on fluidity of knowledge, expertise vs. social well-being, and intergenerational participation. Other themes include student responsibility for their learning, multiple learner/teacher relationships and processes, and the expression of individuality within a collective. This paper shares the findings of my ethnographic research, of research and thinking in the field. I explore cultural capital and cultural knowledge through brief descriptions of varieties of music teaching and learning in community-based settings. Comparisons are drawn between traditional Irish music transmission in Ireland / the “Celtic” diasporas, and ‘schooling’ of popular musicians in the UK and the USA with reference to community music making in South Africa, New Zealand and Portugal.

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A CASE STUDY OF THE PHOENIX CHINESE ART ENSEMBLE

Chi-Hwa Wu

Abstract

In this four-month study of the Phoenix Chinese Art Ensemble, I observed the rehearsals and performances of both the Chinese Instrumental Ensemble and Choir. Data analysis revealed three themes: (1) meanings of participation to the members, (2) learning music in a community group, and (3) function of the organization. Chinese immigrants in these ensembles sought cultural identity and advocated Chinese culture to American society through music making. Implications for music education include benefits of informal learning, qualities for leadership of community groups, and social aspects of adult music making.

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AS WE REMEMBER “HAIR”: COLLECTIVE REMEMBERING AS A TOOL FOR MUSIC TEACHER’S REFLECTIVE WORK

Reijo Aittakumpu and Heidi Westerlund

Abstract

There are noticeably few studies on how students in school experience their musical studies. This study contributes to this understanding by employing a method of ‘collective remembering’ (e.g. Wertsch; Middleton & Edwards; Simola) that concentrates on students’ experiences of high-school music projects. The underlying assumption is that meaningful, significant experiences in music education function as constitutive elements of a young person’s identity construction. Instead of relying on students’ individual memories as accurate representations of the past, the study treats remembering and re-experiencing past musical experiences and their significance collectively, as a new, socially constructed reality. The presentation will examine students’ experience of their music studies as reflective ‘co-memoration’ by addressing the concepts of experience and memory in a social constructivist framework. Shared educational processes form the past link between individual students. However, remembering past school experiences becomes a part of the present situation; thus, memories can be examined from new perspectives and in new contexts and can get new meanings.

The presentation reports the results of a joint re-call and group interview of six students who all participated in the same high-school music projects approximately 10 years ago in Finland. In this pilot-study, earlier videotaped performances of the informants have been used as “cues” for re-experiencing and constructing versions of the past events. The research questions that guide the group discussion and qualitative analysis are: What are the collectively constructed meanings of past experiences in school music; and how are past experiences used to serve identity needs in present life situations? The analysis focuses on experiences that are collectively supported and socially constructed. Pedagogically, this collective remembering is interpreted as guiding the teacher’s understanding of the nature of meaningful music learning.

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IMPROVISATION AND ADULT LEARNERS

William Dabback

Abstract

Everyone has the capacity for lifelong musical growth and creativity, but many people are less inclined to be risk-takers in later life. Risk may lead to unpleasant consequences, and the reluctance to be “wrong” often manifests itself as a disinclination to improvise and experiment in music (Achilles 1992). Of particular concern are those adults who recall experiences of being “vehemently discouraged” from performing anything but notated music (Uszler 1990, 21). If extemporaneous music is indeed natural to human beings as Sloboda (1988) believes, then the development of communities that nurture creativity and improvisation must be a goal of music education in all contexts (Azzara 2002). Specific areas that must be addressed to fully integrate creative music-making in adult settings include accepted definitions of general and musical creativity, concretized mental skills, possible “interference” from previous learning, and teacher-learner interactions.

Human capital, which comprises such constructs as memory, flexibility of thinking, skill levels, and attitude, is often the focus of education. While such capital is integral to teaching and learning, learner

meanings are largely created through social interaction. Claire (1993) and Azzara (2002) propose that networks of exchange featuring participant ownership and collaboration are more facilitative of creative processes than vertical, i.e., “top-down,” structures. This suggests that teachers should seek to make connections to participants’ previous experience and adopt flexible roles as facilitators of learning.

This session discusses the form, content, and processes of creative music-making in adult contexts. Topics include characteristics of adult learners, the roles of teachers, the integration of musical improvisation into existing programs, and ways to connect to participants’ past experience. Videotape and improvisational activities reinforce the concepts presented.

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**ARTISTIC-AESTHETIC IN-PUT OF SONG LEADERS IN AFRICAN ENSEMBLES:
A CASE OF ZIGI IN GHANA**

Mary Dzansi-McPalm

Abstract: please see complete paper in this issue

**LIFELONG LEARNING AND THE INFORMALLY TRAINED JAZZ ARTIST:
A QUALITATIVE, HISTORICAL APPROACH**

Paul Louth

Abstract: please see complete paper in this issue

THE INTERSECTION OF INFORMAL AND FORMAL MUSIC LEARNING PRACTICES

Sheri E. Jaffurs

Abstract: please see complete paper in this issue

**LEARNING, TEACHING, AND TRANSMISSION IN THE LIVES OF
TWO IRISH MUSICIANS: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY**

Janice Waldron

Abstract: please see complete paper in this issue