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### Listening to the Past: Using Student Journals in a Music Education Course

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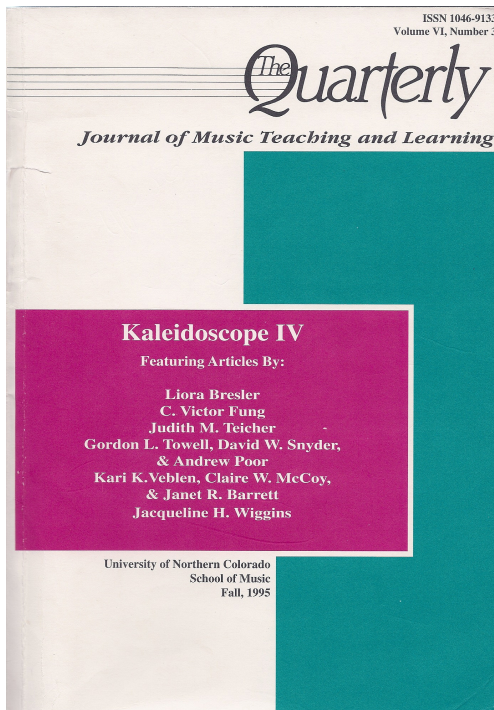
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# Listening To The Past: Using Student Journals In A Music Education Course

**By Gordon L. Towell, David W.  
Snyder, and Andrew Poor**

In what ways, as music teacher educators, can we best prepare our future teachers for the classroom? This perplexing question has long been a topic of heated debate in the education field. In the early part of this century, well-prepared teachers were perceived as ones who were well versed in their subject area, whether it be math, English, or music. This emphasis on subject matter stands in sharp contrast to how well-prepared teachers are perceived and evaluated today. In the 1980s, research on teaching effectiveness led those in teacher education to emphasize pedagogical knowledge, including process-oriented learnings such as organization, management and evaluation (Shulman, 1986). Today, with the guidance of Lee Shulman at Stanford and others, the concern in teacher education is also focusing on future teachers' pedagogical content knowledge. In other words, how is subject matter transformed from what the teacher knows about the subject to the content of that teacher's instruction?

Current thought on how students learn, sometimes called the constructivist view, contends that learning to teach is a process

of constructing meaning. Children learn through constructing ideas about the world and themselves. We can view undergraduate teachers-in-training as constructing meaning in becoming teachers by drawing upon their past and present experiences. Our job as teachers of teachers may be one of discovering our students' ideas and past experiences and then assisting them in constructing meanings and making connections with present and future learnings.

While most teacher preparation curricula today do focus on subject matter, educational psychology, teaching methods, and the philosophical foundations of teaching, little research exists that aids in explaining how teachers use this knowledge in classroom practice. Pamela Grossman (1990) contends that prospective teachers learn much, including instructional strategies, curriculum knowledge, and expectations for student learning from their many years as students observing teachers. For many preservice teachers this prior experience can be much more influential on their conception of teaching than their program of preparation.

Prospective teachers bring these past experi-

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ences or biographies, as J. Gary Knowles (1992) of the University of Michigan calls them, into their forming teacher identities. Knowles works under the assumption that preservice teachers are more influenced by prior experiences than by college methods courses and has published the findings of several case studies that focus on preservice teachers' biographies. To gain a complete understanding of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that preservice teachers have and are acquiring requires conversation of both what the students bring to and experience in their teacher preparation program. One way to get at both the forming pedagogical content knowledge and the biographies of teachers in training is to use student journals to create a place for conversation.

Teacher educators have turned to dialogue journal writing and supervisory discussions in order to encourage preservice teachers to be reflective while learning to teach (Barbour & Holmes, 1987; Oberg, 1990; Lehman, 1991). In a general education setting, Fishman & Raver (1989) and Richert (1990) have had groups of students benefit from reflective student journal writing during student teaching. These studies have discovered that keeping journals can be an experience that encourages critical thinking. Packard (1992) used dialogue journal writing in an introductory course in preservice art education to assess students' cognitive development. Schiller (1994) examined the reflections of preservice art teachers through dialogue journal writing with university supervisors. Using student journals can provide a unique opportunity for music preservice teachers to discuss the issues they see as central to teaching with someone who has experience in the profession.

Our primary goal in using journals with undergraduate music education students was to shed some light on the prior conceptions

these students have about schools, teachers, students, and how continued music study interacts with that mixture. Further, we hoped to trace any changes that occurred due to curricular influences or life experiences (Wing, 1993). Eve Harwood (1993)

gives suggestions in her discussion of how teacher education programs can provide for better experiences for the undergraduate preservice teacher. Among her suggestions are: (a) providing for more frequent feedback, (b) more opportunities for discussion, and (c) requiring students to engage in reflection on their own teaching and learning. Dialogue journal writing between experienced teachers and undergraduate music education students can provide one opportunity for teacher educators to address these suggestions.

At the University of Cincinnati, using journal writing, we have been observing the individuality and processes of our undergraduates' thinking. Journal

writing involves the undergraduate music educators in discussions of their observations of experienced teachers in music classrooms within the greater Cincinnati area. This process has led us to a more informed view of our students and their backgrounds and to better understandings of just how they observe and perceive the teaching of music. Through these understandings we hope to then be able to assist them in constructing meanings and making connections with the past, present, and future learnings and experiences. By engaging in an open-ended discussion with us, the preservice teachers are also invited to join and share in the ongoing conversation taking place in music teaching and education. This article is a synthesis of our understandings obtained by using student journals in the Winter and Spring of 1994 at the University of Cincinnati.

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## BACKGROUND

### Curriculum

The College Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati is a comprehensive music school with a strong conservatory tradition. Many of the undergraduates possess strong musical performance skills and solid academic qualifications befitting this conservatory tradition; consequently, many pursue double majors in music education and performance. About half this student body hails from Ohio, while the remaining students come primarily from the eastern and southern states. With a few exceptions, the undergraduates are traditional students ranging in age from 18 to 22. The school operates on the quarter system with each quarter being 10 weeks long.

The journal-writing process is part of the INTRODUCTION TO MUSIC EDUCATION I course that is required of all the students in the music education program. Freshmen traditionally take this course as their first exposure to the music education curriculum at the undergraduate level. We have selected student journals from the Winter and Spring quarters so we could gain a greater knowledge of more students and also for comparisons.

### The Teachers Observed

Efforts are made to include all types of possible public school music settings in the eight scheduled observations. The particular observations in the Winter and Spring quarter of 1994 included: elementary general music (in both suburban and inner-city settings), beginning and advanced strings, beginning and advanced bands, and high school choir situations. The teachers in these classrooms represented a range of experiential levels from one year to several decades of service. In most cases, student journal writers were allowed to talk with the observed teacher before or after the observation. A more complete picture of the particular teacher and the

lesson being observed could be revealed at this time. According to the class syllabus, students are informed that many different approaches to the same problems will be witnessed and not to criticize differing views but to “look for positive elements that will aid you in your career.” During the first observations the students were given little direction of what aspects to observe, since we were interested in understanding their perspective. In later observations the pen-pal would ask pointed questions to enhance the picture of what was taking place in the classrooms. These questions would be asked after the observation with the hope of creating and maintaining discussions. Due to scheduling problems, some teachers were observed in less than optimum conditions. After each observation the students wrote their impressions of the lesson on computer disk and then gave the disk to their pen-pal.

### Pen-Pals

Each undergraduate observer was assigned a doctoral music education student who served as a “pen-pal” to the observer throughout the quarter. All the doctoral music education students have had school-teaching experience. These pen-pals attempted to personally meet with their freshman partners and also provided a biography of themselves so that the undergraduate students felt more comfortable conversing about the observed issues and the journaling process had human interaction. Similar to the Schiller (1994) study, pen-pals attempted to create an informal dialogue with the undergraduates that emphasized content over formal structure. Many classroom and teaching issues did arise and were discussed, whether they were observed or stemmed from a particular conversation or concern.

Student journals were read and responded to each week by the assigned pen-pal with meetings to discuss the observations between

It must be understood that it was never the pen-pals' intention to change the student journal writers' belief system but, rather, to create an awareness of alternate views on important issues and practices in music education and the greater field of education.

the course professor and the doctoral pen-pals scheduled when appropriate throughout the quarter. In an attempt to facilitate deeper understandings from the observations, pen-pals did ask pointed questions of the undergraduate observers. These might include, but were not limited to, such questions as: What appeared to be the objectives of the class? What was actually being taught (subject matter) and in what ways did it seem appropriate? How did the teacher try to achieve those objectives (methods)? What connections among learnings did the teacher make during the lesson? How did the students respond to the teaching procedures (methods)? What methods of classroom management did you observe? What would you try to do differently if you had been teaching the class? These questions were asked at the end of the observations and the student would either respond to or address the questions in future observations. These journals were done on computer so it was easy to create space for discussion between the observer and the pen-pal.

To allow for an illuminating discussion, we have chosen the journals of two students with different backgrounds who saw and thought about the observations quite differently: "Robert" and "Karen." We have provided excerpts from their biographies, journal entries, similar to the research of Knowles (1992) and a synopsis of their placement within the developmental continuum emerging from a content analysis. As will be illustrated, Robert showed insight into the teaching process through his journal entries and was placed high in the developmental continuum. Karen, on the other hand, maintained a judgmental and narrow focus in her observations; her thinking was placed in the lower half of the continuum.

### **The Student Journal Writer's Own Background**

Because of the importance of personal "biographies" (Knowles, 1992) in undergraduate thinking, students were asked to provide some background information about themselves as it relates to music and their desire to pursue a music education career so that we could better understand and identify their past experiences and how these experiences may influence their current thought.

**Robert** transferred from the vocal performance division, but unlike most who do this, he sincerely seems to want to teach as his first choice. He was strongly influenced by his high school choir director in a positive way. He seems to have many non-music related interests and enjoys working with children in a summer camp situation.

**Karen** has played the violin since she was three and listed many of the performance opportunities she has had in her young career in her biography. After prompting from her pen-pal, she told a little more about her background including a less-than-motivating high school orchestra experience which led her to teaching "little kids" and eventually influenced her decision to major in music education.

All of the students brought with them a unique background, motivation, and perspective about public school music which colored their observations in many different ways. It must be understood that it was never the pen-pals' intention to change the student journal writers' belief system but, rather, to create an awareness of alternate views on important issues and practices in music education and the greater field of education.

### **The Coding Process**

The content analysis for each set of journals was completed following the respective

Winter and Spring quarters. In order to perform the actual content analysis on the student journal entries, a system of classifying the various data presented was developed (Casey, 1992). In keeping with the tenets of the qualitative research paradigm, the coding system that emerged was dependent on and embedded in the data culled from the student observations. To ensure reliability, possible content categories from one set of observations were devised separately by each doctoral pen-pal and then compared by all the pen-pals for possible refinement, removal, or confirmation. For aid in identifying the type of statements being made, the doctoral pen-pals created their own systems to highlight similar statements contained across this set of student observations. After discussion and comparison among all the pen-pals involved, initials were chosen to represent the type and content of the statements made in each journal entry.

The following is the Spring 1994 version of the coding system based on a similar scheme reported by Thaller, Finfrock, and Bononi (1993). The descriptions are followed by examples from Robert's and Karen's journals that are representative statements coded in each category.

**AM:** Statements in which student journal writers offer ALTERNATIVE METHODS to those being observed.

**Robert**

*Here I would have picked out the spots that I thought the students might have had trouble with and just gone over those measures.*

**Karen**

None given in observations.

**C:** Statements that dealt with the CONTEXT of the classroom, i.e., background information on the observed students, teachers, or facilities.

**Robert**

*They did, however, just return from state competition, and he (the teacher) did tell us that the class was going to be relaxed.*

**Karen**

*She has some time for planning and free time which is nice but she does teach 8 classes a day for 35 minutes.....She had drums, blocks and chimes which I know a lot of schools cannot afford.*

**D:** Statements pertaining to DISCIPLINE or

classroom control issues.

**Robert**

*There was not a big problem with discipline or acting up and when there was a small problem, she would ask the student what needed to be done to fix the problem.*

**Karen**

*If he had a discipline problem he would write their name down and they would have to stand by the wall during recess.*

**J:** Statements that contained a JUDGMENTAL tone, or were evaluative of the observed situation.

**Robert**

*I thought the way she handled the warm-up was wonderful. It took a minimal amount of time and soon as it was over she began the lesson.*

**Karen**

*This is the most ideal school district for young teachers to teach in....Overall I thought she did a good job with this lesson....I did not like the way he talked to the sixth graders.*

**Em:** Statements that showed EMPATHY for the particular classroom situation being observed either for the teacher or students.

**Robert**

*She was very efficient with her time which is necessary when you have the schedule of a traveling teacher.*

**Karen**

*I suppose that age, discipline and trying to get the students to focus is one of the most ominous tasks that a teacher faces.*

**IM:** Statements that detailed INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS being used in the observed classroom.

**Robert**

*When she was about half way done with tuning, she had the students whose instruments were tuned begin to warm up ....they played the D scale about five times while she finished tuning.*

**Karen**

*He makes them clap the rhythm that they have problems with, and if they have intonation problems he shows them how to fix their breathing or mouth.*

**MA:** Statements that noted actual MUSICAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS made by the students during the observed class period.

**Robert**

*This class accomplished very little. The test was the next day and there was not much planned.*

**Karen**

None given

- R:** Statements that dealt with personal relationships or RAPPORT between the observed students and teacher.

**Robert**

*This was obvious by the respect she had for the students, by the smile she had on her face, and her general demeanor.*

**Karen**

*He was a more passive teacher with the second graders so the students could have more fun.*

- PB:** Statements that introduce the journalists' own PERSONAL BACKGROUND into the observed situation.

**Robert**

*The students acted like all choirs I have observed or participated in.*

**Karen**

*I never had this kind of eartraining until I got to college.*

- SE:** Statements that refer to the teacher's EVALUATION of their STUDENTS, whether it be a formal test or grade, or simply a verbal reinforcement.

**Robert**

*She called on students individually to make sure they understood what she had explained.*

**Karen**

*He rewarded them with stickers and class points for good performances and behavior.*

- SM:** Statements that dealt with what was actually being taught, or SUBJECT MATTER.

**Robert**

*The worksheet consisted of a staff and then notes placed at certain intervals....This hymn was in dorian mode and he prefaced the actual reading with a general explanation.*

**Karen**

*She taught the kids the basic fundamentals of note reading and rhythm.*

In arriving at a consensus for the coding categories, the pen-pals thought the above listed categories would change somewhat for each new group of student journal writers because each class would be comprised of unique sets of individuals. This coding system was modified slightly from the 1992-93 academic year and probably will be further modified again next year so that it might reflect the statements of that particular group of individuals. Not all the student observers noticed or discussed content in all of the categories and many statements involved a combination of categories. After the careful coding

of student observations by a doctoral student other than the one serving as pen-pal with the student, each of the student journal coding results were compared and discussed by all the doctoral pen-pals to provide for reliability of the findings. At this time, the doctoral pen-pals attempted to look for common trends in the students' writings and classify them.

## Better Understanding The Student Journal Writers

In order to attempt to understand and frame the data collected from each student journal writer, we turned to the research of Perry (1968) and to a chapter by Theis-Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1987). The Theis-Sprinthall and Sprinthall chapter synthesizes various viewpoints on "modes" of development from adolescence to adulthood. The following is a summation of characteristics for students at each level, with mode "C" being the most highly developed:

Mode "A"—views learning from a concrete factual basis, other directed.

Mode "B"—views learning from an abstract perspective, can distinguish theory from fact. Empathy for individual differences.

Mode "C"—multiple solutions are employed. High on abstractions-symbolizations, understands laws versus principles. Commitment (pp. 44-47).

The students were then placed in these classifications to allow us to converse about where the students were in their observing and thinking at this specific time. Additionally, this may serve as a model with which their development can be followed as they progress through their undergraduate program of studies and experiences. To expand and enrich this model we also considered the work of Perry.

Perry interviewed male undergraduate students at Harvard from 1954-1963. He and his associates devised nine developmental levels to describe the passage from late adolescence to adulthood. Perry's stages of development can be grouped into four larger categories (dualism, multiplicity, relativism, and commitment within relativism) which are described very well by Brand (1988). In his article, Brand defines dualism as:

The student in this stage acknowledges that

there are differences in perspective, but categorizes those differences into one of two groups: right-good-we vs. wrong-bad-them. Not only do “right” answers exist, but all information can be classified as either right or wrong while uncertainty is viewed as an error (p. 23).

Students in the dualistic stage look to authority figures for “right” answers, but students who have entered into the multiplicity stage now acknowledge other opinions and in fact see each different opinion as valid. In the relativistic stage, the student realizes that what is “right” is dependent upon the situation and the particular context that surrounds it. The student starts to consider such aspects as grade or achievement level, administration, school, and finances before making decisions about a particular teaching situation. Students/teachers who are beginning the commitment stage may be starting a first job, living on their own, or even getting married. At this point, the students realize that their commitment and responsibility to a career or spouse, etc. will influence their decisions. Ideals and beliefs are of a greater consistency because of the commitment to a meaningful job situation.

The basis for our classification system used with the student journal writers was a combination of the Mode “A-C” system from Theis-Sprinthall and Sprinthall and Perry’s four broad developmental levels. A hybrid of the two classification systems mentioned above was developed to allow for a more accurate placement of the student’s journal entries into one of five categories based on the content analysis of these journals. These categories are also included in the study of Thaller, Finrock, and Bononi (1993).

**Advanced**—Operates at mode C which includes employing multiple solutions and high use of abstractions and symbolizations. Committed.

**High Middle**—Operates at mode B. Views learning from an abstract perspective. Can distinguish between theory and fact. Is somewhere between multiplistic and relativistic in approach. On their way towards commitment.

**Middle**—On their way to mode B. Realizes there is more than one possible solution. No longer “other” directed.

**Low Middle**—Operating in Mode A, dualistic thinking. Views learning from a concrete factual basis. “Right” and “Wrong” answers. Other directed.

**Beginner**—Little background in viewing the world in other than dualistic terms. Observations are lacking in content and meaningful information (Appendix F).

## Findings

After a detailed content analysis was made of each student journal, we composed a summary for each student with justification for the placement level chosen. We have included the two developmental summaries of Robert and Karen whom we have been following throughout the article.

“Robert” was concerned with the student/teacher relationship in all of his observations (R) and obviously holds this in high regard in his own developing teaching style. Robert was also creative in his writing style, which lends itself to a richer picture of the classroom being observed. He was very detailed in his description of classroom instruction and often included possible reasons for a particular method being used or even an alternative. He seemed able to accept multiple solutions to a problem though he also had well-constructed ideas of his own. When Robert was judgmental in his comments, it was usually a compliment for a previously unknown idea or approach. As the observations progressed more mentions of the subject matter being taught were made. Robert seems well into mode B and places high in the categories developed for this project.

### Placement: High Middle

“Karen” maintained a judgmental tone in all of her observations (“I thought she was a great teacher”, or “I feel that the way Mr. Brown was is not the way I would teach”) and exhibits signs of right/wrong dualistic thinking. Karen rarely acknowledged the validity of methods foreign to her background or offered any alternatives to methods she condemned, showing a lack of acceptance for and knowledge of alternative procedures. Any mentions of instructional methods were usually superficial and contained her stamp of approval or disapproval. There was, however, a show of concern for

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how the various teachers interacted with the students (R). "He was more of a passive and calm teacher so the second graders could have more fun with him..." Karen did do a fairly consistent job of noticing the different environments being observed and how the class make-up affected the various teachers' approach (C). Karen writes,

Bridgett got a chance to tell us about her schedule for the day. She has some time for planning and free time which is nice but she does teach 8 classes a day for 35 minutes which is a lot of students to have (and remember names for).

Because of Karen's apparent inability or disposition to leave the dualistic realm of right and wrong ways of teaching, she was placed fairly low on the developmental continuum.

#### **Placement: Low Middle**

Below is a summary of the preservice teachers placement within the developmental levels.

Advanced:	0
High Middle:	5
Middle:	3
Low Middle:	5
Beginner:	1
	14

This ongoing work with the Introduction to Music Education students has given us, as teacher educators, some insight into the thinking of these future teachers. The project has been partial confirmation that, for the most part, our undergraduates enter the program as dualistic thinkers. An overall trend observed in all the journal entries was a right vs. wrong/good vs. bad judgmental tone to the observed situations. For example, an observed instructional method is often qualified with the journal writers' approval or disapproval. This seems to match the criteria for a dualistic/Mode A student, which is in line with the findings of Perry's

research for the entering college student.

#### **Karen:**

*I was really impressed with what they were doing because it's just about the same as what we are doing in theory class as freshmen in college.*

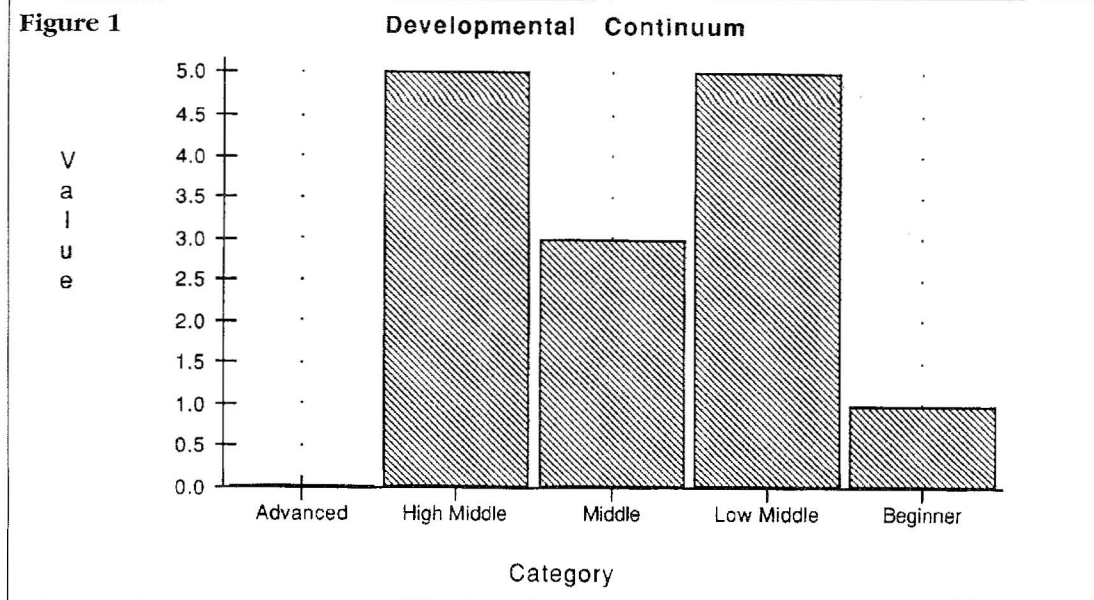
Likewise, if an observed discipline method did not meet the observers' picture of good classroom management, the student journal writer was sure to mention disagreement with the technique.

#### **Karen:**

*The rehearsal resembled organized chaos. Students seemed to have little concentration and talked whenever the teacher stopped the group. Furthermore, I was shocked by the little real rehearsing that was done.*

It should be noted that the very nature of the observation process lends itself to one being a "critical" observer rather than a neutral learner of new possibilities. We sometimes find ourselves, when in a similar situation of, for example, watching a colleague, automatically placing a value judgment on what the observed teacher does and has accomplished versus our mental model of the "ideal." It is also important to note that we, as pen-pals, encouraged our students to break from this pattern of being judgmental and to see each situation for possible alternatives that may not align with their own experiences. In other words, we encouraged the student observers to accept multiple solutions for a given situation. Harwood (1993) writes that we as teacher educators should provide opportunities for our students to move from dualistic modes of thought to the other levels. More often than not, though, our students continued their dualistic/judgmental style of writing. The results of our developmental continuum placements appear to have fallen within a bimodal distribution, which could suggest either the program made a difference



**Figure 1**

with the individual students or that they entered the program at different points on the continuum. We would like to hope that the former is true, but conventional wisdom suggests otherwise. Robert's observations started at a higher level than Karen's and, with the exception of additional attention to subject matter in later entries, showed no growth on the developmental continuum throughout the quarter. It must be noted that one quarter (10 weeks) may not be a long enough period for true developmental change to take place. (See Figure 1 above).

Another trend observed in many of the student journals was a concern over a positive personal rapport (or feeling tone) between the observed teacher and students. It seemed important to our journal writers that the observed students enjoyed being in the teacher's class and further, liked and respected the teacher.

**Robert:**

*In his disciplining, he took the offending students aside and tried to reinforce his rules without causing any embarrassment to the students. He was very communicative with the students and talked to them in their own language, using even slang at times.*

*She took time to talk with the kids and to treat them as friends and not just students.*

This, too, matches the description of Mode A students who tend to be "other" directed; in

this case student approval would control the actions they would take.

One of the most enduring motives that our content analysis uncovered is the importance of previous musical experiences, i.e., high school performance groups, private teachers, etc. on the forming teaching ideals of these undergraduates. It seems these new music education majors base their model of an "ideal" teacher on the experiences, curriculum, and style of their most influential teacher or ensemble and are very reluctant to accept other possibilities as being equally valid. This finding also supports the previously mentioned research of Pamela Grossman.

**Karen:**

*When I was taught the violin, I was taught all of the essentials for advanced playing, but Ms. Martin disagreed and said some things just are not important at the middle school.... I think these students will always have problems in the future.*

These students have observed music teaching for many years and, drawing from their observations, have constructed a set of ideals that conceptualize good teaching for them. With journal writing we are able to recognize these pre-held ideals and their effect on the student's concept of teaching.

Classroom management was also high on the priority list of many of the student journal writers which matches the findings from Schiller (1994). They were very keen on the

mood and style that the observed teachers used in their approach to handling discipline problems. Even if the observer did not particularly care for the method of the teacher, classes with relatively few disruptions from the students were always noted.

**Robert:**

*I have known many teachers who will just yell at the kids in front of the whole class and I believe this to be very detrimental.*

**Karen:**

*After the class he told us that as a teacher you cannot worry about if the kids like you or not. You have to be as tough as you possibly can and then they will respect you and obey you. I'm not sure if I totally agree with that or not. I can understand his point and it definitely works for him.*

These students brought with them different backgrounds and ideals which colored and influenced their observations. Although they were all observing the same situation, many times different pictures emerged. As was previously mentioned, biographies play an important role in the emerging pedagogical content knowledge of a teacher. As we are learning from a growing number of studies undertaken in school classrooms, students' prior knowledge and privately-held conceptions hold powerful sway in their learning (Wing, 1994). If we are to gain an understanding of how teachers change knowledge of subject matter to content of instruction and in general conceive a well run classroom, we must allow their own voices to enter into current teacher education. It must also be remembered that these stages are on a continuum and the placements of these preservice teachers, be they right or wrong, are only for this specific time.

### **Discussion, Implications, and Future Research**

The role of the pen-pal cannot be over-emphasized because it affects the content of the student journal entries. It was our general understanding to keep the conversation between the students and ourselves informal but, as stated earlier, we did give suggestions of what different aspects of the teaching/learning process upon which to focus attention. We had hoped that these suggestions and questions would engage them in critical

thinking, and also may assist them in their development. It was noted several times in our content analysis that the perceived increase of higher-level comments from journal writers over the quarter was due in large part to the student conforming to or addressing their pen-pal's questioning and focus. In some cases the students' writing style even changed in an attempt to focus on what they or the pen-pal considered more "substantive" information. Some students, after pen-pal comments and questions, wrote more detailed observations of method and subject matter in later observations as compared to earlier mentions of discipline and rapport.

The students were also influenced by the course of study, their professor's input from class discussions, outside readings, and CCM case study video tapes 1, 3, 5. The first two observations were totally unstructured. Students were instructed in the course syllabus to simply write what they saw and to note "that which is important to you." As the quarter progressed, the professor did draw the students' attention to the beginnings and endings of classes and how different teachers approached these times. The CCM case study videos were used showing segments of real classes filmed in the Cincinnati area. Students were also instructed to notice how new material was introduced and how old material was reviewed and any reward systems used. Throughout all these discussions daily practical issues of rehearsal technique were discussed.

It is also possible that what the student journal writers addressed was an attempt to conform to what they thought we (the pen-pals) or the professor wanted, rather than their own true thoughts and reflections on what was observed. Some control for this was taken by not grading the journals on content but only on completion and also asking open ended questions to evoke discussion. Another shortcoming of this project was the time constraints under which the student journal writers worked. It was noted that in many journals the entries became significantly shorter and less content rich as the quarter drew to a close. This may be because other course demands increased or that some of the students may have become bored with

the novelty of the journal writing process. Students were also asked to do outside readings and other short assignments in conjunction with this class which also added to their workload.

The students benefited in unexpected ways from writing and keeping journals. The journal process provided an informal setting for our undergraduates to practice their writing skills, a skill that must be addressed for those entering the teaching profession (Schiller, 1994). Another side benefit that derived from this project was an emerging computer literacy for both the student journal writers and the pen-pals. The incoming class of journal writers was given a brief introduction to the Macintosh Classic computer used for the study which included such basics as formatting the disc, opening new folders, and saving documents. We also found that both students with and without extensive background on computers did improve their computer skills. Another possibility for the brevity of some of the journal entries mentioned above, and thus the lack of rich content, could be the writer's inability to manipulate the medium, i.e., the computer.

Harwood (1993) suggests that undergraduates do not achieve the higher stages of development and thinking until after they leave other institutions. Studies like this in the future could be more revealing if they were longitudinal in nature following the preservice teachers through undergraduate studies to their professional careers noting the changes in thought and development stages that occur. As with all research of this type, it is dangerous to make broad generalizations about the undergraduate based on only the fourteen students reported on here and these specific observations. Our findings and placement may not be correct as students' thought processes are forever changing and developing. These particular students have provided us with only a window into the critical thinking skills of the freshman music education major. As we continue to do work with them and grow, we will surely see things not previously noticed, and change our thinking about what we have believed to be once true.

In what ways as music teacher educators can we best prepare our future teachers for the classroom? To understand this question and attempt to put these understandings into our practice, teacher educators must uncover, through conversations about past and present experiences and dispositions, the preservice teachers' thinking and meaning making. Teacher educators and preservice teachers should also identify and reflect upon past experiences that influence their conceptions of good music teaching. This conversation can engage the preservice teacher in viewing teaching and learning from different perspectives. With the student journals, we at least begin the journey of understanding how future teachers acquire their teaching knowledge and styles through listening to their own voices and seeing their attempts at constructing meaning from the input of their world.

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