

Effective Pedagogy in Music

*A model of collegial support
for primary school teachers*

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Introduction

Effective Pedagogy in Music:

This small scale Network Learning Community project examined the effective pedagogy section of the New Zealand Curriculum and adapted the seven features of effective pedagogy identified as promoting student learning, to the specific context of the music classroom. A model for collaborative reflective practice is suggested as a way of enhancing teaching as inquiry

Contents

3. Indicators for creating a supportive learning environment
4. Indicators for encouraging reflective thought and action
5. Indicators for enhancing relevance of new learning
6. Indicators for facilitating shared learning
7. Indicators for making connections to prior learning and experience
8. Indicators for providing sufficient opportunities to learn
- 9 - 10. Teaching as Inquiry: *A model for collaborative reflective practice*
11. Classroom observation sheet
12. Acknowledgements
13. Appendix from New Zealand Curriculum: Effective Pedagogy (NZC pp 34 & 35)

Effective Pedagogy in Music

Aspect 1. Creating a Supportive Learning Environment

The music teacher will consult with school management, classroom teachers, parents, community, students and local musicians to provide relevant contexts for music learning. Materials displayed in the music classroom will reflect student backgrounds and musical achievements, so students will see themselves and their cultural heritage valued in the music classroom displays. The music room will be a safe place where respectful audience behaviour is expected, where it is okay to take risks, to participate with existing music skills and learn from mistakes made. Musical instruments will be tuned, well cared for, accessible and well organised. Music groups will be supported to practise effectively through allocation of space, time and resources and demonstrate supportive learning in action.

Indicators	Self - Reflection	
	Strengths	Areas for development
Music programme and classroom displays reflect relevant context for learning		
Musical instruments are tuned, well cared for, accessible and well organised		
Teacher actively demonstrates and encourages care and respect for musical instruments and equipment		
Teacher uses management strategies which establish and maintain a safe music learning environment which includes encouragement of risk taking and 'mis' – 'takes'		
Teacher facilitates music rehearsals in which effective learning is evident and supportive group processes are operating		

Effective Pedagogy in Music

Aspect 2. Encouraging reflective thought and action

Reflective thought and action in music is made evident through active music-making. The teacher's role is often that of a facilitator who encourages all participants to offer ideas and feedback to others through group discussion. In musical activities such as rehearsal, performance, improvisation and composition, reflective thought and action will be actively encouraged through attentive listening and divergent thinking. The teacher will facilitate the development of ideas through collaboration (building on ideas of others). The music teacher will demonstrate skills in the use of musical vocabulary and open-ended questioning strategies.

Indicators	Self - Reflection	
	Strengths	Areas for development
Active music-making with an emphasis on listening as well as playing		
Active encouragement of creative responses and support for the development of ideas		
Facilitation of reflection through use of open ended questioning		
Support and encouragement of interactive student feedback.		
Teacher facilitates music rehearsals in which effective learning is evident and supportive group processes are operating		

Effective Pedagogy in Music

Aspect 3. Enhancing the relevance of new learning

The music teacher will plan a sequential learning programme that builds on previous music learning in which learning intentions and success criteria are made clear. The music teacher provides hands-on, relevant music making as the hook for children’s engagement, exploration and improvisation. Teachers need to know the children well in order to provide appropriate musical challenge. Music planning will incorporate thematic references to the school-wide curriculum planning and links need to be made explicit. Relevant cross-curricular links and key competencies will be highlighted in music planning each term.

Indicators	Self - Reflection	
	Strengths	Areas for development
Teacher provides active, hands-on, relevant music making opportunities.		
Teacher provides hooks for children to be curious about, engage in and relate to music.		
Teacher demonstrates knowledge of students through differentiated learning opportunities.		
Music learning is relevant to the wider school context.		

Effective Pedagogy in Music

Aspect 4. Facilitating shared learning

Teachers will aim to provide a balance of group, peer and teacher directed teaching where they are music facilitators rather than directors, building on the ideas of students making music together rather than just talking about it. Teachers will stimulate curiosity by performing with and for students so they see their teachers as musicians. Invite family members to come and help with learning particular pieces e.g. Tikanga for using poi or waiata-a-ringa, local musicians to assist the rock band, Tongan families teaching correct pronunciation and dance for a Tongan song. Visiting musicians working with students e.g. from another school, from community, professional and community musicians. Participation in music festivals and community performances e.g. choir, ukulele, marimba, orchestra. Using internet to share knowledge e.g. Youtube, Skype, school intranet... To allow this to happen, first you need: safe environment, opportunity to make noise, risk taking, humility and to build trust.

Indicators	Self - Reflection	
	Strengths	Areas for development
Facilitating peer and group learning. Encouraging students to participate confidently in small groups and provide feedback to each other.		
Reciprocal Teaching: Teachers as learners, teachers identify students' strengths and students sharing their expertise with teachers and peers.		
Preparing students for shared music making with others e.g. festivals, community and professional musicians involved, bringing in expertise e.g. APO and NZMC mentors. Teachers perform with students.		
Students encouraged to share their own music resources e.g. CDs and Youtube to share music experiences from outside the classroom. Or Using internet to search for music/chords/arrangements they'd like to learn.		
Facilitating peer and group learning. Encouraging students to participate confidently in small groups and provide feedback to each other.		

Effective Pedagogy in Music

Aspect 5. Making connections to prior learning and experience

Teachers anticipate students' learning needs by deliberately building on what students know and have experienced. In order to plan and document sequential learning in music at both the programme and individual level teachers need to know about sequences/stages of music learning and what particular range of activities will help develop specific skills. They also need to systematically build their knowledge of, and appreciate the relevance of the students experience of music at home and in the community e.g. cultural context, musical instruments played, out-of-school performances involved in and community/family musical life. This enables connections to be made across learning areas and to musical practices at home and in the wider world. A music profile could be developed for each student to record musical experiences and achievements. Evidence of sequential learning.

Indicators	Self - Reflection	
	Strengths	Areas for development
Sequences or stages of learning are evident in planning and practice e.g. building on skills and knowledge developed in prior learning.		
Music vocabulary and key competencies are developed over time e.g. referrals made to previous learning, music vocabulary used, group skills, feedback to peers.		
Instruments and activities used are authentic and transferable to students lives outside of school		
The music room and the music programme reflect the range of students' cultural and community experience and includes a wide variety of music		

Effective Pedagogy in Music

Aspect 6. Providing sufficient opportunities to learn

Time will be allowed for students to practise basic skills and have opportunities to learn more complex skills. Prior experiences build to new experiences e.g. playing of instruments – challenges for students so they progress beyond playing at a basic level.

Performance groups allow opportunities for students to aim for high achievement.

Indicators	Self - Reflection	
	Strengths	Areas for development
Lesson is paced with opportunities to practise developing skills – embedding the learning through repetition in different contexts and opportunities.		
Differentiated learning is evident: A range of activities to suit abilities Different goals/outcomes for specific learning groups. Enrichment		
Informal and small group performances are used as learning opportunities.		
Opportunities are provided to extend students with special abilities e.g: Independent learning – allowing for individuality, creativity and student input. Assigning leadership roles for group learning and peer evaluation. Students are preparing for performances outside the community.		

Effective Pedagogy in Music

Aspect 7: Teaching as Inquiry

'Inquiry into the teaching learning relationship can be visualized as a cyclical process that goes on moment by moment (as teaching takes place) day-by-day and over the longer term' (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 34)

Collaborative Reflective Practice

Music teaching often occurs in isolation with little opportunity for meaningful appraisal practices in which in-depth conversations about effective pedagogy can occur. Using a collaborative reflective practice approach, partnerships could be formed between teachers working in different schools. This has the potential to address the need for accountability within a particular teaching context, to provide an opportunity for ongoing teacher development and to establish stronger levels of collegiality within the field of primary music education

See also

Robinson V., Lai, Mei Kuin., (2006) *Practitioner research for educators: A guide to improving classrooms and schools Chapter 3 pp 35-52* Thousand Oaks CA Corwin Press

Cardno Piggot-Irvine, E., Carol C. (2005) *Appraising Performance Productively – Integrating Accountability and Development*

Important features of such a partnership for collaborative reflective practice

- **Mutuality:** The relationship is a mutually negotiated one, which involves a reciprocal arrangement between two teachers to engage in collaborative reflective practice in each of the teacher's respective teaching contexts.
- **Reciprocity:** Each teacher will be both observed and observer, giver and receiver of feedback, listener and listened to challenger and challenged, supporter and supported etc.
- **Professional Integrity:** The partnership is established on the basis of commitment to high standards of pedagogical practice both in respect of a particular teaching context and in respect of the professional standards associated within music education
- **Rapport trust and respect:** Given the self-directed and mutual nature of the partnership, the relationship is likely to be characterised by rapport, trust and respect
- **Motivation:** Motivation is likely to be present, as the people involved own the process

A model of practice for collaborative reflective practice

Preparatory stage: Initial discussion and identification of specific focus

- Consider six areas of effective pedagogy and evaluate relative strengths
- Establish focus for observation, reflection and feedback
- Identify specific indicators and/or construct other indicators relevant to own context with possible examples of evidence.

Observation stage: In the classroom

- Provide relevant documentation in advance of lesson (Planning documents, musical notation or other relevant material)
- Observation partner visits and observes unobtrusively

Follow-up stage: Discussion, reflection and goal setting

- Arrange for discussion immediately following the observation
- Co-construct a narrative of session i.e. record of what happened from both the observed and the observer's point of view
- Reflect in relation to specific foci identified in the preparatory stage
- Develop goals for future action/reflection cycle

Classroom Observation
Collaborative reflective practice – Effective Pedagogy in Music

Indicators (with specific examples)	Observer's comments	Teacher's comments

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Visit MENZA’s website www.menza.co.nz to download a PDF of this document

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