

Seminar Exemplar

**STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING**

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# *What is student-centred Learning aLL about?*

- focuses on the *student's* needs, abilities, interests, and learning styles – *teacher as facilitator*
- requires students to be active, responsible participants in their own learning
- in contrast, *teacher-centred* learning has teacher active and students passive and receptive
- theorists John Dewey, Jean Piaget, and Lev Vygotsky influential in its development

# *Examples from my personal experience*

- Reading Lab – in grade 3 we chose from a shelf of books, found the associated activity card, and chose which activities to work on.
- Participaction – working towards a series of specific athletic achievements in order to earn a bronze, silver or gold badge.
- Projects, science fairs, speeches
- Activity!
  - *What might these look like in a music context?*
  - *With a partner, sketch out corresponding music learning experiences*

# *Why is it important?*

- Because my personal learning experiences have convinced me this is how I learn best
- Because my experiences as a student of education tell me this is how MOST learn best
- Because my work as a teacher with students has shown me this is how *they* learn best
- Because it is the kind of learning that students can take with them—they learn *how* to learn... (*teach to fish vs. give a fish*)

# Constructivism *(defining key terms)*

- knowledge is formed *within* learner (not externally—teachers can't pour it in)
- learners personally imbue experience with meaning
- learning activities can help students access and connect to existing knowledge and experiences
- learning is a social activity enhanced by shared inquiry
- learners have a vital role in assessing their own learning
- outcomes of learning process are varied and unpredictable

# Resources

- Hanley, B. and Montgomery, J. (2005). Challenges to music education: curriculum reconceptualized. *Music Educators Journal*, 91, 17-20.
- Cornelius-White, J. (2007). Learner-centered teacher-student relationships are effective: a meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 77, 113-143.
- Scruggs, B. (2008). *Learning outcomes in two divergent middle school string orchestra classroom environments: a comparison of a learner-centered and a teacher-centered approach*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Georgia State University.
- Brown, J. K., (2008). Student-Centered Instruction: Involving Students in Their Own Education. *Music Educators Journal*, 94, 30-35.
- Blair, Deborah V. (2009). Stepping Aside: Teaching in a Student-Centered Music Classroom. *Music Educators Journal*, 95, 42-45.

# Hanley & Montgomery (2005)

Challenges to music education: Curriculum reconceptualized.

**Figure 1. A Comparison of Two Curriculum Paradigms**

<b>Traditional (Positivist) Curriculum</b>	<b>Reconceptualized Curriculum</b>
Improvement	Quest for understanding
Hierarchy	Collaboration
Action and results	Inquiry
Focus on how	Focus on why
Right and wrong answers	Multiple answers
Prediction and control	Meaning
Practice and theory isolated	Practice and theory integrated
Teacher as implementer of someone else's ideas	Teacher as decision maker and researcher
Subject centered	Learner centered
Test driven	Performance driven

The authors outline a shift in the educational paradigm from modern to postmodern era.

They point out music educators have mostly ignored the changes.

They suggest principles of constructivism should guide new music pedagogy.

# Cornelius-White (2007)

Learner-centered teacher-student relationships are effective: a meta-analysis.

- Author synthesized 119 studies from 1948 to 2004 (total 355,325 students involved) to find that student-centered education is associated with...
  - large increases in participation/initiation, satisfaction, motivation to learn
  - positive effects on self-esteem and social connections and skills (students make better relationships with selves and others)
  - reduction in dropout, disruptive behavior, and absences
  - above average critical thinking, math achievement, verbal achievement, IQ, and grades.



# Scruggs (2008)

*Learning outcomes in two divergent middle school string orchestra classroom environments: A comparison of a Learner-centered and a teacher-centered approach*

- Compared learner-centered and teacher-centered middle school orchestra classrooms.
- 2 teachers with teacher-centered approach, 2 with learner-centered
- Learner-centered methods included peer tutoring and collaboration; student conducting, solicitation and incorporation of student input; student leadership
- *Results:*
  - no differences in music performance outcomes.
  - learner-centered students exhibited increased musical growth and greater musical independence.
  - learner-centered teachers reported increased engagement and leadership skills from their students.

# Brown (2008) Student-Centered Instruction: Involving Students in Their Own Education.

- Brown outlines tenets of student-centred learning and offers two models for music education:
- Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance (CMP)
  - 1) Music Selection
  - 2) Analysis
  - 3) Outcomes
  - 4) Strategies (for reaching outcomes)
  - 5) Assessment (reflecting on progress before, during, and after)
- **Arts Propel:** Domain projects involve...
  - 1) Production (create/perform music—where are you going?)
  - 2) Perception (examine others' work to get ideas—how will you get there?)
  - 3) Reflection (assess how their own work was created, how effective, how to improve—are you getting there?)
  - Process Folios: eg' s of student work (sketches, drafts, work admired, critiques by peers, teacher, self)
- In both, cooperative learning and learning through discovery are key

## Blair (2009) *Stepping Aside: Teaching in a Student-Centered Music Classroom.*

- music education has always been good at hands-on experiences, but students need more opportunities to *contribute* and for *mindful engagement*.
- identifies *informed doing*—mindfully solving musical problems (e.g. creating in groups an arrangement of a piece) vs. *uninformed doing*—responding to teachers (replicating a recording, playing/singing as the teacher says, etc.).
- To cultivate musical understanding, teachers must ensure students are engaged in informed musical doing.

# Key Themes

- Stepping Aside
- Facilitating
- Enabling Problem Solving
- Personalizing
- Nurturing Independence
  - *Activity! Identify how each of these themes might be enacted in a grade 9 band class. E.g. How might you step aside? Facilitate? Personalize? Enable problem solving? Encourage Independence?*

# Stepping Aside

- “...the teacher letting go of the “teacher” role and allowing the students to explore ideas and teach themselves” (Brown).
- teacher must step aside: enable and trust students’ budding musicianship (Blair).
- hierarchy (old) vs. collaboration (new) (Hanley’ s characterization of shifting education paradigm)
- prediction and control (old) vs. outcomes of learning process as varied and unpredictable (new) (Hanley)
- students as creative, imaginative and independent musicians responsible for the thinking and doing and musical decision making within a **teacher-supported** learning environment” (Blair).

# Facilitating

- “...the teacher becomes a coach, or instigator, who is always there to assist, but never to give away answers” (Brown).
- putting things in place: tools, activities, goals, assessment, resources, materials\*
- learning activities can help students access and connect to existing knowledge and experiences (constructivism) *teacher can put in place*
- reflection and metacognition (self-awareness—identifying what you know and need to know) *teacher can help with this*
- learning environment will be open, dynamic, trusting, respectful, and promoting the natural desire and curiosity to learn

# Enable Problem Solving

- teachers can help students identify (or provide) problems to solve
- solving musical problems results in informed doing (e.g. creating in groups an arrangement of a piece) (Blair)
- Action and Results (old) vs. Inquiry (new) (Hanley's shifting education paradigm)
- learning is a social activity enhanced by shared inquiry (constructivism)

# Personalizing

- Teachers can “pass along” knowledge of music ...But to have transformative musical experiences and to value music and grow in their love for it, students must engage with it in *personal* ways” (Blair)
- learners personally imbue experience with meaning and extract knowledge from it (constructivism)
- learning is best if it involves the whole person—feelings, thinking, goals, social skills, and intuition, in order to help *make the experience meaningful* (more opportunities to connect and embed the learning)



# Nurturing Independence

- “my goal is not to turn out professional performers...but rather to instill a love of music and a quizzical mind that stays with each student throughout life” (Brown).
- when students can determine learning goals, strategies for achieving them, and assess their own progress (Arts Propel) we as teachers have rendered ourselves (happily) superfluous
- “Through student-centered instruction, our students can achieve independent minds and the capacity to make educated decisions and value judgments about music their entire lives” (Brown).

# To support student-centred learning, teachers should..

- *...step aside*—relinquish power—let go. Students can determine learning goals, strategies for achieving them, and assess their own progress
- *...facilitate*—provide tools, help students identify and define goals, strategies, and progress, help them to stay on track
- ...help students to identify and solve *musical problems*

# To support student-centred learning, teachers should *also*...

- ...*personalize* music learning activities—connect to students' worlds and help them see the connections
- ...nurture student *independence*—exploring possibilities: making decisions and evaluating the results—so they can take it with them

Student-centred learning

**SO THEY CAN TAKE IT WITH THEM...**