

Beynon (2012) article presentation

It's Not a Job, It's Who I Am: Construction, Deconstruction and Reconstruction Sites of Teaching.

What is this all about?

It's about a research study in which 9 music teachers were asked:

- what got them involved in teaching music (initiators)
- what has kept them involved (sustainers)
- their curriculum and the nature of music in their schools
- what they perceive students want/need from the music program

Active learning task 1—think/pair/share

- Individually, create a list of...
 - 2-4 personal initiators: things/experiences that set you on a music career path
 - 2-4 personal sustainers: things/experiences that kept you on that path
- Discuss with partner

Study Findings

--personal initiators: being involved in music as students; strong family support for music (e.g. 7 of 9 enrolled in private music lessons)

--personal sustainers: music was something they were recognized as 'being good at'; enjoyment of music they personally perform and listen to

--professional initiators: admired their teachers; were given teaching/leadership opportunities in high school

--professional sustainers: being personally involved in performance (7 out of 9, other 2 unable due to young families)

4 themes of dissonance

1. **Life balance**—thought their jobs would get easier, but in fact they got harder due to increased personal demands e.g. partners and children
2. **Student & community expectations**—stress measuring up to past traditions, e.g. expectation to win performance competitions
3. **Job security**—the need to 'sell' their music program students sign up for courses and the teacher is able to continue to teach music
4. **External perceptions of music teachers**—society expected them to be something more than regular teachers, e.g. caring, demanding, passionate

2 major themes

- **Role of pop music**—teachers had been trained to provide traditional music ed programs but students wanted something else
- **Future of music education in schools**—teachers wondering: How to create more meaningful music education programs for 21st century? How to move beyond traditional teacher-centred music ed programs that have been the same for 50 years? Teachers feel insecure as professionals because of the perceived need to continually re-construct their music teaching.

Why is it important? (to ask these questions?)

- Because the personhood of teachers matters—that is, their experiences, past and present, will greatly influence the kind of music education they provide
- Because times are changing, and the kind of music programs the teachers grew up with might not meet the wants/needs of current students

What is the author getting at?

“This study begs the question: How could their undergraduate and professional teacher education programs have better supported these new teachers? ...these teachers seem poised for change” (p. 269).

Definitions of any terms that might need defining

Personhood—what it is like to be a unique person in a particular place and time, experiencing, responding, and acting in a particular way

Teacher identity—an aspect of a teacher’s personhood, teacher identity is in a constant cyclical state of flux given the complexity of teaching and the inter-relation of the personal and the professional...impacted by acceptance of, and resistance to, societal norms and traditional institutional practices

21st century learning—providing students with the skills to thrive in a 21st century world, e.g. the 7Cs: critical thinking and problem solving; creativity and innovation; collaboration, etc.

Active learning task 2—group discussion and report

- In groups of 3-4 create a list of 3-5 high school music education learning experiences that are NOT large ensemble performance prep
- Discuss: what are the pros and cons of these experiences?
- Report back on your discussion to the class

Connections between the resource and the world you know

- I’ve experienced the balance between giving all of yourself early in the career (because you can) and then needing to save some for your family
- I’ve felt the insecurity of wanting to provide other experiences to my students but not feeling I knew how to provide them...I’ve overcome it by giving ownership to students and relinquishing the ‘expert’ role
- I often wonder...what IS the best kind of music education we can provide today? I value traditional large ensemble music ed yet feel something different entirely might be more appropriate...

Critique

- valuable to try to understand teachers’ experiences...teacher education is too far removed from contemporary teachers’ realities...teacher educators need to know how teachers are functioning with the training they receive.
- the 4th theme of dissonance ‘perceptions of music teachers’ was not clearly described/explained
- the ‘major’ theme of pop music is confusing and not adequately explained...the role of pop music is not really addressed at all...the issue actually seems to be more about the need to move beyond traditional music teaching methods