

A presentation for the Desert Skies Research Symposium
Arizona State University
Thursday, February 23rd, 1:15 pm

The Role of
CLASSROOM OBSERVATION
in Pre-Service Music Teacher Socialization

Becky Marsh
Ph.D. Student, Music Education
Michigan State University

Why **CLASSROOM OBSERVATION**?

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

“Institutions should encourage **observation** and teaching experiences prior to formal admission to the teacher education program; ideally, such opportunities should be provided **in actual school situations.**”

(NASM Handbook 2016-17, p. 120)

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

INSPIRATION FROM THE LITERATURE

- ▶ Conway (2002, 2012)
 - ▶ Participants found **observation without context** as lacking in value.
- ▶ Powell (2011)
 - ▶ Research examining **observation methods** and sequencing may be especially valuable in understanding pre-service music teachers' skill development.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

The purpose of this study is to explore the **role of classroom observations** in the socialization of pre-service music teachers enrolled in an introductory music education course at a large midwestern university.

ORIGINAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In what ways, if any, do pre-service music teachers' **perceptions of teaching** change as a result of completing several classroom observations over the course of a semester?

ORIGINAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS

perceptions of teaching

In what ways, if any, do pre-service music teachers' **perceptions of student behaviors** (in the context of a music classroom) change as a result of completing several classroom observations over the course of a semester?

ORIGINAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS

perceptions of teaching

perceptions of student behaviors

What do pre-service music teachers find **most valuable** about classroom observations required for the course? And, conversely, **least valuable**?

METHOD

- ▶ Phenomenological Framework (Patton, 2002; Husserl, 1973)
- ▶ Particularistic Case Study Design (Merriam, 1998)
- ▶ Description of Music Education course

METHODS

METHODS

PRINCIPLES

INTRO

METHOD

METHODS

METHODS

PRINCIPLES

INTRO

Observation Component



Unit 1 ?s



Unit 2 ?s



Unit 3 ?s



Unit 4 ?s



Unit 5 ?s



Unit 6 ?s

METHOD

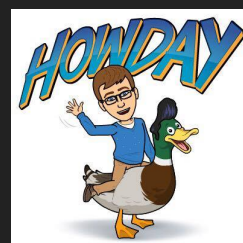
Jennifer



Isaac



Aaron



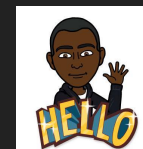
Use of avatars inspired by Dr. Erin Hansen (2017)

METHOD

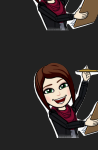
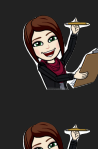
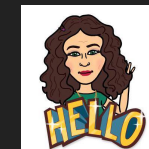


Researcher Fieldnotes

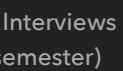
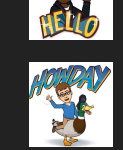
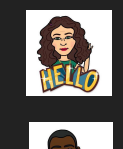
Participant Observation Assignments



Group Interview
(midpoint)



Individual Interviews
(end-of-semester)



THEMES

- ▶ Observation Methods
 - ▶ Participant Observation vs. Non-Participant Observation
- ▶ Design of Observation Component
 - ▶ Guiding Questions vs. Emergent Experience
 - ▶ Observing Outside of Specialization
- ▶ Classroom Management
- ▶ Self-as-Teacher
- ▶ Value

OBSERVATION METHODS

I think I paid more attention to her when I was outside, personally, because I didn't have to think about what I was doing and what the kids around me... Well, yeah, I wasn't thinking about where I was in it. I was just thinking about the classroom. It felt more natural to me to take myself out of it and observe what was happening and what caused what, and blah, blah, blah.



OBSERVATION METHODS

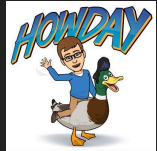


When you're in the class or when you're in the circle, you're focused on, more so what the kids immediately around you are doing and how they are reacting to the teaching. Because in part, you're part of the class, so you're reacting to the teaching in a way as well. So that proximity helps out with how you're looking at it and how you observe both the activities and the flow and all of that. And when you're sitting back, you get to take an overview of what's going on with the students, how they're all reacting. You get to look less at what the teacher's doing and more at the kids.

I know one thing that sort of got lost on us really was that we had the questions for each observation that correspond with each of the units for our reflections that we turned in. A lot of the times I know I asked a question for a couple of times but sometimes we would just forget and be more focused on, "Oh, this happened today, what's up with that?" or things like that.



DESIGN OF OBSERVATION COMPONENT



I would look at these questions and I'd be kind of going in, expecting to learn, and observe these specific things. But I would observe so many other things that, at the time, seemed much more meaningful. And so, that said, I never really knew what I would expect, what to expect to learn, but I always walked away with something. Often, especially the last few times, I was looking at different gender studies issues which were really, really fascinating to me.

DESIGN OF OBSERVATION COMPONENT



One placement vs. multiple placements

Same class vs. different classes

Interactions & relationship with cooperating teacher

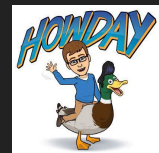
DESIGN OF OBSERVATION COMPONENT



Yeah, kind of like, with teaching anything, like I'd be fine even teaching band. But I really enjoy, like, seeing the different things and knowing, like, 'OK, I think I prefer this, but I know if I was placed here I'd be okay still.'

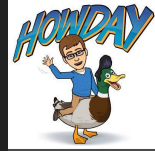
DESIGN OF OBSERVATION COMPONENT

In fact, I was, uh... honestly, like, kind of disappointed when he was, like, "We're, like, we are specifically going to put you in classrooms that are not your, like, intended focus." I know I'll have more opportunities throughout my degree still, so I'm not really worried about it, but I wish that just from the get-go, it was slightly more well-rounded.



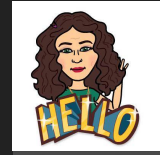
DESIGN OF OBSERVATION COMPONENT

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT



Evolving Opinions

For me, it was...this is kinda weird, but, I feel like a real adult [laughs] thinking from the teacher's standpoint and not from the student. I was like, 'Oh, I actually could see myself doing this,' rather than, like, this hypothetical. I picture myself in that role more than, like, I guess in high school, thinking more of me as a student. It's just cool to go to an observation and see it from the teacher's eyes, like, this is where I'm going to be in a couple years. And then, 'Wow, I feel like an adult, I feel grown-up.'



SELF-AS-TEACHER

It's funny how, in our sort of progression of getting through college, we all were in music programs in high school. We thought, 'Oh yeah, we can definitely teach our class,' cuz we probably thought we were smarter than the teacher, at least I did [laughs softly]. And then coming into the, uh, theoretical aspect in this class, it's nice to sort of be able to go into the settings and see it from the teacher's perspective, and to see at least that it's harder than it looks.



SELF-AS-TEACHER

Two big things that immediately come to my mind. The first being that I'm more convinced that I do not want to teach elementary. But the second and probably more important or more impactful was that I've a better understanding of just how much elementary music can affect kids.



VALUE

VALUE



The most valuable aspect has probably been to actually get into a class setting and start thinking about whether or not different settings will best work for us and start putting context to the things that we're learning in school.

VALUE

Observation & Teaching Opportunity



Questions?

Your Experiences & Approaches

Areas of Exploration

Moving Forward



THANK YOU!

Becky Marsh

Ph.D. Student, Music Education
Choral Conducting Cognate
Michigan State University

beckymarsh.music@gmail.com
beckymarshmusic.com

