Music Composition and Kyosei:
Advancing Practice Through Teaching–Learning Partnerships

Michele Ellen Kaschub
University of Southern Maine, USA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The spirit of cooperation central to kyosei is a critical component in the creative corners of American music education. This chapter will describe a project that involved the creation of a hybrid space where a music teacher-educator and practitioner worked with pre-service teachers and middle school students to explore teaching and learning music composition. By recasting who is considered an expert, rethinking institutional boundaries, and immersing in project-based learning on multiple levels, teacher education programs and schools can better identify their challenges and explore possible solutions. Though not part of initial program planning, the principles of kyosei were evidenced in the evolution of complex understandings developed prior to and throughout the project, in the inclusive nature of project-based learning by pre-service teachers and music students, and in the professional relationships—and, ultimately, the friendships—that emerged as the teaching-learning community matured.

INTRODUCTION

The teaching and learning of music composition is an increasingly important issue in music education. Beginning with the Manhattanville Music Curriculum Project in United States (Thomas, 1970) and the work of John Paynter in 1970s England, school-based composition study has proliferated the globe to become a major component of music curricula in many countries. This expansion has been accompanied by a growing number of research studies seeking to better understand the nature and value of music composition in the lives of school students and the practices best suited for use by teachers in its pedagogical delivery.

On a parallel track, research examining the preparation of future educators is astoundingly robust. While the pendulum swings widely between programs siloed in universities and those situated within schools, there is growing support for the idea that engaging pre-service teachers with practitioners throughout their preparation strengthens the clinical components of teaching (Forzani, 2014; Reid, 2011). Pre-service teachers with ample opportunities to work in schools with a school-based mentor are more comfortable with and better able to enact specific practices related to student success (Grossman et al, 2009; Zeichner, 2012). These findings suggest that educator preparation programs should carefully consider the benefits of acknowledging and activating the expertise of school-based practitioners. As Feiman-Nemser (2001) points out, "if we want schools to produce more powerful learning on the part of students, we have to offer more powerful learning opportunities to teachers" (pp.1013-1014).

This chapter examines how "powerful learning opportunities" might be offered to pre-service teachers and school students through a concurrent set of project-based learning activities. The chapter will open with a description of the broad challenges facing composition as "late comer" to American music education. This discussion will lead to the identification of specific challenges experienced by music educators that reportedly prevent the inclusion of composition activities within their curriculums. To consider how these challenges might be addressed within music-teacher education, a model of a school-university partnership focused on teaching and learning composition will be chronicled. Finally, the emergence of the principles of kyosei as critical components of this multi-tiered collaborative partnership will be highlighted.

Related Content

Ensemble Data Mining Methods
Nikunj C. Oza (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 770-776).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/ensemble-data-mining-methods/10907

Learning Exceptions to Refine a Domain Expertise
Rallou Thomopoulos (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 1129-1136).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/learning-exceptions-refine-domain-expertise/10963

Tree and Graph Mining
Dimitrios Katsaros (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 1990-1996).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/tree-graph-mining/11092

Using Dempster-Shafer Theory in Data Mining
Malcolm J. Beynon (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 2011-2018).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/using-dempster-shafer-theory-data/11095

Search Situations and Transitions
Nils Pharo (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 1735-1740).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/search-situations-transitions/11052