

The Importance of Ensemble in Instrumental Music Teaching

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Abstract: This proposal focuses on research the importance of ensemble in instrumental music learning with the aim of using the results to stimulate more teachers and students to pay attention to the ensemble approach as a means of study. This paper will investigate the subject through interviews and reviews. In total, eight instrument teachers will be interviewed, four of whom teach instrumental music on a one-to-one basis, and four arrange instrument teaching through ensemble lessons. Initially, all teachers will be asked to complete a questionnaire. Then, they will be interviewed after they have delivered their lessons, which will be recorded on video. This approach is intended to analyze and evaluate the different teaching methods, discovering which teaching method allows the increased efficiency of instrumental music teaching by encouraging student creativity. This paper aims to add value to instrument education and better encourage students to learn about instrumental music.

Keywords: Creativity; Instrument; Educational methods; Ensemble

1. Background

According to Janata, a cognitive neuroscientist studying the psychology and neuroscience of music, believes that considering the solo performance against the ensemble will result in the ensemble being more attractive.^[6] Leonard observes that ensemble music became more popular in the latter part of the last century, and since then has superseded solo music and gained in popularity across all age groups.^[9]

Based on research by Kokotsaki and Hallam, they has determined that ensemble music has provided great satisfaction to the younger generation, especially children. They considered that the benefits include communication skills, a sense of participation in shared experiences that transcend language and cultural boundaries, critical listening, and self-correction skills.^[4]

Temmerman developed this idea further by arguing that the musical and personal skills gained in early life will be of benefit in later situations. ^[4]Abeles considers that these skills will have an impact on future career prospects.^[4] Adderley, Kennedy, and Berz observe that joining a musical ensemble is a means for some students to form social interactions .^[5]

College students may seek to join an ensemble to form a closer relationship with the university during classes, with the higher possibility of being awarded scholarships through their participant. Brantley and Rickels have suggested that by taking part in musical ensemble activities, students can be better to define their interests and this may have a significant effect on their future career choices.^[10]

William considered that educators and students have a better possibility to take an active part in the period of learning ensemble. ^[10]From the research of Eun , that there is the possibility of empathy arising from involvement in small musical ensembles.^[11]

2. Research aim

I intend to analyze how to stimulate students involvement in instrument education through the pedagogical strategies. It is planned that questionnaires and face-to-face interviews with the eight teachers will be adopted to determine their education experiences. The purpose is to advance student instrumental music involvement in the classroom and define exactly how important ensemble music is in instrument education.

This investigation will enable teachers to identify difficulties and determine the value of ensemble classes. If it supposed that one-to-one teaching is less than inspiring, then it should be possible to find harmony between individuality and commonality, developing new and innovative musical accomplishments from the mix of different instruments. The benefits will allow students to cooperate with other musicians to enhance their own level of competence and appreciate the overall musical performance.

3. Methodology

3.1 Recruitment and participation

Before participating in the research, eight music teachers from two or three studios are invited to participate via the Internet. We ensured that the teachers, all of whom were volunteers, understood fully the aim of our research. In addition, before starting the questionnaire survey, we explained the informed consent to the eight teachers, allowing them to ask questions at any time and voluntarily withdraw. They all signed agreement forms before the study was commenced to ensure the conduct of the research would be unimpaired.

The teachers, four men and four women, were all over 18 years of age and had three or more years of musical teaching experience, held regular higher music teacher qualifications and did not suffer from any physical damage that may affect the study. The piano and the violin were the chosen instruments for comparison. Two of the four piano teachers were experienced in ensemble lessons, two were not. The four violin teachers had the same profile. The experimental data of all the teachers were retained as this did not affect the result findings.

3.2 Design and methodology

The research will use qualitative research conducted with interviews. The first step will use questionnaire which is open-ended question. Once there is confirmation that all teachers meet the standards, they will be asked to choose answers on the questionnaire during a 20-minute time frame.

The piano and violin teachers will be tasked separately to teach the same piece of music to judge the reaction of the ensemble class and evaluate their instrumental music learning abilities. Once all teaching practices are complete, the teachers will be interviewed to assess their reaction and this will be recorded on video. The main content of the interview will focus on the concentration and participation of students in class and how the teachers feel after class.

The main content of the questions are listed as follow: whether it is a one-to-one professional class or for an ensemble; the current teaching model and the teaching experience. Teachers will then be asked to assess how the students reacted to the class; whether the students continued with their exercises after class, either instrumental or ensemble; and the teacher's opinion of the ensemble class. Narrative analysis methods should be used to evaluate the interview data based on the response of each teacher individually and the respective class response.

The summary will be edited using the recordings made during the interviews. By interviewing all the teachers, each following the same program process, and recording their opinion immediately following the class. Together with the collection of students' reactions, these data will be calculated and assessed fairly.

4. Limitations

The nature of musical instrumental learning is a long-term process. During the experiment, the interview data of quantitative research may be biased. It is difficult to find changes in one lesson. Secondly, in the course of the classroom, teachers' questionnaires may be biased and the learning ability and personality of the students will also affect the data. Student participation in the classroom also affects data reliability.

5. Ethics statement

The distribution and collection of questionnaires was conducted through the Internet. If there are any personal issues presented, the teachers will have the option to remain anonymous or, if they wish, withdraw from the survey. Emphasis is placed on the security of the collected data and protecting the privacy of respondents. The final action will be to ask teachers to confirm their consent, that is, their anonymous data can be used to prepare survey reports.

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