

Mission Impossible or Possible Mission? Changing confidence and attitudes of primary preservice music education students using Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory

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Abstract

Many Australian state primary schools have a policy to use generalist teachers to teach music as well as many other subjects, however research indicates that primary generalist teachers lack confidence and competence to teach music in their classrooms. Added to this, preservice teachers enter their initial teacher education course with little or no background in music education and low confidence to teach music. Skills, knowledge and attitudes that are learned in the preservice teacher education course are crucial to developing the students' confidence and competence to teach music. This paper presents one approach to addressing this situation, based on Kolb's Experiential Learning Model. A description of a primary creative arts teacher education unit is given, then results from a quantitative and qualitative student survey are triangulated with the students' online journals and are used to evaluate the unit in terms of the students' developing confidence and competence in music education, based on their learned skills and knowledge. Results indicated that the majority of the students (97%) developed their confidence and competence to teach music using this approach. Specific learning experiences that helped affect their sense of competence in teaching music included experiential, face-to-face and online training approaches to learning relevant skills and knowledge, which confirmed the importance of using Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory as the basis for the unit.

Key words: Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory; preservice teachers; music education.

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Introduction

Since the days of the Greek philosophers, music education has been considered an important part of a child's development (Gillespie, 1992; Kelstrom, 1998; Miller & Coen, 1991; Robitaille & O'Neal, 1981). Often music education has been left up to the school to provide for children, and in many cases, for policy or financial reasons, the generalist primary teacher is expected to teach music along with many other subjects. However, for over 45 years many studies into primary music education in Australia have found that generalist teachers

are not confident or competent to teach primary school music (ASME/ACE, 1973; Bartle, 1968; Covell, 1970; DEST, 2005; Hobcroft, 1980; NSW Ministry of Education, 1974; Senate Environment, Recreation, Communications and the Arts Reference Committee (SERCARC), 1995).

Despite each of these reports' recommendations to increase the face-to-face hours in teacher education institutions, the number of hours in music education for preservice primary generalist teachers has decreased significantly (SERCARC, 1995). Added

to this, many teacher education Arts educators are faced with ensuring their students can teach four or five art forms (music, dance, drama, visual arts and media arts) at the end of one or two units in creative arts.

This paper presents one approach to addressing this situation, based on Kolb's Experiential Learning Model (Kolb, 1984). A description of the approach is given, then results from a student survey and the students' online journals are used to evaluate the unit in terms of the students' developing confidence and competence in music education. Investigations will indicate whether or not the students developed their confidence in teaching music using this approach, and if so, what specific learning experiences helped affect their sense of competence in teaching music.

Background to the study

Many Australian state primary schools rely on a generalist teacher to teach music as well as many other subjects, with a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy and basic skills testing (Russell-Bowie, 2002). However research indicates that most generalist primary school teachers do not have the confidence or competence to teach music and often do not see it as important or as a priority in their classrooms (Ballantyne, 2006; DEST, 2005; Duck, 1990; Ewing, 2010; Meiners, Schiller & Orchard, 2004; Sanders & Browne, 1998; SERCARC, 1995).

When completed and implemented, the new Australian Curriculum for the Arts will further complicate this situation as all primary school children will be expected to achieve set standards for each stage that will indicate their quality of learning in each of the five art forms (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2012). This will have implications for generalist primary teachers and teacher education institutions to ensure preservice and inservice teachers are provided with skills and knowledge to teach in each art form.

Further research indicates that, as well as inservice teachers not being confident to

teach music, preservice teachers enter their initial teacher education course with little or no background in music education (Ballantyne, 2006; Conway, 2002; Jacobs, 2008; Jeanneret, 1997; Kim, 2001; Mills, 1989; Temmerman, 1997). This lack of a strong background in music relates significantly to preservice teachers' confidence in teaching music as students' prior experience in the subject has been found to have a significant influence on their confidence levels in teaching the subject (Bruce, 2001; Russell-Bowie, Roche & Marsh, 1995).

Added to this challenge to music educators, the amount of face-to-face hours in music education has rapidly decreased in primary teacher education courses over the past years (SERCARC, 1995; Jacobs, 2008). Prior to the mid-1990s music and visual arts were generally taught as separate subjects and as such had one or two units each in a teacher education course. However as the Arts Key Learning Area was created, all art forms (music, dance, drama, visual arts – and sometimes media arts as well) were included in the one or two units focussing on the arts. This led to further decrease in face-to-face time for music (Russell-Bowie, 2002).

More recently, the Australian *National Review of School Music Education* indicated that 'the level of music education that the majority of students entering preservice teacher education bring to their studies is demonstrably inadequate'. It also confirmed that 'teachers emerging from these programs indicate that they lack sufficient knowledge, understanding and skills and accompanying confidence to teach music' (DEST, 2005, p. 78).

If preservice teachers could develop their confidence and competence about teaching a subject, they are more likely to teach it when they graduate. Although Fromyhr (1995) indicated from her research that many primary preservice teachers were not confident to teach music, the results from Hudson's (2005) study indicated that in relation to art education, university-based courses could have a positive affect on the preservice teachers' confidence in teaching art.

Lazar's study (2007) found that when preservice teachers had positive experiences in relation to learning about and teaching reading in their teacher training course, they were more confident about teaching the subject. Results from Welch's (1995) study, also relating to preservice teachers and art education, indicated that preservice teachers' personal and practical experience of the art form during their teacher education program affected positively their confidence to teach art education. Similarly, in their study, Russell-Bowie, Roche and Marsh (1995) found that preservice teachers would feel more confident about teaching a subject if they felt confident about themselves as students of the subject. Therefore if preservice students develop confidence in teaching music in their teacher education course, it is anticipated that they will want to teach it when they graduate.

Based on this research, arts teacher educators need to research carefully how to make their arts units effective, to motivate their students, providing them with relevant knowledge and skills through confidence-building learning experiences and processes, and attempting to change their attitudes and confidence given the challenges of decreasing face-to-face hours in primary arts education courses and the lack of experience in the arts the entering students bring with them. One approach is to base the unit on Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory.

Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984)

Motivating students to be involved in the learning experiences offered them in their preservice education, especially in the area of arts education where many students lack confidence and background, can be a challenge, however it is vital to the development of their confidence and attitudes. Experiential and reflective aspects of learning are key to motivating and involving students in this learning process, and changing their attitudes and confidence in the subject, and have given

rise to Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984) that explains the challenges and complexities of classroom teaching. Kolb (1984) defines experiential learning as a 'holistic integrative perspective on learning that combines experience, cognition and behaviour' (p. 21) and further elaborates that it is 'a continuous process grounded in experience' (p.41).

Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) comprises a four stage learning cycle, or spiral, that includes Concrete Experience (CE), Reflective Observation (RE), Abstract Conceptualisation (AC) and Active Experimentation (AE). Learning in this cycle can be entered at any point, but generally these stages are followed through in the above sequence (see Figure 1). Learners will often repeat the cycle throughout the learning process.

Stage 1: Concrete Experience

Akella (2010) expands on the four stages of Kolb's EL theory, indicating that the Concrete Experience (CE) stage is usually the basis of the learning process. At this stage the learner actively experiences an activity and lessons are learned through 'adaptability and open mindedness rather than a systematic approach to the situation or problem' (p. 102).

In relation to this Experiential Learning stage, Welch (1995) notes that practical hands-on activities offered during the teacher education course are one method of motivating students. Meiners, Schiller and Orchard (2004) reported

Figure 1: Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984).



from their research that their preservice teachers learned more when they were actively and physically participating in learning experiences, rather than passively observing or reading about the activities.

Stage 2: Reflective Observation

The next stage uses Reflective Observation (RE). During this stage the students reflect back on their experiences in the previous stage and articulate what learning processes they went through, how and what they have learned, observing and examining their experiences from all perspectives.

Based on this Reflective Observation stage, another key aspect of learning that can be included in a teacher education course is that of reflection (Dewey, 1933; Kolb, 1984). Reflection can be a vital part of learning, problem solving and creativity in the professions (Schon 1995). In reflection the learner internally analyses their experiences and then makes their own personal meaning and understanding about these experiences (Liddell, Hubbard & Werner, 2000). Journal writing can be a form of reflection that facilitates the learning process (Hatcher & Bringle, 1997; Liddell, Hubbard & Werner, 2000) and can increase students' knowledge, academic skills and the ability to solve problems (Conrad & Hedin, 1990).

Stage 3: Abstract Conceptualisation

Moving from experience and reflection, the next stage in the Experiential Learning Theory is Abstract Conceptualisation (AE) where the learner uses their practice, observations and reflections to create a theory or model to conceptualise what they have learned. At this stage, the learners use 'logic and ideas as opposed to feelings to understand the situations and problems' (Akella, 2010, p. 102).

Changing students' attitudes to music education is another challenge that arts educators face, and can be in some way aligned

to Kolb's Abstract Conceptualisation stage. Many students enter their teacher education programs with negative concepts, thoughts and knowledge about music and teaching music which leads to negative attitudes (Kretchmer, 2002; Lewis, 1991; Russell-Bowie, 2002). These attitudes impact on their learning as each student brings to the course their own attitudes, beliefs and experiences through which they will filter their teacher education courses (Borko & Putnam, 1996; Goodman, 1988; Hollingsworth, 1989; Rosaen, 2003). Research confirms that there is a correlation between the conceptualisation and attitudes of preservice primary teachers in relation to music and their positive or negative attitudes to teaching music (Bidner, Devaney & Della Pietra, 2010; Kretchmer, 2002; Lewis, 1991, Siebenaler, 2006).

How can these attitudes and concepts be changed? Deering and Stanutz (1995) reported that after reviewing many studies on attitudes, they postulated that experience is a significant aspect in changing attitudes. Providing students with experiential learning (Kolb: Stage 1) could be a key to changing their competence and attitudes to music education. Secondly, research into changing preservice teacher perceptions and attitudes found that a key element in attitude change was having the students reflect on their learning (Bondy, Schmitz & Johnson, 1993; Grouix, 2001; Haberman, 1991; Haberman & Post, 1992). Reflection (Kolb: Stage 2), combined with experiential learning, could make a valuable contribution to the students' learning in an arts education unit.

Garman's research (2004, 2010) confirms this, suggesting that key factors associated with effectively changing preservice teachers' attitudes and beliefs include their character and their experiences. Teacher education courses would find it a challenge to change students' characters however, based on this research, they can provide them with effective learning experiences and the opportunity to reflect on their learning in an attempt to change their negative attitudes

and concepts about music education and to build their confidence and competence in music education by the end of the course.

Stage 4: Active Experimentation

The fourth stage, that of Active Experimentation (AE), allows the learners to test the theory or model they have developed in the previous stage and to put them into practice and/or plan for a forthcoming experience, as well as 'make predictions about reality and then act on them' (Akkella, 2010, p. 102).

Green, Chedzoy, Harris, Mitchell, Naughton, Rolfe & Stanon, W. (1998) in their study of student teachers' perceptions of teaching the arts in primary schools, found that having students put into practice what they had learned on campus, within the practice teaching situation, significantly assisted them in developing their confidence and competence in teaching the arts. Similarly, Palmer (2007) found that when preservice primary school teachers were able to teach science lessons in the classroom, they increased their positive attitudes and confidence in teaching science. Thus, this stage of Active Experimentation is very important in developing students' confidence and competence in music and music teaching.

Thus research indicates that providing students with the opportunity to have practical learning experiences is crucial to increasing their confidence in teaching the subject. However providing students with hands on, practical, experiential and face-to-face learning strategies is currently being held in tension against the push by universities to provide students with online learning experiences, either as part or the whole of their unit or course as online work is much more cost effective than face-to-face lectures and tutorials (Bell, Bush, Nicholson, O'Brien & Tran, 2002).

Online learning is bringing about significant changes for the way units and courses are being delivered as well as the way people learn (Bach,

Haynes & Smith, 2006) and there are many discussions and much research comparing the outcomes of units and courses that are delivered fully online, partially online or fully face-to-face (Bach, Haynes & Smith, 2006; Jurewitsch, 2012; Llewellyn & Frame, 2013; Rose & Chen, 2012; Wuensch, Aziz, Ozan, Kishore, & Tabrizi, 2008). The scope of this paper does not cover this at times controversial issue in depth, however mention is made of it as some of the creative arts unit's learning experiences are online and others are practical face-to-face learning experiences.

In his Experiential Learning Theory, Kolb (1984) also developed a Learning Style Inventory, to assess the learning styles of the different learners so that the theory created a better fit for each student. Each of the four learning styles (Divergent, Assimiliators, Convergents and Accommodators) match the different stages of the ELT as learners learn better if subject matter is presented to them in a style consistent with their preferred learning style.

However Kolb's Learning Styles and how they relate to ELT is not part of the scope of this paper. Rather, this paper examines how Kolb's four stages of his Experiential Learning Theory has been used as the basis for the creative arts unit, which was developed to respond to the challenges of preservice teachers entering their teacher education programs with little confidence and competence in music education yet needing to be prepared to teach music in the primary school when they graduate.

The Creative Arts unit

The preservice Primary Creative Arts unit included 12 hours of face-to-face tutorials, 12 hours of face-to-face lectures, blended learning tasks such as quizzes and reflective journals, readings from the set text, watching videos of classroom teachers teaching arts lessons, planning an integrated creative arts program based on the students' practice teaching class, access to web-based resources, and spending 50 hours in their own time learning skills in music, dance, drama and visual arts.

The creative arts unit was offered in six modules over six weeks during the semester. The first week focussed on music, the second on dance, the third on drama and the fourth on visual arts to ensure the students had a sound understanding of the skills and knowledge of each individual art form. The remaining two weeks focused firstly on integrating the arts with literacy, and secondly, integrating the arts across a theme, as many primary schools do not have discrete lessons in each art form, instead, they integrate the arts with other subjects, such as literacy or social science. The integration weeks helped the students understand how to authentically integrate subjects, ensuring outcomes are achieved in the arts as well as in the other subjects.

This paper will focus on the music module of the Primary Creative Arts unit, which was presented over one week, and included an online music quiz based on the music chapter from the arts textbook, a two hour practical tutorial, a two hour interactive music lecture, watching one or more videos of a teacher teaching the different elements of music to primary children, analysing their learning through a reflective journal and writing an integrated arts program which included four to six weeks of developmental music learning experiences based on their practice teaching class.

The unit is based on Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory with the unit components matching the following stages of ELT:

Concrete Experience (CE)

The fundamental basis of the unit is to ensure that students have hands on, practical experiences as a significant part of their learning processes, so Concrete Experience is seen as the first stage of the unit. Before they start attend the lecture or tutorial they have to read the music chapter in the creative arts textbook and from information learned, they are then able to complete the online quiz to mastery

standard (80%+). Results are given immediately to students once the quiz is completed.

Now that they have learned basic knowledge of the meta-language of music gained from the readings and quiz, they are ready to participate in the practical, syllabus-based music tutorial. This includes simple classroom-style music learning experiences, developing in difficulty and structure throughout the two hours focusing on the teaching each of the five elements of music (Duration, Pitch, Dynamics, Tone Colour and Structure). All students are involved practically and are able to achieve success in every learning experience, thereby developing their confidence and understanding of music education. Integration with music and literacy is also a key to the tutorial, demonstrating how authentic music outcomes can be achieved in a literacy lesson.

The two hour lecture focuses on classroom management skills, experiential revision of the five elements of music, and interactive activities related to lesson planning and programming for music. Students are also asked to watch one or more of the online videos showing classroom teachers teaching different aspects of the syllabus in their own time. As most of the students have never seen a music lesson it is important that they are given the opportunity to see competent teachers presenting music lessons.

Reflective Observation (RO)

At the end of the music week/module, the students are asked to reflect on what they have learned and how they have learned it. A summary of the content covered in the week is given, and they are required to present an online journal analysing their learning processes and what they have learned by participating in the activities. Although the minimum word count required is 150 words, all students wrote much more than this limit as they seem to be very excited about what they have experienced in the music week.

Abstract Conceptualisation (AC)

Now that the students have learned the basics of music education and have reflected on what and how they have learned about music content and pedagogy, they are required to think about how this can be applied to the real classroom. The online resources assist with this, and they relate their observations, experiences and reflections of the past week to the theories of classroom management, programming, children's learning styles and preferences and across-arts integration. This is their preparation for writing a program which will include four to six weeks of developmental music learning experiences for a specified class.

Active Experimentation (AE)

After reflecting on the practical experiences in which they have participated and relating these to relevant pedagogical theories, the students are then required to write this integrated arts program, based on their practice teaching class. Through this activity, they test the theories in relation to an authentic classroom situation as they plan to implement the program in the final weeks of the semester.

The four steps of the cycle as described above are summarised in the following figure (Figure 2), with Concrete Experience being the first step in the cycle.

This cycle of learning was repeated in each of the four art forms (music, dance, drama and

visual arts) over four weeks as well as in the two modules focusing on integration. The students were surveyed at the end of the semester to ascertain their confidence in each of the four art forms.

Methodology

The research was based on a mixed method methodology, with a survey administered at the end of the semester that included both quantitative data and open-ended questions. The results from the survey were triangulated with the qualitative comments that the students wrote in their music reflective journals after a week of input focusing on music education.

Aim

The aim of the larger arts-focussed research study was to identify the preservice teachers' levels of confidence in arts education at the start and end of the primary creative arts unit. It also aimed to investigate the range of learning experiences offered to the students in the unit in order to better understand the value and effectiveness of these learning experiences. This paper addresses the following research questions, focussing specifically on music:

1. Did the students develop their confidence in teaching music throughout the semester?
2. What learning experiences helped affect the students' sense of competence in teaching music?
3. How many of students have taught music on prac and do the students plan to teach music when they graduate?

Participants

The participants included 197 primary students enrolled in the creative arts unit which is one of 16 units in the Master of Teaching (Primary) course, a post graduate coursework degree. From the University *Unit Demographic Snapshot* (2013) it was noted that 90% of the students were female and

Figure 2: Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory related to the Creative Arts Unit.



10% male, and they were all domestic (Australian) students. The majority of students were born in Australia (70%), with the other top four countries of birth being England (4%), Fiji (4%), India (3%) and New Zealand (3%) and the majority of the students (76%) spoke English at home.

Instrument

The survey was developed specifically for the unit to ascertain the students' perceived development in confidence in each of the art forms and what learning experiences within the unit helped affect their sense of competence in each of the art forms. It was comprised of 11 questions. Some questions which had a 5 point Likert scale for responses (e.g., *At the start of this semester, how confident did you feel about teaching music: Very confident; Confident; Not Sure; Not Confident; Scared Stiff!*) and other questions which were open ended (e.g., *General comments about how you feel your sense of competence has developed in arts education as a result of completing the primary creative arts unit*).

The survey included questions asking the students how confident they felt about teaching the creative arts at the start and at the end of the semester, which learning experiences helped them develop this confidence, how effective were the integration learning experiences and why, whether or not they taught creative arts in their practice teaching sessions and if they would teach the creative arts when they graduate, how they developed their personal skills in the creative arts, and any general comments about how they developed their competence in the arts as a result of the unit.

Procedure

The survey was distributed by sessional staff in the final assessment session of the unit and students were asked to complete it and return it by the end of the session. Of the 238 students in the cohort, 197 students chose to complete and return the survey. Some of the responses were incomplete, perhaps due to lack of time or interest, but many students

had taken the time to complete the entire survey, including the open-ended questions.

The students' online music reflective journals were also used to collect data about their developing confidence in the unit and the survey had a tear-off sheet on which the students put their names and agreed or disagreed that their reflective journals could be used as part of the research. All reflective journals were de-identified prior to results being collated and analysed.

Data was collected from the survey that included both quantitative and qualitative questions as well as from the students' reflective online music-e-journals. The quantitative data was analysed to ascertain percentages of students responding to each question. The qualitative data from the surveys and reflective journals was collected and sorted into themes in relation to the students' perceptions of their developing confidence in music education and their reasons for this development.

Results

The qualitative data from the surveys was analysed in terms of percentages of responses to the different questions was then triangulated with the open-ended questions and the students' reflective online music journals were analysed in relation to common themes arising from the students' comments. These themes included how the students' confidence developed during the music week, how the lecture and tutorial assisted in their understanding of and confidence in music education, the value of the video clips of music classrooms, the importance of the quizzes, the effectiveness of the textbook, their thoughts about teaching music on prac and when they graduate, the importance of experiential learning, their change in attitudes during the music module and general comments.

Many students reflected extensively about the different learning experiences that helped affect their sense of competence in teaching music. Selected comments from the different themes are included here, along with the quantitative results.

Many other comments were very similar but have been omitted due to space.

Research Question 1: Did the students develop their confidence in teaching music throughout the semester?

When asked how confident they felt at the start of the semester about teaching music, all students responded, with 7% reporting that they felt very confident, 14% felt confident, 14% were unsure, 37% were not confident and 27% felt 'scared stiff!' Overall, 64% of the students did not feel confident to teach music at the start of the semester and 21% felt confident.

When asked the same question in relation to the end of the semester, only 4% indicated that they did not feel confident (1% Scared stiff! and 3% Not Confident) compared with 84% who reported that they felt confident to teach music (49% Confident and 35% Very Confident). This indicates a considerable increase in confidence between the start and end of the semester.

The students' comments in the survey and in their reflective music journals confirm this increase in confidence, and included comments such as:

I entered this week with a large amount of apprehension and dislike towards the creative arts music genre. In primary school I was led to believe music was something that couldn't be taught and I have been fearful of it ever since. That was, until this week when I have been given the tools to teach music to primary aged children and to instil in them a love of music.

I got a lot out of the lecture and the tutorial and it makes me excited to teach music instead of being petrified of it!

I was initially very sceptical of the unit on music as I do not have a musical bone in my body. But after this week, I want to be the type of teacher that programs fun and engaging music lessons that are scaffolded in a way that students feel a sense of accomplishment and pride in what they are able to learn and create themselves.

Through my engagement of the lecture, tutorial and viewing of the online videos, I now feel more confident that I have the required skills to

implement an effective music program in the classroom.

During the music week, my knowledge of musical elements increased from bare minimum to a level of competency I didn't expect after only one week of classes.

Overall the students increased their confidence and competence in relation to music education after one week of music focussed activities. The next research question examines which of these activities helped developed this confidence in music education.

Research Question 2: What learning experiences helped affect the students' sense of competence on teaching music?

The students were given a list of learning experiences in which they participated throughout the unit and were asked which ones specifically helped affect their sense of competence in teaching music. The following table (Table 1) indicates the percentage of students selecting the different learning experiences as those that helped affect their sense of competence in teaching music. Most of those which ranked highest (participating in tutorials, textbook, participating in lecture, completing quizzes and viewing video clips) were related to the first stage of Kolb's ELT, that of Concrete Experiences.

As noted in Table 1, Participating in Tutorials (86.7%) and the Textbook (84.2%) rated highest in the concrete learning experiences that assisted in developing their sense of competence in music teaching. Sample students' comments about the value of these are as follows:

Tutorials

I found the tutorial to be helpful in modelling and inspiring ideas for teaching music concepts. I really had no idea how I would go about it but the tutorial made me realise that it can actually be quite simple and that children can learn the concepts through engaging activities;

The most enjoyable part of the tutorial for me was actually realising I could read music, make

Table 1: Learning Experiences that helped affect students' sense of competence in teaching music as related to Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory.

Music Learning Experiences	Percent of students selecting this learning experience
Kolb's ELT: Stage 1: Concrete Experiences	
Participating in Tutorials	86.7%
Textbook	84.2%
Participating in Lecture	67.0%
Completing Quizzes	60.7%
Viewing Video Clips	58.2%
Kolb's ELT: Stage 2: Reflective Observation	
Reflecting on Learning	56.1%
Kolb's ELT: Stage 3: Abstract Conceptualisation	
Online Resources	46.2%
Kolb's ELT: Stage 4: Active Experimentation	
Writing a Program	74.0%
Teaching lessons on Prac	41.3%

Note: Responses were either positive, as noted above, or blank, indicating no response.

music and develop a fun graphic score that told a story;

The thought of teaching music to students was frightening because, much to my regret, I have no experience in reading music and have never attempted to play an instrument. After leaving the tutorial, however, I felt relieved and excited to teach my future students music;

At the beginning of the tutorial I had no idea about long, short or medium sounds. However after the activity I found myself being able to create and read music;

I personally have never been able to read music but for the first time in the music tutorial I began to understand how to clap through a few basic notes. This may seem trivial but honestly, it felt wonderful to finally begin to understand because I love music so much.

Textbook

As a future teacher I am starting to understand how hard it is to cover each area of the

curriculum for creative arts. It can be time consuming and many schools, principals and teachers do not think it is as important as others such as English and Maths. However, the text book has multiple lesson plans and ideas which can incorporate other aspects of the creative arts and even other KLAs;

You, yourself as teacher need to understand the basics to be able to teach it. Also to refer to the textbook, as the text gives the theoretical components that can be easily linked to the practical experience, which was evident in the video, the tutorials and lecture;

I am grateful that the set textbook is modern, as well as comprehensive and will be a great resource for future Creative Arts lessons.

Writing a program

The third ranked learning experience, relating to Kolb's Stage 4: *Active Experimentation*, that assisted students develop their confidence in teaching music was writing a program, with 74% of students noting this as an important learning experience. As students had not written any part of the program at the end of their first week, the comments came from the *General comments about the unit* question on the survey, for example

Programming assignment was great. Good to see people engaged in the course. Good to see people developing themselves;

The unit gave me some interesting points to help me develop creative programs to use in the classroom;

The programming assignment helped me learn about integration with each of the art forms.

Participating in lectures

Of the sampled students, 67% of them noted that participating in lectures (Kolb's Stage 1) helped affect their sense of competence in teaching music. Students' comments to confirm this include:

Within the music lecture, (the lecturer) reinstated the need to do as the children will. We stopped at intervals, got up and sang in the lecture itself. It was one of the most exciting lectures I have ever participated in. I cannot explain how refreshing

it was to learn content in such a way and as (the lecturer) reiterated, using the words of Victor Frankl, we all need to choose our attitude and be positive to such new experiences;

The lecture was very informative and useful in the fact that it provided us with many ideas and resources that we could implement in our classrooms. I thought teaching music would be extremely difficult and confusing for me, this lecture has made me realise there are so many fantastic different ways to teach the concepts of music to children;

The lecture for music was a fantastic opportunity to clear some of my worries when it came to teaching music. I am quite musically gifted but teaching it to smaller children is a challenge as has been proven in previous prac experiences.

Completing the music quiz

More than half of the students (60.7%) indicated that completing the music quiz assisted their developing sense of competence in teaching music, and this was also related to Kolb's Stage 1. The online quiz was based on the Music chapter from the set textbook and although it did not involve much higher level thinking, it gave all students the opportunity to reach a basic level of knowledge and understanding of the metalanguage of music as well as the concepts and elements, prior to attending the tutorials and lecture.

Sample comments confirming the importance of the quizzes are as follows:

The online quiz, I believe was a great way to encourage me to read the text book and gain some knowledge about the topic previous to attending the lecture and tutorial. It works as a guide in outlining the main elements of music as well as encouraging me to do some research of my own as I have very little experience with the elements of music;

Having completed the online quiz prior to the tutorial I felt better equipped and prepared for the tutorial having already learnt the elements of music such as duration, pitch and tone colour amongst others in addition to some of the musical terms including those Italian terms referring to dynamics and duration;

Using the textbook and the quiz I was able to gain an understanding of the music language, terms, and various types of concepts used in music, and their role in creating music. Many of these terms were then reinforced in the tutorial and videos where a practical understanding of each element could be developed, and how it could be used for teaching.

Viewing the video clips

Just over half the sampled students (58.2%) indicated that viewing the videos were important in assisting them to develop their competence in teaching music, and this related to Kolb's Stage 1. The videos had been filmed and edited by the lecturer and put online so that students could see quality music lessons being taught in a real-life situation – something many of them may have never seen! Their comments indicated that they appreciated being able to view these authentic teaching situations, for example

It was inspiring to watch the videos of music education within real classrooms. I was so impressed that the students were both engaged and well-behaved during these lessons as I had imagined that music time in any classroom would be noisy and chaotic;

The videos were really useful for demonstrating music lessons in action. I feel that I got a lot of good ideas out of it but also that it helped clarify some of my ideas of how I would teach music;

The online videos were a terrific way to see all that we had learnt in the lecture and tutorial being put into practice in a real classroom with real students. They highlighted not just how to put into practice great music lessons, but also how to implement behavioural strategies in a way that ensures a successful lesson;

I found that the video clips were a great aid in gaining a view of how to implement music into a classroom. By providing examples of different teaching styles, it is easier to grasp how music is taught in a classroom and how students respond to a music unit.

Lectures, tutorials and video clips

Although the quantitative results indicated that tutorials were ranked first (86.7%), the lectures 4th

(67%) and the video clips 6th (58.2%), many students commented in the reflective music journals on how the combination of the lectures, tutorials and videos helped them develop their confidence in teaching music, for example

Overall I found the lecture, tutorial and online videos provided a great foundational basis for me in being able to teach music in the classrooms in a fun and integrative way, allowing children to express themselves in an environment where there creativity is nurtured and encouraged;

I was very apprehensive about teaching music as I have no music background; however I am astounded on how much I did learn from attending the lecture and tutorial along with watching the suggested videos;

Before the music week, I felt a bit uneasy knowing that I would have to teach music when I have my own students because my only relationship with music was listening to the radio or my CDs and singing along to the songs. The lectures, tutorials and videos, inspired me and allowed me to feel more confident;

Initially when reading the textbook chapter I felt a little overwhelmed by the terminology, symbols and elements of music. On reflection having attended my tutorial, the lecture and viewed the videos online I feel that I have learnt a great amount about music and how to teach it in the primary context.

Reflecting on learning

Over half of the sampled students (56.1%) indicated that reflecting on their learning in music was helpful. This learning experience is related to Kolb's ELT Stage 2, that of Reflective Observation. However there were no comments about this aspect of their learning in their reflective music journals as these were the first reflections the students were asked to complete. No references were made to the importance of reflecting on their learning in the open-ended questions on the survey, however several students' comments generally on the process of reflection:

In reflection, 90% of my learning was greatly influenced by doing music. I feel I have a natural

understanding of the elements of music, which was only achieved by the act of 'doing';

On reflection having attended my tutorial, the lecture and viewed the videos online I feel that I have learnt a great amount about music and how to teach it in the primary context;

The video clips I watched online allowed me to reflect on my own learning and identify how much information I had absorbed from the lecture, tutorial, reading and quiz;

As I reflect on what I have experienced, read, watched and listened to over the past week, I can say that it was simple, engaging and fun!

Online resources and teaching lessons on prac

Responses to the other listed learning experiences included the Online Resources (46.2%) and Teaching Lessons on Prac (41.3%). These related respectively to Stage 3 (Abstract Conceptualisation) and Stage 4 (Active Experimentation) in Kolb's ELT. There were very few comments in the reflective music journals or in the open-ended comments in the survey about the value or otherwise of the online resources, however several students commented generally about the resources available from the online websites for the unit:

My head is now swimming with ideas about what to teach for music lessons in my future practicum and my computer files are overflowing with lesson resources;

As a first time teacher I have gained knowledge and resources to integrate the music into the KLA's;

Utilising the many valuable resources available online, being organised in the classroom and applying fun and exciting lessons are a recipe for success!

In conclusion, interacting with the wide range of online resources available has presented a very big eye opening experience.

As most of the practice teaching session was at the end of the semester, after this survey was completed, students would have been referring to their one week practice teaching session during

the semester or the three week practice teaching session in a previous semester, prior to undertaking the creative arts unit. A few students commented about teaching music in their practice teaching sessions, and the comments included:

Reflecting back on my practice teaching session last semester, I had to prepare for a music lesson. That unfortunately was a complete catastrophe, which could have been prevented and highly effective if I had the knowledge and understanding of the five elements of music that I have now;

In my previous practicum experience I observed that the teachers struggled to fit all parts of the creative arts into the weekly curriculum. Music was squeezed into a half hour slot for singing from words on a board and a music teacher relied on a set of IWB (Interactive Whiteboard) lessons that were not very hands on for the children. The ideas and examples that I have experienced during the music module seem to be quite implementable and could breathe life into the primary school music lesson as long as the teacher is well prepared with the necessary resources and enthusiasm.

These results also relate to the next research question, asking how many of the students had taught music in their practice teaching session.

Research Questions 3: How many students have taught music on prac and do the students plan to teach music when they graduate?

Students were then asked if they had had the opportunity to teach music in their practice teaching session. Only 16.8% indicated that they did teach music on prac, with 61.7% responding that they did not have this opportunity and 21.4% of the students not making any response to the question.

Some of the few students who did teach music in their practice teaching session, and had positive experiences, gave the following comments in the open-ended question on the survey:

Great fun! Kids SO talented!

I loved the experiences as did teacher and students;

I used music in literacy;

Some behaviour management strategies from the lectures were used successfully;

Students really enjoyed it.

Three students commented that they did not teach music to their practice teaching class:

I had Year 5 around NAPLAN exam time so there was no music as the students were 'too far behind' and 'needed to catch up on the important subjects';

I didn't teach music in my previous prac, but I have many different lessons planned for the upcoming prac!

The school had a specialist music program.

However, in contrast to this question, when asked if they wanted to teach music in their classroom when they graduate, 91.8% of the sampled students indicated that they wanted to do this, with 2% responding negatively and 6.1% not responding to the question (see Table 5). These results indicate a significant change in attitude and confidence compared with the students' attitude and confidence start of the semester.

In their reflective music journals some students commented about how much they were looking forward to teaching music when they have their own class, for example

What I have gained from this week is that now I would be more confident doing music with my class and that I don't need to be an expert musician;

Not having very much musical knowledge myself other than enjoying music I was a bit tentative about teaching music in the future. However after seeing the different ways and techniques that music can be taught, I felt a lot more confident and if anything, excited, about getting into the classroom and undertaking a music lesson with my students;

As a teacher, I hope that I can make a difference in the lives of my students and instil in them a love of learning music;

I hope I can emulate my own positive experiences in this unit in my teaching practice and can

develop all of these attributes within my own future students;

Prior to the lecture it was frightening for me to even think about teaching a music lesson, but after the music lecture and the tutorial I feel eager and encouraged to teach music lessons rather than frightened and petrified.

Experiential learning, changing attitudes and general comments

Although the quantitative results were limited to the above headings, students also commented in their reflective journals about other aspects of the music module that helped developed their confidence and competence in teaching music. These included the importance of the use of experiential and practical learning experiences in the unit as well as changing their attitudes to music, and a variety of general comments about the unit. These comments included:

Experiential learning

In reflection, 90% of my learning was greatly influenced by doing music. I feel I have a natural understanding of the elements of music, which was only achieved by the act of 'doing';

The way that the tutorial was run in terms of actually being a hands on experience allowed me to gain a deeper knowledge of both the concepts of music and how to implement them in the classroom;

I found this concrete way of learning very stimulating as it engaged the whole class to realize and experience how innate musical ability is within every person;

Due to the practical content in the music tutorial, lecture and video clip, I am now enthusiastic to teach music and ensure that this unit is taught on a weekly basis in my classroom. I will also ensure that the lessons always have practical activities embedded in them to encourage involvement and ensure my students enjoy themselves.

Changing attitudes

I have lost the apprehension that I once had towards this area of creative arts (music) and I

have adopted a positive attitude and enthusiasm, which I hope that I can deliver to my class of 30 eager students in the near future;

Throughout the lecture, (the lecturer) introduced music into my teaching practice in a way that went above and beyond my expectations. This resulted from her teaching with such passion, love and excitement for music. Hence, I was engaged throughout the entire lecture;

Music week has taught me that as a future educator it is important to be daring and not to be afraid to explore with music;

I aim to be a positive and enthusiastic teacher who uses effective communication and variety to engage the students so that they can appreciate the importance of music for their personal development;

The lectures and tutorial have taught me that I can change my attitude towards creative arts, and that in doing so and using my ability I can achieve success;

Any pessimistic attitudes I had have disappeared for I now know how easy and exciting teaching music can be.

General comments about the unit

All aspects of this learning experience had outstanding and priceless information and ideas. However, the most important thing I have learnt from the music week is for myself to feel the music and let the children freely experiment with making their own music by using a number of instruments, after they have understood the purpose and the use of the five elements;

To sum up, the music week for this unit built in me the confidence and creativity to teach music to students, it had also made me appreciate music whilst simultaneously equipping me with great and creative teaching ideas for music lessons in the future. I am happy to say that the statement "music is fun" is no longer as daunting and am no longer apprehensive about it. Yay for me!

These comments indicated that the students valued the experiential, practical approach to the unit and through these had changed their attitudes in relation to teach music.

Discussion

The overall results from both the survey and the music reflective journals indicated that the majority of the students started the unit with very little confidence in music education. After the training included in the music module week they had changed their attitudes, developed their musical knowledge, skills and understandings and had increased their confidence in relation to teaching music. This was not only evident in the quantitative data, but was confirmed in the students' comments about each specific aspect of the unit and in the majority of them saying that they now want to teach music when they graduate.

The results indicated that 64% of the students were not confident to teach music at the start of the semester, compared with 84% of the students saying they were confident to teach music at the end of the semester. Confirming this were the results when they were asked if they would teach music when they graduate, with 91.8% of the students indicating that they would teach music. This is in line with the literature that indicates that if students are confident in the subject then they are more likely to teach it (Bruce, 2001; Lazar, 2007; Russell-Bowie, Roche & Marsh, 1995; Welch, 1995). Given the fact that the music week was just that, one week of music input, using both online and face-to-face activities, it would appear that the learning experiences were valuable, relevant and effective.

According to the students, the top ranking learning experiences that helped affect their sense of competence in teaching music were participating in the tutorials (86.7%) and lectures (67%), reading the textbook (84.2%) and writing a program (74%). These are all face-to-face learning experiences as compared with those that ranked next in helping the students develop their competence, ie. completing the quizzes (60.7%), viewing the video clips (58.2%), reflecting on their learning (56.1%) and the online resources (46.15). It is interesting to note that in the current climate of change in the delivery of university

courses and units from face-to-face lectures and tutorials, to online learning, these students have clearly indicated that they learn more from the face-to-face learning experiences than from online learning (Bach, Haynes & Smith, 2006; Rose & Chen, 2012). However the online learning interactive activities (completing quizzes, viewing video clips and reflecting on learning) were ranked higher than the more static Web 1.0 online resources.

As well as developing their confidence in teaching music, both the qualitative and quantitative results indicated that the students' attitudes to music and music education had changed significantly over the semester. As seen in the literature, both experience and the opportunity for reflection are significant factors in changing students' attitudes (Bondy, Schmitz & Johnson, 1993; Garman, 2010; Grouix, 2001; Haberman, 1991; Haberman & Post, 1992; Deering & Stanutz, 1995) and students were able to participate in a variety of online and face-to-face learning experiences as well being required to reflect on their learning. These seem to be significant factors in changing their attitudes.

These two aspects of experiences and reflection are also important stages in Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984). The first stage (Concrete Experience) seemed to be the most important part of the students' experience in developing their confidence and competence in music education. As seen in Table 1, the students ranked the face-to-face, experiential learning experiences highest in helping affect their sense of competence in teaching music. These included participating in lectures and tutorials, reading the textbook and writing a program.

The second stage (Reflective Observation) was also important to more than half of the students (56.1%) in developing their confidence to teach music. After the music week they were required to think about what they had experienced, how and what they had learned during that week. Although these reflective music journals had a

minimum of 150 words, most of the students wrote 600+ words as their many comments reflected their excitement about what they had learned, how their attitudes had changed and how their skills and knowledge had developed. As confirmed in the literature, reflection is an effective method to facilitate the learning process and increase students' knowledge and skills (Conrad and Hedin, 1990; Hatcher and Bingle, 1997; Liddell, Hubbard and Werner, 2000), and was a factor in changing the students' confidence and attitudes to music education.

The third stage of Kolb's EFL theory is that of Abstract Conceptualisation. During the unit the students were required to think about how the arts pedagogy and skills they had learned on campus and through the online resources, could be implemented in the classroom and prepare to write a program for their practice teaching class to be implemented at the end of the semester. Questions in the survey did not specifically cover this stage as its very abstract nature is difficult to quantify. Because the reflective comments were mainly after the first week and before students had the opportunity to move into this stage, they did not comment on this aspect of the unit. However thinking about the pedagogies and skills they had learned was an important foundation to writing a program which was a strong factor in helping change students' attitudes and confidence in music education.

The abstract conceptualisation of the pedagogy and skills needed to teach music in the classroom, leads into Kolb's fourth stage, that of Active Experimentation. In this stage, after reflecting on the practical experience in which they have participated, the students were required to write an integrated arts program to test out the pedagogical theories and practices they had learned in the previous stage. This included a 4 – 6 week music program. Of the sampled students 74% indicated that writing a program helped affect their sense of competence in teaching music. At the end of the semester most of them would be implementing the

program and this would complete the fourth stage of ELT, where they put what they had planned into practice.

Conclusion

The primary creative arts unit was based on Kolb's ELT and both the quantitative and qualitative the results from this survey triangulated to confirm that the experiential training and reflective nature of the unit was effective in changing the students' attitudes and developing their skills and competence in relation to music education. These results can be used by arts educators to design preservice music/arts education programs that take into account the students' lack of confidence and background experience in the arts. The programs can include a variety of experiential learning activities (Kolb's Stage 1: Concrete Experience) along with the opportunity for students to reflect on their learning (Stage 2: Reflective Observation). The students should also be challenged to relate their observations, experiences and reflections to relevant classroom and arts education pedagogies (Stage 3: Abstract Conceptualisation) then have the opportunity to test these in relation to an authentic classroom situation (Stage 4: Active Experimentation). In this current climate of basic skills testing where the arts are de-prioritised, inspiring students to teach music and giving them the training, skills and experiences, changing their attitudes and developing their confidence and competence in relation to music teaching is vital for the future of music education for our children.

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