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Dewey's Experience and Education: Applications to Fieldwork Experiences in Music Teacher Education

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Abstract

Across most undergraduate music teacher education programs in the U.S., preservice music teachers are required to fulfill a cumulative fieldwork experience. A variety of titles are used to describe this real-world teaching experience and similar attributes are shared, including: a college supervisor who observes classroom teaching across a four-month academic calendar; an assigned cooperating teacher from a K-12 music classroom mentors the preservice music teacher throughout its entirety; and a corresponding seminar class meets regularly throughout the semester to support critical reflection and professional development in preparation for job placement. Scholars have argued that field-experiences offer real-world teaching experiences and provide valuable learning opportunities for students in authentic music teaching contexts. In the early nineteenth century, John Dewey (1859-1952) identified challenges associated with classroom instruction isolated from real-world learning experiences. His philosophy of education and experience sought to revolutionize education, where learning is: individualized, autonomous, directly connected to real-world learning experiences, socially constructed, built on students' previous experiences, and embedded in reflective practices. In this paper, I argue that Dewey's philosophy of experience and education provides a philosophical foundation for re-conceptualizing music teacher education, where preservice music teachers develop an individualized curriculum around their previous teaching experiences, a teacher identity relevant to their personal interests, professional teaching knowledge and skills embedded in authentic teaching contexts, assessments significant to their individual needs, and a close mentorship with music teacher educators who support their professional development. Implications for the field of music education are presented in conclusion.

Keywords: music teacher education, experience and education, experiential learning, fieldwork

In music teacher education, the student teaching semester is typically the capstone requirement for an undergraduate music education degree. Fieldwork experiences often occur over a four-month academic semester, where preservice music teachers collaborate with assigned cooperating teachers and university supervisors who mentor and support their professional development.¹ Throughout this teaching semester, preservice music teachers are exposed to hands-on learning in a K-12 music classroom, often fulfilling the role of a full-time music teacher.²

Additional fieldwork experiences also exist throughout music teacher education curricula, including: (1) teacher observations, (2) one-on-one work with students, (3) small group instruction, or (4) administrative tasks.³ In music teacher education, it is not uncommon for preservice music teachers to take on assisting responsibilities as well. Across this myriad of experiences, preservice music teachers often teach lessons, create lesson handouts, assignments, quizzes, tests, grade assignments, or design other useful materials for classroom learning.⁴ Research suggests that various types of fieldwork experiences positively influence pre-service teachers' transitions to full-time music teaching, enhancing their teaching knowledge and skills more than any of their coursework requirements.⁵ This suggests that fieldwork experiences hold significant value in creating real-world learning opportunities as preservice music teachers prepare for careers teaching music.

The inclusion of fieldwork experiences in teacher education began in the early nineteenth century.⁶ Now, most teacher certification programs in the U.S. require fieldwork experiences for graduation and state teacher certification. However, occurrences of field experiences vary depending on the institution and discipline.⁷ In the early nineteenth century, the goal of implementing fieldwork experiences in teacher education was to support a more fluid transition

from student to teacher, while assisting the development of a students' teacher identity.⁸ This assertion holds true for teacher education in the twenty-first century as well, where fieldwork experiences provide skills and knowledge necessary for their transition to full-time teaching.

Whether fieldwork experiences exist as extension assignments in method courses or during the final student teaching semester, scholars have argued that field experiences provide valuable opportunities for preservice teachers to work closely with cooperating teachers in real-world teaching settings.⁹ The aforementioned literature suggests that fieldwork experiences assist in professional growth, enhance learning, and support the development of their teacher identity.¹⁰ Additionally, scholars have argued that fieldwork experiences encourage adaptability—a characteristic deemed critical for effective classroom teaching.¹¹ Across much of the literature, scholars agree that fieldwork experiences support professional development, the development of teacher identity, and provide space for students to learn real-world teaching skills.

Scholars have called for pre-service teachers' field experiences to be expanded. The earliest recognition in this area came from the Music Educators National Conference (MENC) in a document entitled, "Commission on Teacher Education" (1972). Recommendations from this commission suggested that all music teacher education programs provide multiple opportunities for fieldwork experiences in the first two years of a music education degree.¹² A decade later, an additional task force addressed the need to increase fieldwork experiences in music teacher education. This task force, entitled *Music Teacher Education: Partnership and Process*, recommended that all teacher certification programs create and promote early field experiences in music, arguing that fieldwork experiences support students' abilities to shift their thinking from student to teacher, thus offering support for an integrated learning experience across the curriculum.¹³

As researchers have investigated the implications of fieldwork experiences in teacher education, so too, have educational philosophers written about this important topic.¹⁴ Of the major educational philosophers, perhaps one of the most noteworthy and progressive of his time was John Dewey (1938). Building on his theory of experience and education, Dewey argued that experiential learning opportunities transform stagnate and static content into vibrant learning environments.¹⁵ Although his philosophy of experience and education was written in the early nineteenth century, his ideas present important implications for music teacher education in the twenty-first century. His work provides a philosophical framework for re-conceptualizing curricula based on students' learning in real-world fieldwork placements.

In this paper, I argue the field of music teacher education can learn from Dewey and his philosophy of education and experience. As we will see later, Dewey suggests that real-world learning experiences provide learners with opportunities to enhance their learning in ways not accessible when confined to classroom environments. Rather, he argued that experiential education relies on the quality of a learning experience, which is rooted in: (1) individualized learning, (2) principles of interaction and continuity, (3) social-collaborative learning, and (4) reflective practices. In the following paragraphs, I will explore areas further with applications to music teacher education. Finally, I will discuss the implications of Dewey's philosophy of experience and education in music teacher education.

Education, Experience, and Music Teacher Education

John Dewey (1859–1952) is well known for his work in education and the arts throughout early American philosophy. During his career, he published a significant amount of literature in the area of education, which held lasting impacts on classroom learning and its practices.¹⁶ Dewey is also known for establishing the Laboratory School at the University of Chicago, where he applied his educational theories in laboratory settings with children. Finally, his philosophical principles for democratic education were influential in developing his philosophy of experience and education.¹⁷

Dewey's (1938) work is rooted in the philosophical belief that educational institutions often underemphasize students' previous life experiences in classroom learning and overemphasize a standardized curriculum that requires students to fit a predetermined mold.¹⁸ He argued that much of education perpetuates a cycle often focused on delivering factual knowledge, largely disconnected from reality and devoid of applications to the real world. For this reason, he claimed that students were disinterested in classroom learning and chose not to engage. This revolt, according to Dewey, is known as collateral learning; other educational philosophers also observed this phenomenon and suggested different terminology.¹⁹

As Dewey (1938) explained, “the subject matter of education consists of bodies of information and of skills that have been worked out in the past; therefore, the chief business of the school is to transmit them to the new generation.”²⁰ This type of learning is often teacher-dominated, where teachers view their students as empty “containers” and “fill” them with information. According to Dewey, an assiduous focus on disseminating facts often exhibits “habits of action in conformity with rules and standards,”²¹ where teachers ignore individualized learning opportunities. Consequently, teachers often diminish the quality of students' learning.

Dewey's philosophy of education and experience is largely built on issues he believed existed within the traditional education system of his time. Therefore, he argued for a more relevant and meaningful curriculum. Yet, much of his observations in education hold true today. For example, he believed the persistent use of traditional textbooks in classroom learning contributed to widening gaps between school learning and its real-world applications. In this way, classroom learning is "bound up in the past as to give little help in dealing with the issues of the present and future."²² In order to address this widening gap, Dewey argued that existing curricular models shift to more relevant ones, where teachers emphasize real-world skills using students' previous experiences through individualistic and socially constructed learning. He wrote that "education, in order to accomplish its ends both for the individual learner and for society, must be based upon experience—which is always the actual life-experience of some individual."²³ Dewey's philosophy of experience and education is built on the unity of students' previous experiences, personal interests, real-world learning, and educational goals.

In addition to individualistic and socially constructed changes suggested by Dewey, he also believed that students do not embark upon formal education with little or no knowledge. Instead, Dewey believed that many students bring a wide range of previous experiences across multiple domains with them. According to Dewey, teachers' focus on standardized curricula that remain largely unchanged for many years significantly minimizes the quality of learning and its impact on students' long-term interests. These suggestions have implications for teachers and the development of classroom curricula today. Dewey's philosophy challenges educators to take existing static content, filled with important concepts and principles necessary for learning, and create learning experiences that are individualized, relevant, meaningful, and built upon students' previous knowledge.

Dewey suggests five changes to classroom teaching, which have direct applications to the music teacher education profession. These changes support increasing fieldwork experiences across music teacher education curricula. First, Dewey argued that education must transition from a place that opposes individual expression into one that cultivates individuality. As preservice music teachers are placed regularly in K-12 classrooms, their individual personalities and teacher identities might be more effectively supported, cultivated, and developed. Through real-world teaching experiences, their individual interests may be enhanced as they recognize their teaching strengths and build upon their weaknesses. Second, Dewey believed that external discipline strategies should be replaced with ample room for ‘free activity’. Although he did not believe in a chaotic classroom and recognized the need for structure and order, ‘free-activity,’ was meant to encourage the expression of student viewpoints, build on their previous experiences, and foster personal interests in learning. In music teacher education, increasing fieldwork experiences might encourage students to reflect on their philosophy of music education, support real-world lesson plan writing abilities, and develop curricular units around the needs of real-world students in K-12 classrooms. Third, Dewey argued that learning should transition from textbook driven teaching, which is largely dominated by teacher-directed instruction, into a relevant curriculum built upon students’ previous experiences. In music teacher education, increasing fieldwork experiences might replace “textbook driven” learning with real-world and individualized approaches, where preservice music teachers are encouraged to find relevant research that supports their and their students learning needs. Fourth, Dewey argued that skills and concepts should not be isolated by drill or rote memorization. Rather, they should be applied to real-world applications. Dewey might suggest that preservice music teachers engaged within fieldwork experiences not be required to memorize facts in tests and

quizzes, which are often disconnected from music teaching and learning in real K-12 classrooms. Conversely, students might be encouraged to acquire knowledge and skills from within their fieldwork contexts. In this way, students would learn by doing; learning would be relevant and meaningful.

Finally, Dewey believed that teachers should assure that student learning focuses on life-long skills and less on near-future needs. In music teacher education curricula, fieldwork experiences do this well: they focus on the life-long and professional skills necessary for effective music teaching in preparation for their future careers. Although these challenges raise possible implications for music teacher education, they also raise legitimate concerns about the quality of experiences; one might argue that not all experiences are likely to be educational or beneficial in student learning. As I will outline in the following paragraphs, Dewey addressed the issue of quality in student learning and placed responsibility on teachers to assure quality learning occurs in the classroom.

The Quality of Experience

According to Dewey, not all experiences are educative and may fall into one of two categories: non-educative and mis-educative. Non-educative experiences occur when learning is disconnected from any other learning experience in the classroom, leaving the learner unaffected. Dewey believed mis-educative experiences lead to misallocated learning, which inhibits a students' learning capability. According to Dewey, the purpose of education is to "prepare the young for future responsibilities and for success in life, employing acquisition of organized bodies of information and prepared forms of skill, which comprehend the material of instruction."²⁴ This means that teachers must regularly make curricular decisions to assure student-learning experiences are worthy for inclusion.

In addition to mis-educative and non-educative experiences, Dewey suggested additional criteria potentially inhibiting the quality of a learning experience in the classroom. These included experiences that: (1) produce a lack of sensitivity, (2) reduce responsiveness, (3) increase complacency, or (4) promote a careless attitude. He argued that these types of experiences are standard throughout many traditional education classrooms:

How many students, for example, were rendered callous to ideas, and how many lost the impetus to learn because of the way in which learning was experienced by them? How many acquired special skills utilizing automatic drill so that their power of judgment and capacity to act intelligently in new situations was limited? How many came to associate the learning process with ennui and boredom? How many found what they did learn so foreign to the situations of life outside the school to give them no power of control over the latter? How many came to associate books with dull drudgery, so that they were 'conditioned' to all but flashy reading matter?²⁵

These questions raise implications for education and challenge traditional models, identifying complacency, boredom, drudgery, and conditioned response often associated with drill memorization of facts. In order to avoid these experiences, Dewey developed two principles, which fall on a continuum he called the *experiential continuum*. His continuum presents a way for teachers to assess whether experiences are worthy for inclusion in educational settings and suggests the responsibility of the teacher to assure that quality-learning experiences occur. The continuum is categorized using two principles: the *principle of continuity* and the *principle of interaction*. As I will outline further, both are applicable in assessing the quality of learning experiences of fieldwork experiences in music teacher education.

The Principle of Continuity

According to Dewey, the principle of continuity is one based on habit and suggested that each new experience builds upon previous experiences. In this way, the principle of continuity is similar to building a foundation of a house, as building blocks are placed on top of each other. Similarly, each new experience in a students' learning is built upon previous ones, thus shaping future experiences in relevant ways. In educational contexts, the principle of continuity suggests that when students learn from their experiences, they grow both “intellectually and morally.”²⁶

This principle holds promise for increasing fieldwork experiences in music teacher education. For example, when students engage in fieldwork experiences, they can focus on their individual and professional needs and are encouraged to bring their diverse teaching experiences with them. When applying the principle of continuity to music teacher education, students' diverse backgrounds allow opportunities for music teacher educators to construct a personalized education around their interests and learning needs. “Hands-on” or “real-world” fieldwork experiences encourage an individualized learning schematic and support the maturation of their personal teacher identity. This deviates from the traditional curriculum in many ways, where a significant focus of the curriculum is based on standardized textbook knowledge, and a “one size fits all” approach, as students are required to pass juries, quizzes, and tests, which are often disconnected from real-world applications.

As Dewey argued, there are implications in correctly implementing these ideas across educational contexts. For example, he argued that intellectual and moral growth might not always prove advantageous and teachers may need to navigate these challenges to ensure quality carefully. Applied to music teacher education, this notion suggests that moments may occur where teacher educators and cooperating teachers will need to decide whether growth from an

experience has proved to be educative or non-educative. Dewey referred to this challenging task as a “moving force,”²⁷ and recognized challenges associated with assessing the quality of a students’ experience. Although somewhat elusive, Dewey managed to articulate a few areas where success may be measured. These included a students’ ability to overcome through difficult times, as well as a strong will for ingenuity, creativity, or innovation. Although these attributes are honorable, teacher educators may need additional tools for assessing the quality of an experience. Since teacher educators and cooperating teachers bring a wealth of experience and knowledge, it seems appropriate that they would also be responsible for determining the value, worth, and significance of fieldwork experience. Dewey supported this belief, claiming, “It is [then] the business of the educator to see in what direction an experience is heading.”²⁸

The Principle of Interaction

The principle of interaction is the final criteria in determining the quality of an educative experience within Dewey’s philosophy of experience and education. “Interaction” refers to the interplay between two specific constructs, “the objective and the internal.”²⁹ In this context, the “objective” refers to students’ physical environment. The “internal” is their psyche (e.g., emotions, feelings, and mind). Interactions that occur between these two constructs is where students derive meaning from their experiences. Dewey considered the interplay between physical spaces and a students’ psyche as a *situation*. Therefore, a situation creates an experience. Dewey argued that much of education violates the principle of interaction, as the traditional curriculum in most schools is based on external control factors. In classroom contexts, external factors that negatively influence a situation include standardized curricula, where teachers make all curricular decisions or classroom environments minimize autonomy. In these

types of classrooms, students are provided with limited choices, and their previous experiences are often ignored.

The principle of interaction holds promise for increasing fieldwork experiences in music teacher education. For example: in fieldwork experiences, students often take on the role of a full-time music teacher, where they are required to create, write, and teach lessons in a K-12 music classroom. As they do, the objective (their created lesson, the classroom environment, and the social context) interacts with their internal. This interaction develops a situation, and thus an experience. Experiences provide students with valuable professional development opportunities. Though many courses in undergraduate music education programs require students to write lesson plans, students often have few opportunities to teach these lessons in authentic contexts. This means pre-service teachers' learning is disconnected real teaching experiences, violating Dewey's principle of interaction and reducing the quality of their learning. In turn, this minimizes the principle of interaction, limiting important interplay that creates meaningful learning experiences.³⁰

Additional avenues for applying this principle to music teacher education fieldwork experiences also exist. For example, Dewey argued that many classrooms focus on rote memorizing of facts, where learning is reduced "to a diet of predigested materials."³¹ In this way, pre-service teachers are often unable to attribute their learning experiences in classrooms to real-world applications outside of schools. In most music teacher programs, students are required to learn choral and instrumental instrument techniques. Students often learn within a university or college classroom, where they are required to pass playing quizzes and demonstrate a working knowledge of musical instrument(s). Applying Dewey's principle of interaction in this context allows music teacher educators to re-envision how learning might occur. For example, replacing

techniques courses with fieldwork experiences might encourage preservice music teachers to learn and play instruments along with beginning musicians and cooperating teachers in K-12 music classrooms. As pre-service teachers learn, they might also teach instrumental or vocal techniques *with* students as they learn. In this approach, learning is individualized, and students learn at their own pace autonomously. Replacing method and technique courses with fieldwork places emphasis on teaching skills in real-world contexts.

Additional fieldwork experiences might encourage students to research and identify reading material relevant to their individual needs. Inevitably, students will face challenges in fieldwork experiences and will need to identify ways to overcome the challenges. In this way, preservice music teachers would not memorize facts disconnected from real-world applications. Instead, pre-service teachers would develop individualized curricula supported by research and practice. These types of experiences in music teacher education support the principle of interaction, enhance quality-learning experiences, and support the individualized nature of learning.

Unifying the Principles of Continuity and Interaction

Dewey argued that the principle of continuity and interaction present implications for assessing whether a learning experience has been educative. I have briefly outlined a few possible implications for fieldwork experiences in music teacher education. However, both principles were presented in succession, beginning with the principle of continuity and concluding with the principle of interaction, suggests a disconnected approach of the two principles. However, Dewey argued that each principle is in “active union with each other.”³² The union of each principle provides “the measure of the educative significance and value of an experience.”³³ Dewey believed traditional classrooms often focus on content delivery, isolated in

physical spaces and devoid of connections to real-world applications. He believed this encouraged passivity in learning processes and violated the unification of both principles. For experiential education to be successful, a marriage of these principles is imperative. In the following paragraphs, I will illuminate how examples of how to apply unification of these principles to fieldwork experiences in music teacher education.

First, roles of the music teacher educators would shift. Instead of classroom teaching, a music teacher educator would facilitate active teaching and learning practices within a real-world K-12 classroom setting. Music teacher educators would then work individually with students, develop individualized curricula which support their needs, and build educational goals around students' needs. Second, music teacher educators might focus less on teacher-focused instruction and fill an observational role, traveling to local schools and observing preservice music teachers in K-12 classrooms. As preservice music teachers work in K-12 music classrooms, they would create lesson-plans, recognize the skills and knowledge necessary for teaching each lesson, and apply them in real classroom contexts. Pre-service teachers' lessons would be observed regularly by music teacher educators. Third, music teacher educators would provide space for autonomy and professional development. In partnership with cooperating teachers, preservice music educators would take on real teacher responsibilities by choosing appropriate activities, procedures, standards, and assessments for each lesson. Fourth, all previous music experiences each preservice music teacher brings to classrooms would be valuable contributions to their learning. This is supported by Dewey's philosophy, as he advocated for students to be active learners throughout learning processes, arguing "there is an intimate and necessary relationship between the process of actual experience and education."³⁴ As students learn in real-world

situations, students' active participation increases and the role of music teacher educators becomes facilitative.

Finally, Dewey's experiential continuum provides a means for teacher educators to assess the quality of learning in fieldwork experiences throughout music teacher education. Besides, it outlines the significance of creating a curriculum around students' previous experiences. As we have seen, Dewey suggests the importance of student autonomy. This suggests a need for increased freedom of choice in student learning.

Freedom and Social Control

Dewey's philosophy of education and experience is closely related to his philosophy of democracy in the classroom. This type of learning environment emphasizes student autonomy. In traditional classroom models, Dewey believed teachers governed social and physical environment too strictly. Dewey argued that social control when governed too strictly by teachers, negatively impacted student attitudes, motivation, willingness to learn, future learning outcomes, and the relevancy of their learning to real-world applications. Dewey argued that teachers do not act in the social good of the entire class, but for an "exhibition of personal power."³⁵ For this reason, Dewey argued that classroom environments should emphasize freedom and that students should have the ability to contribute towards their learning. Dewey defined freedom as "intellectual freedom," in the manner that intelligence should be the goal and its purpose is "intrinsically worthwhile."³⁶ In this model of teaching, students are responsible for their learning and actively contribute to learning processes, building on the common good and social structure of their entire classroom.

If applied to music teacher education, Dewey's beliefs about freedom and control would transform curricula. It would require music teacher educators to plan, be thoughtful, and know

their students well. Learning would become an “organization in which all individuals have an opportunity to contribute something.”³⁷ Implementing, supporting, and encouraging fieldwork experiences throughout music teacher education would provide avenues for freedom in student learning, as pre-service teachers contribute significantly to their learning.

Freedom in learning requires that music teacher educators support student learning in a variety of ways. First, Dewey argued that teachers must recognize the social construction of learning. In music teacher education, fieldwork experiences provide opportunities for social learning through interaction and collaboration with a variety of stakeholders, including cooperating teachers, peer teachers, and teacher educators. Second, Dewey emphasized that curriculum planning is not haphazard. Rather, it involves a complex set of knowledge on behalf of the teacher and begins by understanding each student individually. This includes any knowledge they bring to the classroom. Music teacher educators would be required to know the intellectual, emotional, and psychological needs of their students before facilitation. Third, music teacher educators might provide avenues for students to offer insight into curricular decisions and educational goals. Dewey argued that teachers should not exert authority in a dictatorship or authoritative role, as students desire to be an integrated and socially active member of the group. Finally, applying Dewey’s philosophy requires a flexible curriculum. Dewey’s philosophy requires flexibility to assure the individual needs of *all* students are recognized. Learning within fieldwork experiences offers one approach for a flexible curriculum.

According to Dewey, traditional classroom teaching is built upon the premise that students know little about a particular topic being discussed and are often treated similarly to their peers, whereby the diversification and stratification of learning are largely overlooked. Applying this philosophy to fieldwork experiences in music teacher education offers a relevant

and meaningful re-design; it would transform curricula in ways that would provide intellectual freedom, recognize individualized needs for every student, integrate their interests in the topics to be addressed, and offer avenues for critical thinking. As Dewey argued, the negative impact of forced uniformity in classrooms “creates a kind of uniform immobility and this reacts to perpetuate uniformity of studies and methods of recitations, while behind this enforced uniformity individual tendencies operate in irregular and more or less forbidden ways.”³⁸ Re-envisioning music teacher education by replacing fieldwork experiences with traditional coursework requirements further breaks the mechanical uniformity found in many traditional programs.

Dewey delineated perceived benefits in providing experiential learning opportunities for students. Although many of these have been addressed earlier, I suggest additional benefits for increasing fieldwork experiences in music teacher education as well. First, Dewey believed that teachers could gain knowledge and understanding of each student more effectively. This has direct implications for music teacher educators: as preservice music teachers are encouraged to work in socially constructed environments through fieldwork experiences, effective music teacher educators would know and understand students’ personalities and previous music experiences in real ways.³⁹ Music teacher educators would develop close professional and mentoring relationships with students, facilitating enhanced learning and support. Learning would become a social and collaborative process between students and various stakeholders. Second, Dewey believed that experiential learning encourages students to be active participants in learning processes. As experiential learning is mostly social, students would collaborate with other stakeholders in their learning and professional development. This holds for fieldwork experiences in music teacher education as well. As students work in K-12 classrooms, they

collaborate closely with university supervisors, cooperating teachers, and other peer teachers. This social interaction provides avenues for professional growth and the sharing of thoughts or ideas. Third, breaking the physical boundaries of traditional learning spaces allows learning to occur in real-world settings. Dewey argued that experiential learning should include opportunities for students to explore outside the confined spaces of the physical classroom. In music teacher education, fieldwork experiences allow learning to occur in K-12 music classrooms, where preservice music teachers' work with young musicians in the community outside the boundaries of the university classroom.

The infusion of freedom and social collaboration through fieldwork experiences in music teacher education encourages music teacher educators to re-examine and recognize the purpose of music teaching and learning. Fieldwork experiences provide students with opportunities to work in K-12 classrooms, develop and teach lesson in real classroom contexts, learn from past mistakes and successes, actively participate and assess individual learning needs, provide freedom of choice in curricular materials, collaborate in social milieus, and apply learning to future outcomes in a students' professional career.

Conclusion: Reframing Music Teacher Education Coursework

Dewey's themes suggest new avenues in re-envisioning music education curriculum based his philosophy of experience and education. In defining experiential learning, Dewey acknowledged that there must be some combination of the old (traditional education) and the new (progressive education), and neither should replace the other. He argued that teachers should increase individualized learning experiences, where students learn from personal experiences within socially constructed environments which encourage freedom and autonomy. Music teacher educators might use many ideas from Dewey's philosophy of education and experience

to inform their practices. I argue that increasing, and perhaps sub-planting, much of the traditional coursework with fieldwork experiences will address many challenges and shortfalls of traditional education models. Similar to Dewey, I suggest that degree requirements for music teacher education implements change to reflect an evener balance between traditional courses and fieldwork experiences.

Dewey's philosophy of experiential education continually challenges researchers and practitioners to re-examine how music teacher education programs prepare and educate students for successful careers in K-12 schools and beyond. I argued above that Dewey's philosophy suggests valuable opportunities for pre-service teacher education. Music teacher education curricula would benefit by fostering collaboration with surrounding community schools, breaking down boundaries between local K-12 contexts and surrounding universities. Dewey argued that experiences are socially constructed through human contact and communication. I suggest that Dewey's socially constructed conception of education describes an ideal relationship between universities, colleges, and local K-12 schools. In addition, social learning processes outlined by Dewey illustrate the significance of close collaboration among cooperating teachers, university supervisors, and preservice music teachers.

Perhaps most significantly, I suggest that Dewey's philosophy provides a conceptual and philosophical foundation for placing preservice music teachers in K-12 music classrooms earlier and more regularly. Although established music teacher education curricula require students to complete method courses using corresponding textbooks and materials before teaching, music teacher educators should consider a combination of both curricular models. Carefully balancing instructional pedagogies and fieldwork experiences may enhance the quality of learning for all students. As Dewey argued, teaching must not be disconnected from real-world situations.

Increasing fieldwork experiences in music teacher education would support this philosophy, perhaps increasing student motivation, applications of learning to real-world situations, increased professional development opportunities, maturation of teacher identity, and the inclusion of student autonomy.

Music teacher educators and cooperating teachers should assure that quality learning experiences occur. Dewey acknowledged that without quality, learning is significantly reduced. Although quality is dependent upon many things, Dewey's philosophy is rooted in the premise that music teacher educators recognize and be cognizant of the richness of experience students bring with them into classrooms. According to Dewey, a marriage of both quality and experience is vital for meaningful and successful learning.

Implications for Music Education

The philosophy of experience and education presented by Dewey provides possible implications for the field of music education. As change is the only constant around us, fieldwork experiences in music education coursework provide preservice music teachers opportunities to learn in real-world situations through social interactions with peers and colleagues in changing cultures. Research suggests the value of field experiences and the need to recognize them as an integral part of music teacher education.⁴⁰Dewey's philosophy of experience and education support such calls to action. Below, I outline possible implications for the field of music education from the ideas presented in this paper.

Fieldwork experiences in music teacher education should not be superfluous but carefully examined to ensure quality learning, as they have implications on the future of many students. To assure quality learning is occurring through fieldwork experiences, a relationship of respect and trust must exist between music teacher educators and pre-service teacher. Healthy

relationships might encourage supportive learning environments and provide insight into ways a music teacher educator might build learning experiences around the needs of students.

Additionally, music teacher educators, university supervisor, and cooperating teachers must regularly assess the development and progress of preservice music teachers in fieldwork experiences.

If fieldwork experiences become the primary curricular requirement in music teacher education, music teacher educators will incur additional responsibilities. First, communication with local music teachers in surrounding K-12 schools would be more pertinent than ever. If these relationships already exist, additional new relationships may need to be established to provide additional placement opportunities for pre-service music teachers. Second, additional planning, scheduling, and observations would be needed to assure that classroom learning supports individualized instruction and a collaborative workspace. Third, music teacher educators may need to meet regularly and communicate with cooperating teachers to assure pre-service teachers are experiencing quality learning. Fourth, existing methods courses may need to address the assessment of fieldwork experiences. Tests and other summative measures may need to be replaced with more relevant, meaningful, and supportive measures.

Dewey explains that experiential education is a moving force and that students learn at different speeds and bring with them a diverse range of experiences. As each student is uniquely different, so too must curricula continually adapt and change to meet the needs of students. This requires music teacher educators and cooperating teachers to provide extra time for planning as well as a passion and willingness to put in extra time. Challenges for incorporating fieldwork experiences in music teacher education recognizes the need to continually re-evaluate, revise,

and revamp curriculum requirements to improve educational experiences for pre-service music teachers.⁴¹

Although advancing fieldwork in the field of music education may take time, change never occurs quickly. Dewey argued that the route to change is “a slow and arduous one. It is a matter of growth, and there are many obstacles which tend to obstruct growth and to deflect it into wrong lines.”⁴² However, with passionate music teacher educators who desire to provide a meaningful, valuable, and lasting education to their students, the inclusion of more fieldwork experiences in music teacher education programs is possible. With increased awareness, time, dedication, and persistence, long-term positive outcomes in music teaching and learning throughout K-12 music classrooms, impacting the involvement of music in schools around the country and possibly the world, might be achieved.

Notes

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