

Peer Teach Reflection and Synthesis

Working on this peer teaching project, I learned very quickly the unique set of challenges that accompany recording an effective music teaching video with two people who are not physically together. At first, we sought out an app we could use that would have allowed us to record our parts separately, but in sync. We quickly learned that this would be both inefficient and costly and chose to record the entire video via Zoom. However, as our schedules were very different, we also found it challenging to find a time to create an effective recording. Creating a script alone took several hours as we wrote out our ideas, then worked to read through the script and time it. During this portion of the lesson design process, we discovered our greatest challenge: timing. Three to five minutes is such a short time, and we wanted to make sure that we included scaffolding as well as time for thinking and responding for the children watching. When we finally did get to work on our recording, we thought we had our script edited down to a little over five minutes. Recording on Zoom does not show the user to see the timing of their recording. Therefore, in editing, I still had to speed up portions of the movie to cut down on time.

In editing, I recognized several obvious areas during which Michael and I were not in sync thanks to Zoom sound delays. We planned for sound delays, which is why we had Michael repeat the rhythms with his own set of materials for the students to follow along with him rather than trying to have him follow along with me via Zoom, and expect the students to also follow along with him when practicing the different 4-beat rhythmic patterns. When we added pitches however, the students were asked to read and sing with Michael, who was reading my patterns rather than ones he had created in his own space. Therefore, timing was off for these portions. Unfortunately, we did not have time to rerecord these spots or fix timing issues and still meet

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deadlines for this project because Michael and I have such different schedules. I found it particularly challenging to let go of these technological issues as I was concerned that final video did not meet standards I would usually set for an effective lesson, as it taught students to follow along with the delayed sound rather than following the tempo set by me initially and watching the beats with their eyes. Maintaining the initially set tempo and then tracking rhythms in that tempo from left to right are important skills students will need later when introduced to sight-reading on a staff, following a conductor, and playing and singing with ensembles.

While I completed initial cuts, sped up portions and inserted frame transitions where necessary using iMovie, Michael worked on adding additional graphics and text using Screencastify. Both of these applications have their limitations and neither allowed us to add helpful elements we wanted to add, such as a bouncing ball to help students to track with their eyes from left to right, or pictorial graphics that children find engaging. Ideally, I would have liked to have added an animation appearing on each beat for the songs at the end: an old man with a walker for “This Old Man,” a star for “Twinkle, Twinkle,” and baby chick for “Los Pollitos.” However, we were only able to add text, which we used similarly.

In general, I thought our scaffolded lesson structure was effective in reviewing and building upon concepts. The first portion of the lesson introduced the students to the concept of four-beat patterns made up of quarter and eighth notes using call-and-response. Were I to add another element to this portion, I would have the children try a few patterns without hearing Michael repeat them, simply having him point to the beats. Then, I would present a rhythm for

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children to read independently, to ensure that they could synthesize what they learned through repetition into more independent music literacy skills, using problem solving. The second portion of the lesson simply introduced the children to how one rhythmic pattern can combine with different melodic patterns. Therefore, by the time we reached the third portion of the video, the children were able to listen for and identify the same rhythm with pitches attached, without being confused by the sudden addition of melodic elements. Finally, in the fourth portion of the lesson, children were assessed on their ability to create the same rhythmic pattern using objects in their house. Were I to scaffold in another layer of the lesson, I would try to do something similar to what I do with the children in-person, to allow the opportunity for composition using these colors to represent pitches. They could either search for four objects that are blue and four that are yellow or draw blue and yellow circles to compose their own melodic pattern on “sol” and “mi.” They would need to maintain the same rhythm, “tadi, tadi, ta, ta,” and assign a pitch for each note in the rhythmic pattern. Next, I would ask students to compose their own 4-beat rhythms, then add their own melodies.

After completing this project, I would conclude that an effective asynchronous teaching video includes repetition. It also includes pacing that provides enough time to think but moves quickly enough for children to not lose focus. I also think an effective teaching video encourages students to learn at their own pace by pausing as needed. Any effective lesson includes scaffolding so that children are constantly building upon previously acquired skills. Both synchronous and asynchronous lessons should allow for integration of multiple learning modalities, including visual, aural, and kinesthetic elements. I think an effective asynchronous

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lesson must also seek ways to allow students to create, respond to questions, and problem solve.

These elements come naturally in dialogue with teachers and peers, but are much more challenging to incorporate and effectively assess asynchronously.