

Teresa Hooper
December 7, 2006
Jr. High Methods

Second Qualitative Research Journal

Ms. Roberts
December 5, 2006
Sedalia Middle School
10:00-11:00 AM

I attended Ms. Roberts's choir class on December 5, 2006. This class was held from 10:10-11:00 a.m. I arrived early and noticed that there were some students already in the class setting up the different rows for Choir. I also noticed that some students were asking the teacher some questions. Ms. Roberts informed me that they would be working on the musical today.

Students started to enter the class. They were walking in, talking, and all find their spots to sit down. When the bell rang, the teacher said, "Give Me Five", and put her hand up in the air. Anticipatory set? But is it effectively linked to the rest of the class? The class instantly got quiet. There was a problem with the group. They did not have enough chairs for everyone that was present for class. The students try to solve the problem by moving in to fill in empty chairs. The teacher says, "I take roll by empty chairs. So don't sit in the empty chairs." The teacher then goes over to her desk and starts to take roll. As the teacher is taking roll, a student is causing problems. Teacher stands up from the desk and says, "Enough is enough. We've all had enough." She sits back down to finish taking roll. Would it be possible for students to be involved in taking the roll. Generally, could students take more responsibility for "teaching" or other "adult" roles?

After the roll is taken the teacher says "Today we are doing Fat Sam's and Dandy Dan's after school." A student starts to talk, and the teacher says, "Wait, wait, wait. Just raise your hand." The teacher continues on. She is trying to clarify instructions that she gave at the end of their last class. The students need to know who needs to attend which after school rehearsal. She keeps adding, or subtracting different groups that need to attend the different rehearsals. There is a lot of confusion between the students and the teacher, and this is reflected by a student's comment, "I am so confused." There are many questions. It seems like the teacher does not have a clear idea of what should be happening and is working it out during the class instead of before the class. Two students have a question. The teacher answers one girl's question, and then says "Yes" to another girl with her hand up. As the girl begins to ask her question, the teacher addresses the girl that she was talking to earlier. Later the teacher says, "There seems to be some confusion." She then asks the students "Who needs to stay after school today?", and continues on with the different days that they will be holding an after school rehearsal. The students that are staying raise their hand and the teacher says, "Keep your hands up. I am doing this to see if the right

people are going to be showing up.” She checks to make sure that everyone understands the schedule for after school rehearsals. **All of this took until 10:30.**

Teacher says, “We still need to work on “Fat Sam’s Dance” to get it faster and to work on enunciation. We also need to learn “A Little Love”, so grab a book.” The students start to pass out the music that is sitting in a pile on top of the piano. The teacher moves to the piano, which is facing the group. She looks out at the students, “Stand up straight and give me good posture. Arms to the side not in your pockets. **Everyone yawn to loosen your jaw.**” **Did the teacher model the yawning?** A student begins to yawn loudly, like he is tired. “No, don’t go to sleep. You want to do a half yawn in the back of your throat. Do you feel how there is a cave back there?” The students then start to feel their jaw.

Teacher then says, **“Sing (she demonstrated a descending scale)”** **The class sings what she demonstrated.** **“Do you hear how the pitch goes flat when you are going down. You need to think about the half steps.”** **Research suggests that effective music teachers can provide their students with appropriate models by singing or playing instruments. They cannot only provide models of what they would like to hear (the goal) but also how their students are playing or singing.** The class sings again. This time the teacher says, “You need to think about coming at the note from on top.” **metaphor?** The class sings again. The teacher says “You need to open up your throat more.” The class sings the scale again.

The teacher then started to talk about performing on stage. She says, “The stage is really big, and it can swallow your sound. We need to work on **pitch, enunciation and being fast so everyone can hear and understand us.**” **(Concepts: pitch, articulation, and durations or tempo)** The class then does two more vocal warm-ups using the phrases, **“Papa, papa picked a pot of peas”** and **“Mama made me mash my m-n-ms.”** **articulation**

Before the class starts singing their music, the teacher says, **“Please try really hard not to go down the slippery slide.”** **metaphor** The class starts to sing “Fat Sam’s.” She stops the group and says, “I want to understand the words here. We are going to go faster.” She then looked over to some students and said, “I don’t want anymore drawing or what ever it is you are doing.” They continue to sing through the piece. At one point she stopped them and said, “Everyone open your mouth. I’m going to pour an energy drink into all of you.” **metaphor** Sing this song with more energy.” The class sings the piece with more enthusiasm and energy. A few times she stops the group because some students are adding a slide on the word “speak easy”. She has them sing it right once each time she stops them. They continue to sing through the piece. She stops them again, “We need to keep all of that energy. Stay energized.” The classmates begin to talk about the different reasons that they don’t have energy.

She also started this singing session by having everyone singing the alto parts. At one point she added a few sopranos. “I want to hear the alto parts.” The altos drowned out the sopranos the next time through the selection, so she added a few more sopranos. This time through, the sopranos drown out the alto part. The teacher said, “Good, but I want to hear the alto part still.” At this point she works on the selection row by row to hear the individuals. She works with a student who is having problems following the alto line. She tells him that he is

sliding down to the note. Another student laughs as the student tries to hit the right notes. The teacher says, "Don't laugh. He didn't laugh at you when you sang." The student she was working with says, "Did I slide that time?" Another student says from across the room, "You should be the one that knows whether or not you were sliding." The teacher then cuts in and says, "Actually if they knew they were sliding, they wouldn't do it." This raises very important issues. Are students having enough opportunities to self-assess or assess their peers? Roberts makes an excellent point that you can't sing or play one way or another unless you can hear the difference. It would be useful to know which students can hear the difference between sliding (portamento or glissando) into a pitch and not sliding into a pitch (senza portamento or glissando). She is exactly right, if they can identify it aurally, then they are much more likely to be able to sing it or play it.

The teacher then puts the CD in the CD Player so that the group can sing the song up to tempo. She stops the CD when there is one line that is a problem at the faster tempo. The teacher has the group sing the line acapella at a slower tempo. As they are singing with the CD, the teacher notices that some students are standing with their arms folded. She then talks about how it is comfortable to stand with arms folded, but that no one should stand that way during this scene. It seems to me that the teacher should provide students with some good reasons or better yet have the students identify good reasons to not sing with their arms folded. The students then start to talk about how they would prefer to stand while they are singing on stage. They sing with the CD again. Afterwards, the teacher says, "Thank-you Alisa. Alisa is enunciating because I see her lips are moving." The next time through the song a couple more students enunciate. There were also a couple of students that goofed off with their lips as well.

There was chaos between in the transition between the two different songs. The teacher uses "Give Me Five" again to get their attention. The last few minutes of class were used to work on "Dandy Dan". This song features a student soloist, with the choir backing them up.

At the end, the teacher says, "Pass your music in." The students all stand up and start passing their music in. The teacher says, "No, pass it in by rows." She then says, "I'll excuse you a lot faster if you don't jump up when the bell rings." The class sits and talks with their friends. The bell rings, and the class jumps up, and she says, "No, sit back down. When you are all sitting I will excuse you." The students all sit down, and then the teacher excuses them.

Daniel Jasper
Caracas Middle School
Dec. 6, 2006
10:30-12:35

The first group was his beginning group. I noticed as I walked into the class that he had some instructions written up on the board. Do Now: Spit out gum/ candy, Have a seat in assigned seating, turn in practice log. Aim: Warm-ups, Jingle Bell Rock, Rhythm Elimination, Pat A Pan Noel, Were You There?

and Santa's Diet. When the bell rang, teacher clapped his hands to get the classes attention. The class would clap back the rhythm that he had clapped. The teachers seems to have a plan. Shows he cares and is at least somewhat prepared for the lesson. This got them quiet for a couple of seconds. The students weren't quiet as he tried to take roll. Would it be possible for this job to be at least partly taken over by a reliable student? This would allow the teacher to immediately move into the lesson. This roll-taking seems to really inhibit lesson momentum. I wonder if it has to be completed at the beginning of the class? Could the T. get the students started on some activity before taking the roll? Perhaps a cooperative or individual activity? A listening lesson perhaps? Daniel jumped right into warm-ups after roll. The class sang "La" on 1,2,3,4 and 5 of the scale going up and down. Each time they would move up a half step. He asked, "Girls, can you hit this note?" (It was the highest note that they had sung in the warm-up.) The girls hit the note. "Good, you guys are able to sing a little higher." He notices a girl with gum in her mouth and asks her to spit it out. They then sing "Floppy, Fluffy, Puppy", as a warm-up. The students seem to be excited about this one. After singing this for a while, the teacher noticed one girl was sitting there not doing anything. He asked, "Are you singing?" She snapped back, "Yes!". The teacher then calmly asked, "Then why isn't your mouth moving?" She rolled her eyes at him, and put her feet up on a chair, (after being asked several times to keep her feet down.) The teacher than said, "Brittney isn't here today, so you shouldn't be having any problems." "Thank-goodness she isn't here!" "Well, can you please take your feet off of the chair?" She does and they finish doing the warm up. Very unfortunate... This student is getting a lot of attention from the teacher for inappropriate behavior. Whether they realize it or not the other students are being punished by this one individual. I wonder what options the teacher has? Has he met individually with this student? Have her parents been contacted? How could he document her behavior to present to principal and/or parents? Videotape?

After warm-ups Daniel says, "Okay, it's time for Jingle Bell Rock." The class becomes chaotic, as students start to rummage for their music. Some of them approach Daniel with questions. There are a couple of girls in the front who seem to have some sort of learning disability. They go up to Daniel to ask him a question. When Daniel starts to play the piano, the students straighten up. Some of the students seem to really enjoy singing. All the more reason to get into the music more quickly. There are other students who just stand there with their arms folded, having a real attitude problem. At one point, the students are having problems with the lyrics, so Daniel stops the class to go over the lyrics. When he stops, chaos breaks out again. One girl refuses to put her hand up when she has questions. Two of the boys are rough housing as the class is going over the lyrics. The teacher asks them what they are doing. One boy says, "Rough Housing." They return back to the song and finish singing their way through it.

Next is Rhythm Elimination, and the students seem to be very excited about this. The teacher picks up some papers that have some rhythms on it and asks, "Who needs papers?" A lot of students put their hands up. He asks each

one, "Where is your paper?" Most of them either lost them, or left them at home. I've always liked how the Davis School District requires all junior high students to carry certain basic materials to classes like a journal and folders. Then students have a means used across the school to keep track of materials for all of their classes. "Class, we are going to clap through the first two lines together." The class claps the first line very well, and then messes up on the second line. The teacher says, "Listen to me while I clap it." It cleans up a little bit, but there are some students who weren't clapping the right thing at all. The teacher says, "Hold up your papers if you have them." Nineteen students don't have their paper with them. The teacher says, "Each of you should have a paper, I passed these out last week, and you are supposed to be working on them." A student asks, "Can I go 1st today?" The teacher says, "We aren't going individually, since only 10 of you brought your paper. We'll do it tomorrow for a grade. We are now going to move on to Pat a Pan."

There is a little bit more chaos as the students get ready to sing this song. The teacher puts all of the boys together. They sing through the song. When they are done running through the song, several students start to yell out questions. Daniel tries to get their attention, but people just keep talking over him. He finally says, "Do not shout out questions, please." The teacher runs through the boys' part. There are only a few boys, compared to all of the girls in the class, and their part is different from the girls part. He runs through their part a couple of times. Afterward they put it all together and sing through it again.

They move on to the next song. At the beginning the students came in early. The teacher says, "Remember, you don't come in right there." He plays the introduction again, and some students came in early again. He continues this until they come in at the right time. When they are done running through the song the teacher says, "It sounded good, but we still need a little work on the lyrics." He sits on a stool in front of the class. He reads a line of lyrics that they were having problems with. Some of the class repeats it back. He keeps repeating the line, until he gets everyone to repeat it back. After they say all of the lyrics that they were having problems with, they sing through the song one more time.

The last song that class sings through seems to be their favorite. It is called, "Santa's Diet". It is near the end of class, and the energy of the group's singing seems to be going down. The teacher says, "I can't hear you!", and the energy comes back to the group. At the end of the song, the group gets noisy. The teacher claps to get their attention. He says, "Please sit down and be quiet." He goes over the times for the concert. The students can wear a red, white or green shirt if they want. Santa hats and reindeer antlers are also allowed. The students are very excited about this. The bell rings and the students start to filter out. One of the students with a learning disability stops to talk to Daniel. She is really excited about the Christmas Concert. She has a Santa Hat and she is going to wear it. As she walks out the door she says, "This is going to be the BEST Concert ever, huh?" The teacher replied, "You bet it is!" She says, "Peace Out, Mr. Jasper!" :)

The next group to come in is the Advanced Group. For starters, I would say that there were a lot of students who seemed to have an attitude problem. Before they get in Daniel changes the Aim to: Warm-ups, Carol of the Bells, Silent Night, Rhythm Elimination, Jingle Bell Rock, and 'Twas the Night. He also adds Homework: Practice!!!!. I wonder if students have a good idea of how to practice? Has their teacher modeled good practicing techniques? The first girl to walk into class says, "Mr. Jasper, I'm not going to spit out my gum and you can't make me!" He says, "And why is that?" She replied with, "Because, I don't want to, and you can't make me." She then stomped out of the room. The rest of the class comes in. There is a lot of movement as students walk around and talk to all of their friends. There is student who is sitting in front of the class taking roll. (I think he was a teacher's assistant.) Daniel starts playing the piano, and some of the noise diminishes. They are going to sing "La" on 1,2,3,4 and 5 going up and down, like the previous class. At the end of this warm-up he says, "Sopranos, hold out this note." The girls hold out the highest note that they sang in the warm-up. The teacher then says, "Good you are getting higher. Can you hit this note?" He then plays a note a half step higher. Some girls can hit it, but most can't. The teacher says, "Our next goal is to be able to hit this note." The next warm-up is singing, Do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti and do up and back. There is too much talking as they do this exercise, so he stops. He does the clapping to get their attention a couple of times. He finally gets the classes attention and continues on. The last warm-up they do, splits the group into their different voices, and they crescendo and decrescendo on the note that is being played.

The first song that the group worked on was "Carol of the Bells". They ran through the whole piece. There was a lot of movement during the rehearsal of this song. There were students who would move around and talk to different friends, and there were other students who kept bumping into the students next to them. Even though all of this was going on, there were still some students who took it seriously.

After they were done going through the piece, the teacher asked, "Who can tell me the concept we talked about yesterday?" A few students answered, "line dynamics". The teacher then asked, "When the notes get higher," and then a student answered, "The louder you get." The teacher then asked, "When the notes go lower," and a student answered, "the quieter you get." "That's right. Now I want you to remember this when we run through the next piece. Please take out Silent Night." This time Daniel used a recording of the song they were singing. The teacher provided aural models. Because he wasn't playing the piano, he was able to get out in front of the group. It seemed like the discipline problems weren't as bad when he was up front conducting. As the group ran through the piece, Daniel walked around and fixed behavior problems, such as feet on the chair, and students with gum in their mouth. Many behavior problems will go away when the teacher or another adult is in close proximity to the behavior problem. Being able to use recordings is very useful. When I taught beginning band, I would regularly move around behind the students. This made them more rhythmically independent and I could help students stay on task, by pointing to their music or tapping on their shoulder.

There was a lot of talking between “Silent Night” and Rhythm Elimination. The group got a new Rhythm Elimination sheet today. The teacher’s assistant passed out the papers, while Daniel took care of some problems with students. Once the music was all passed out, Daniel said, “We are going to work on the first two lines together.” Daniel clapped along with the class. Some of the students try, while the rest of the students clap on the off beats, or just clap randomly. After going through the two lines, the teacher went over the different note durations used in the Rhythm Elimination exercise. After they cover the different beats, they class goes through it again. They seem to do better the second time through. A few students wanted to try it on their own. Each student is very close, but doesn’t have it completely right. Each time, the teacher would say something encouraging, such as, “Good job, you are almost there.” He then addressed the whole class. “This paper will eventually be used for the rhythm elimination. Practice this at home. Don’t lose these papers please.”

The next song the group worked on was “Jingle Bell Rock”. While they are running through the piece, students are wandering around again. They seem to really like this song, but are also bumping into their friends, or pushing them around. The teacher’s assistant is at the front of the room messing around as well. After they are done running the piece, there is chaos among the students. The teacher clapped his hands to get the classes attention. “Before we sing ‘Twas the Night, we need to talk about the concert. “ He goes over the times that the group needs to show up, and tells them that they can also wear red, white or green tops and a Santa hat or reindeer antlers. He also answered any of the questions that were asked. Some of the questions were very cheeky, but Daniel seemed to take it all in stride, answering the question quickly and moving on to the next question.

After he is done with the class business, he notices that some girls had moved across the room and were sitting against the wall talking to each other. He talks to them, and tells them he would like them to participate. He tells the class to stand up and sing the song. There is more chaos as they stand up to sing the final song. He claps his hands again to get their attention, and when he finally got their attention, he immediately started to play the piano. The class sings, and starts messing around, even more than they had been. He stops playing and stares the class down. Some students don’t realize what is going on, since they are too busy talking with their friends. He waits until they are all quiet. He then says, “This needs to be done right, and we only have 4 more classes before the concert.” Everyone behaves (mostly) for the rest of the class. They are able to run through the whole song.

At the end of class, he tells everyone that they need to stack their chairs against the wall and get ready to leave. There were 5 girls who stood in a circle during the final run through, and he asks to talk to them privately.

After his class left, I asked Daniel if he had any advice. He said first of all, to start off with a seating chart from the beginning. Don’t let them pick their own seats. He said this would help with behavior problems, and it would also help with learning names. He also said, don’t let them talk whenever they want, even if it is the first day of school. If you give them that luxury, it is really hard to get

them to break the habit of talking. The other thing he said was not to try and be their friend at the beginning. He said next time; he would start off stern, and then if he could, back off. It's too hard to go from being nice to mean, and the students walk all over you.

In both cases, I observed teachers that were instrumentalists, teaching a choir. Both teachers were doing a good job teaching, but it seemed like they had some difficulty expressing what they wanted the choir to produce in "choir" terms. I really wish that we had a vocal methods class that would teach us how to work with a choir. It would be nice if we could cover appropriate vocal ranges for Jr. High and High School students, and how to pick repertoire for the choir. It would also be nice to know what should be expected of each age group, like what they should be able to do at the end of each year. Great suggestion. Some ideas for the moment: I think that Dr. Brookens would be really open to this suggestion so the voice class could be made more useful to the instrumental music education students. The Brinson book is a great resource for repertoire and you already have the chapter on the changing voice in your textbook.

Both observations were eye opening to me, because I got to see a choir rehearsal. I also got to observe a first year teacher, and some of the difficulties that come with the first year of teaching.

50 points for this assignment.