



Fall 2016

A Classroom's Evolution

Brooke E. Maskin
Gettysburg College

Follow this and additional works at: https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/student_scholarship

 Part of the [Disability and Equity in Education Commons](#), [Music Education Commons](#), and the [Poetry Commons](#)

Share feedback about the accessibility of this item.

Maskin, Brooke E., "A Classroom's Evolution" (2016). *Student Publications*. 486.
https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/student_scholarship/486

This is the author's version of the work. This publication appears in Gettysburg College's institutional repository by permission of the copyright owner for personal use, not for redistribution. Cupola permanent link: https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/student_scholarship/486

This open access student research paper is brought to you by The Cupola: Scholarship at Gettysburg College. It has been accepted for inclusion by an authorized administrator of The Cupola. For more information, please contact cupola@gettysburg.edu.

A Classroom's Evolution

Abstract

Based on the four texts that we read in Social Foundations of Music Education, I took some of the main points and concepts from each of these books and incorporated them into an original poetic monologue. The main question I was trying to answer was: How should teachers as transformative intellectuals navigate through the current educational system in the age of accountability to pursue equity among, in, and through education? Teachers must work to completely defy the stereotypical boundaries of education and inspire students to become investigators in the world, both in and out of the classroom.

Keywords

Music Education, Poem, Educational System, Teaching, Equity

Disciplines

Disability and Equity in Education | Music Education | Poetry

Comments

Originally written for MUS CLAS 149: Social Foundations of Music Education.

Brooke Maskin
MUS149
Assignment 8

We're born into this world unspoken, with nothing but a delicate heartbeat and an open book ahead, waiting to be written and beautifully illustrated.

The first few chapters of the story are probably narrated by your parents, the ones who created you through an act of love and will give you their everything; nurturing and treasuring your soft skin.

But I guess we have an impact before we realize who we are within.

Since this color, this pigmentation has a predetermination of our lives and we can't have it crawl off our bones and leave us to die, NO.

In the hospital room, we're wiped and bathed of our mothers, the old that has held us as air swiftly rushes into those tiny little lungs, forcing us to accept a new way of survival.

But we will always have that gentle pulse, the steady, driving force behind our existence, the rhythm of our own bodies.

It may take some time, but eventually we all develop our own voices, unique and diverse.

We are curious; freely exploring the nooks and crannies while crawling on the living room floor, moving along "a journey of discovery and surprise." (Ayers, Alexander-Tanner, 113.)

The living room boundary is broken after our legs develop, and this changes the game.

Toddling around, we nearly lose our balance with every step that we take, but even if we fall, we get right back up and continue wandering.

Because without failure, we would never learn how to stand up, brush ourselves off, and continue moving forward.

But we have failed to learn, from an educational standpoint, failed to recognize that as humans grow, change, and develop, we will always be inquisitive, analytical, question-asking and answer-seeking creatures that want to appreciate and experience the world as much as possible. And it is absolutely impossible to be revolutionary, to go forth and change the world, if the buildings that we sit in seven hours a day don't empower students, don't give them the freedom to be "living, squirming, questioning, perceiving, fearing, loving and languaging nervous systems," (Postman, Weingartner, 31.)

If we can sing, dance, play, laugh, and wiggle our way through childhood, then why are we forced to walk in single file lines that MUST be perfectly straight, as if we're marching in a jail back to our cells. Because if we're not walking, bounded together by that invisible chain, the teacher will yell and scold us for not listening. Not listening to what? Their absurdness? Why are those desks in rows that only face the teacher? I want to talk with my friends, but if the teacher catches me, then recess will be taken away and I'll have to sit inside on this wonderful, spring day.

Straight rulers, straight pencils, straight lines; we are meant to travel on a twisted, winding, challenging road that may take us on detours, but never will a person navigate through their life on a one-way street. "Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the

world, and with each other” (Freire, 72.) Learning is a two-way process; it’s not about what teachers cover, it’s about what the students discover!

“Education is suffering from narrating sickness,” (Freire, 71) states our wise friend Freire. Like programmed robots, teachers open students’ brains and dump information into them, whether they enjoy learning about the subject or not. From lectures, to an absurd amount of homework and tests, in this banking concept of education, students are “receiving, filing, and storing the deposits,” (Freire, 72.) In the classroom, is the teacher the almighty, power-hungry, “all-knowing” figure and the students the “all-receiving?” Think for a minute. We teach because we are passionate; because “knowledge, like love, is something you can give away, without losing a thing.” (Ayers, Alexander-Tanner, 44.) We can only teach if we use powerful, emotional, creative, and communicative outlets; forming unbreakable and trustworthy bonds inside the classroom.

And the classroom shouldn’t look like a jail cell either. With those awful bright lights and bare spaces on the wall. Instead, these safe places need to be colorful, have room to explore, to spread out, to feel liberated, to be fearless even if mistakes are made. To be messy, positive, interactive; building bridges together that rise higher than the barrier of failure. Most importantly, for students to “know that their presence in the classroom is both valued and valuable,” (Ayers, Alexander-Tanner, 81.) That each individual brings their own personal backgrounds, identities, and experiences that are critical to share and understand amongst everyone in the room. That “only through communication can human life hold meaning,” (Freire, 77.)

When engaged in music, both the right and left sides of the brain are activated, so we are fully awake and alive. This energy; it defines our identities, impacting the performers as well as the listeners. Plato famously says, “Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and life to everything.” This artistic outlet, this form of expression, is incredibly impelling. It “can reach deep levels of emotional affect and aesthetic experience, [offering a] sense of belonging to a musical group” (Campbell, 225.) Actions speak louder than words, yet words can be transformed into song, which can touch anyone’s heart.

So teachers, I ask you all to unveil reality, tell stories to your students, make those connections, seek their strengths and be there when their weaknesses flare. Do not have your “children enter school as question marks and leave as periods” (Postman, Weingartner, 60.) That will only choke off their explosive imaginations, hindering themselves from writing the stories of their lives.

Make music an inseparable part of their world.

Based on the four texts that we read in Social Foundations of Music Education, I took some of the main points and concepts from each of these books and incorporated them into an original poetic monologue. The main question I was trying to answer was: How should teachers as transformative intellectuals navigate through the current educational system in the age of accountability to pursue equity among, in, and through education? Teachers must work to completely defy the stereotypical boundaries of education and inspire students to become investigators in the world, both in and out of the classroom.

Works Cited:

- Ayers, W., & Alexander-Tanner, R. (2010). *To teach: The journey in comics*. New York, NY: Teachers College.
- Campbell, P. S. (2008). *Musician and teacher: An orientation to music education*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Postman, N., & Weingartner, C. (1969). *Teaching as a subversive activity*. New York, NY: Delacorte Press.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York, NY: Bloomsburg Academic.

Honor Code:

“I affirm that I have upheld the highest principles of honesty and integrity in my academic work and have not witnessed a violation of the Honor Code.”

-Brooke Maskin