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Teaching practice in the teaching of stringed musical instruments

In the context of individual instruction of a musical instrument, there are several factors to be considered. The use of self-regulation-promoting strategies is one of them, which could contribute to greater autonomy in students. This study seeks to articulate the concept of self-regulated learning in stringed instrument lessons with other factors, such as teaching strategies, teaching verbalizations, and student's in-class performance.

Self-regulated learning refers to the control of cognition, motivation, and behaviors to achieve specific educational goals (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2011). The process of self-regulated learning begins with the definition of goals, develops through the monitoring and regulation of actions, and concomitant reflection on performance and adjustment of the strategies used (Zimmerman, 2000).

In this study, 14 individual lessons of stringed instruments (violin, viola, and cello) were video recorded, for a total of 10 hours (lasting from 35 to 55 minutes each lesson). These lessons include 4 violin lessons taught by the author and the remaining lessons were taught by 5 other stringed teachers. The 10 participating students, aged between 7 and 12 years-old, played their instruments at the beginner-intermediate level of learning. For the analysis of in-class behaviors, an observation grid containing 4 categories and their subcategories was designed:

1. Self-regulated learning (Forethought, Performance and Self-reflection),
2. Teaching strategies (Demonstration, Gesticulation, Mark beat, Singing, Playing along with the student),
3. Teaching verbalizations (Goal identification, Pointing to the context, Feedback, Short verbal assistance, Teaching study strategy, Task explanation, Questions, and Informal indication)
4. Student performance (Insufficient, Reasonable, Good).

The lessons were analyzed using MaxQda software, version 20. Firstly, rehearsal frames were selected (Duke, 1999), that is, the temporal events of the class considered relevant for the analysis. These rehearsal frames were coded using the categories and subcategories belonging to the observation grid. Subsequently, the overlap of the coded events was analyzed considering the components of Self-regulated learning (no.1) with Teaching strategies (no.2), and Teaching verbalizations (no.3).

Results revealed (i) the quantitative aspect - the time devoted to certain teaching strategies or verbalizations; (ii) the qualitative aspect – elaboration of the critical reviews describing the teaching process within a rehearsal frame of the lesson; and (iii) the influence of “Teaching verbalizations” as a possible way of promoting self-regulatory behaviors in students.

Although associated with the specific context of individual lessons of strings instruments, the observation grid presents potentialities as an instrument of observation and/or assessment of teaching practices. The application of this grid will allow the micro-analysis of the teaching process of each teacher and may contribute to improve this process, as well as enable greater independence in student's learning. For a possible refinement and improvement of the observation grid, it will be desirable to establish a broad dialogue with the teachers of the area.

Keywords

Self-regulated learning, observation grid, stringed instrument teaching