


ARTICLE

Examining a collaborative community amongst music student teachers in Korea

Jihae Shin 

Music Education, Graduate School of Education, Ewha Womans University, Seodaemungu, Seoul, South Korea
Email: jhshin99@ewha.ac.kr

Abstract

Teacher collaboration has been recognised as one of the most influential factors positively affecting school teaching practice. To add to the literature in this area, I investigated a collaborative community of Korean preservice music teachers. The results showed that the collaborative community was a place where these preservice music teachers were able to share their thoughts about their passion for music teaching and various philosophical issues closely related to the role of music in public education. In addition, the collaborative community played a role in helping preservice music teachers focus on the level of students' current knowledge and understand the importance of instructional pacing. Finally, music student teachers freely and frequently expressed their worries and frustration about student teaching and gained emotional support from their peers.

Keywords: Teacher collaboration; teacher community; music teacher; preservice teacher in Korea

Learning is socially constructed (Vygotsky, 1978; Wenger, 1998). People can learn from others' strengths, knowledge and skills by interacting in a community, pursuing knowledge together and generating accomplishments (Wenger, 1998; Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008). Moreover, learning occurs 'most effectively if it is accompanied by metacognitive awareness and analysis of one's own learning processes, and is supported by membership in a learning community' (Schulman & Schulman, 2004, p. 267). In fact, collaboration amongst a group of learners can enable them to improve their achievements, self-concepts, social interactions, collaboration skills and peer relationships (Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008).

Similarly, teacher collaboration has been recognised as one of the most influential factors positively affecting school teaching practice (Killion, 2015; Ismail et al., 2018). However, teacher collaboration does not naturally occur when several teachers are merely assigned to work on the same group or project (Thessin & Starr, 2011). Instead, teachers need to have a culture allowing them to collectively question students' learning and think about improvements (Fullan, 2009; Harris & Jones, 2010). For preservice teachers, it is, therefore, important to have opportunities to develop skills for effective teacher collaboration through teacher education programmes based on collaborative practice, which can help them become more effective collaborators when they begin their teaching careers (Bond, 2013; Draves, 2017). Music teachers, like others, have a need for such collaborative practice before they face real teaching situations.

Because of the advantages of teacher collaboration, this consideration has been incorporated into preservice teacher preparation programmes all over the world (Lee et al., 2015; Nguyen, 2013; Sorensen, 2014). Especially to help preservice teachers naturally transition in their roles from students to teachers, teacher educators and scholars have actively applied teacher collaboration in student teaching, and some scholars consider it to be one of the most important experiences in teacher education (Goodnough et al., 2009). However, there seems to be only one study that

considers preservice peer collaboration in music (Draves, 2017), and most research has focussed on general education (Rigelman & Ruben, 2012; Bond, 2013; Nguyen, 2013; Sorensen, 2014). A more comprehensive understanding of the role collaboration plays for student teaching in music is therefore important.

Korea recognises the importance of teacher collaboration and has incorporated it in teacher preparation and teachers' professional development (Seo, 2009). But in the current system, too many pre- and in-service teachers are dissatisfied with their preparation for the profession (Lee et al., 2015), so it is necessary to think about ways to improve the quality of teacher collaboration for teacher education programmes. However, most research studies have focussed on mock teaching in preservice teaching (Lee & Yim, 2018; Shin, 2019), which results in a lack of evidence concerning student teachers' learning during experiences in the classroom (rather than mock teaching), supported by peer collaboration. Therefore, this study investigates the implementation of collaboration amongst a group of preservice music teachers in their process of student teaching.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the experience of a group of Korean music student teachers in a collaborative community. The specific research questions guiding this study were as follows: How do music student teachers describe the benefits, if any, of a collaborative community? How do music student teachers describe the challenges of contributing to a collaborative community? How do music student teachers describe the influence of a collaborative community on their preparation for a music teacher career?

Peer collaboration in preservice teacher education

In order to examine a collaborative community in preservice teacher education, I investigated three areas of research that apply to music education as well as to general education: peer mentoring, professional learning communities (PLCs) and co-teaching in student teaching. In the following, I briefly consider the literature associated with each of these areas in turn.

Draves (2017) examined music student teachers' experience with peer mentoring. While watching teaching videos, providing assessment feedback to one another and spending time with peers' mentors at their schools, participants could gather teaching ideas and feedback, find assurance, overcome isolation and consider varying perspectives from diverse mentors. However, the results also revealed that time, distance and a heavy workload were obstacles to peer collaboration amongst student teachers. With regard to student teachers of English as a Foreign Language in Vietnam, Nguyen (2013) investigated the effects of peer mentoring on student teachers' sense of psychological support. The results showed that peer mentoring helped students find and provide emotional support, for example, by listening to each other's difficulties, counselling and trusting each other and considering each other's friends.

Bond (2013) implemented a PLC based on a field teaching experience for preservice music teachers. Participants in this study were able to deepen their knowledge of new concepts and to exchange their ideas for teaching by interacting with others in the group. They also received emotional support by sharing their worries, fears and difficulties. However, in this community, preservice music teachers struggled with providing and receiving concrete feedback and suggestions.

Other studies have also reported on the effects of co-teaching incorporated into student teaching. Rigelman and Ruben (2012) conducted a study in which preservice teachers participated in student teaching based on a triad model where two student teachers and one mentor teacher were placed into a group. The preservice teachers' experience with collaboration helped them not only to better understand students' thinking in learning processes and to adjust their teaching practice appropriately, but they also become more reflective educators through each other's successes and challenges. Sorensen (2014) also explored how peer placements in the teaching

practicum affected student teachers' learning. The results showed that peers supported each other, raised several questions regarding their teaching situations, collected ideas and tried to apply new solutions. However, cooperating teachers were sometimes reluctant to accept new learning strategies and ideas to improve their teaching practice.

Context of the study

This study took place in the graduate school of education, at a university located in Seoul, South Korea. This graduate school of education has one of the largest teacher education programmes in South Korea and was awarded first place in South Korea's 2015 Graduate School of Education National Evaluation.

In this graduate programme, leading to a secondary teaching certification and a Master of Education degree, the preservice music teachers' study comprises five semester-long courses. The programme tries to help preservice teachers strike a balance between theory and practice. Before student teachers undertake their student teaching in the third or fourth semester, they are required to complete 60 h of field experience in elementary or secondary schools and 10 h of seminars in student counselling.

Preservice music teachers have two options in determining a school site where they will work for 4 weeks, usually in April or May. They can either search on their own for secondary schools or they may ask the graduate school to assign a cooperating school. Due to a limited number of cooperating schools, most student teachers have to secure their mentor teachers and a school site on their own. This situation frequently results in too many student teachers at one school and insufficient opportunities to work in the classroom with cooperating teachers (Eom & Uhm, 2010; Lee, 2016).

Method

This qualitative research took the form of a case study focussed on understanding preservice music teachers' experiences in a collaborative community. The purpose of a case study is "to inform practice, policy development, research, civic action through the particularised and complex presentation of the case within an analytical framework" (Barrett, 2014, p. 119). I investigated the bounded case of a collaborative community amongst preservice music teachers in-depth to generate knowledge regarding the role of peer collaboration amongst music student teachers.

Preservice music teachers in a collaborative community

I used purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002) to select participants at a university in Korea. Wenger et al. (2002) argued that to foster a collaborative community among people, it is important for members to understand the nature of the community and its value. Therefore, I sought a representative group of preservice music teachers who were aware of the importance of peer collaboration for their professional development as music teachers. This university offers a course entitled "Practice in Music Education Professional Careers", to help preservice music teachers prepare for teaching during the following spring semester. Throughout this course, students visit several school sites, read various articles regarding music education and discuss diverse issues related to music education with their peers. They are expected to become more reflective practitioners by incorporating previous teaching experiences, new knowledge gained through the programme and practices learned in music classrooms. I determined that the 18 students enrolled in this course were aware of the importance of peer collaboration in becoming more reflective music educators.

In the winter semester of 2016, I sent a recruitment email to the 18 prospective participants who had enrolled in the course and planned to conduct their student teaching during the following semester. My email explained the purpose of the study and the nature of the collaborative community in which preservice music teachers discuss the topics that interest them and generally interact with one another during their time of student teaching. I made sure to focus on the fact that this group's meetings would be additional tasks for their voluntary participation while they would also need to focus on student teaching. After several exchanges of email correspondence, a total of six student teachers decided to participate in the study. All six worked at schools in Seoul; Jenny, Bang, Sunny and Hyeri (pseudonyms) had decided on a high school, while Jay and Solvin (pseudonyms) had selected a middle school. They were all asked to teach general music in their respective schools, so they taught Western music, Korean traditional music and popular music. In addition to the regular music classes, they also helped their cooperating teachers to prepare for school activities and festivals. As a result, Jenny and Bang helped to prepare students for a choir festival, while Jay and Sunny taught orchestra as assistant string teachers. Hyeri and Solvin helped prepare spring athletic competitions.

As the participants carried out their student teaching during 4 weeks in April 2017, they met 4 times, once each week. To help establish their community and facilitate their group discussions and collaborations, I, as the researcher, provided a list of possible discussion topics, for example, the best and worst things that had happened during the week and what material they had taught in their music classes. However, I gradually minimised my role as the researcher in this collaborative community to investigate the more natural collaboration amongst the participants. As a result, from the second meeting on, they brought teaching materials or music education topics they wanted to discuss with their community of peers. Each meeting lasted for 2 to 3 h, and I made video recordings for future analysis.

Data collection and analysis

A case study employs multiple methods of data collection (Barrett, 2014), and this study, in particular, used data from observation, individual interviews and focus group interview. To gain insight into the experience of the preservice music teachers in their collaborative community, I observed every meeting and recorded field notes. These observations focussed on building an in-depth understanding of the discussions, interactions and collaborations amongst the participants during their meetings. I also collected and examined the documents and materials the participants brought to the meetings.

As I mentioned above, I used individual interviews and a focus group interview with all six participants for research purposes. Immediately after their student teaching and the concurrent series of collaborative community meetings, I asked each participant to come to my office for individual interviews. These interviews were semi-structured and were meant to guide my understanding of the participants' experiences with their peers in the collaborative community, along with their perceptions of the benefits and challenges associated with it. Each interview lasted between 1 and 2 h. For future analysis, I recorded and transcribed audio from all interviews. The focus group interview was held during the first week of May to gain a deeper understanding of participants' collaboration experience through discussion of interesting themes while also allowing them to elaborate on their ideas and respond to those of their peers.

To analyse the data, I used an explanation-building technique (Yin, 2009). I began by making initial propositions about teacher collaboration based on theories of collaboration and previous studies on peer collaboration in preservice teacher education, including concepts such as exchange of ideas, emotional support and reflective practitioners. I then compared my findings against each proposition, aiming to revise the characteristics of preservice music teacher collaboration while analysing specific details of the collaborative community, continually comparing the revision to

new facts. Once the categories had merged, I added specific details to illustrate each point in its category.

To assure trustworthiness in this study, I used peer review, multiple data collection methods and member checks (Patton, 2002). I invited a colleague at my university to read and code the collected data. Discussing and comparing our respective results allowed me to refine my coding. I had also collected the data using multiple techniques, and, accordingly, I analysed multiple forms of data from observations, individual interviews and the focus group interview. Finally, I shared my findings with the participants in order to verify their perceptions and experiences of the collaborative community.

Findings and discussion

The data from the observations of the collaborative community, individual interviews and the focus group interview generated four distinct themes in the course of my analysis. These included passion to become a music teacher, gaining various philosophical perspectives on music education, awareness of instructional pacing in teaching and feeling a sense of relief. Each theme is illustrated below, with ample quotes describing participants' various perspectives.

Passion to become a music teacher

Throughout the period of student teaching, the collaborative community was the forum in which the participants shared their thoughts about whether they had sufficient passion for becoming music teachers and enthusiasm for teaching as a career. The participants in this community commonly mentioned that they wanted student teaching to be their opportunity to prove they had the ability to become music teachers. What follows is an example from conversations during the first meeting of the collaborative community, focussed on the participants' goals in student teaching:

Sunny: Frankly, even though I study in a graduate school of education, I am not very passionate about being a music teacher. I have negative perceptions about music teachers, teaching, and a teaching career. I want to be more positive about becoming a music teacher.

Jay: I totally agree with Sunny. While observing music classes in a public school when I took method classes, I kept thinking about whether I could do it. During student teaching, I want to check whether I am fit for a teaching job. My mentor teacher told me that if I still love children after student teaching, I have the aptitude to become a music teacher. I want to check whether I have that.

During the fourth meeting, when the participants' student teaching had almost run its course, they discussed what elements of teaching would affect their decisions to become music teachers:

Jenny: I had a lot of worries at the beginning of my student teaching. . . . However, my thinking was changed. I had good relationships with students, which actually helped me dream of becoming a music teacher. It was not my skill, knowledge, or pedagogy. It was the relationship with students.

Solvin: I know the relationship with students affects how I think about a career in music teaching. But the more important thing is love of music and music teaching. It is not enough to like music. While making lesson plans and teaching students, I realised that this is a job which requires commitment to music teaching.

Sunny: During student teaching, I tried to figure out whether a teaching career is worth investing my energy and time in, so I observed carefully what music teachers do in schools The most impressive aspect of teaching was teachers' expertise. That means a lot to me. Teachers have expertise in their subject areas, acknowledged by students and parents. That was great, so I decided to become a music teacher.

This example of conversations that took place within the collaborative community seems to show that the community helped most of the participants speak out about their worries and thoughts about music teachers' careers. In her individual interview, Sunny mentioned that her peers in the collaborative community allowed her to share worries about becoming a music teacher and unburden herself.

While studying in graduate school, I kept thinking about whether I could become a teacher. Is it worth it? Can I do it? I have thought about it, but it was not easy to talk about that matter with others. There were my colleagues, coffee and a place where we could talk to each other. It was good to have peers who were in a similar situation. It was very comfortable to talk to them and share worries about my future career.

In the focus group interview, Jenny also pointed out that various perspectives of her peers had led her to reconsider what mattered most when choosing a teaching career.

During student teaching, we had opportunities to observe closely and to experience music teachers' tasks while fostering rapport with students What was interesting [in the collaborative community] was that each person had different ideas about what to consider as necessary in order to become a music teacher. That was very helpful for me, especially when thinking seriously about music teaching as a career. All the ideas from my peers provide a checklist that I need to think about.

Gaining various philosophical perspectives on music education

Interestingly, from the beginning of this study, the participants showed great interest in the philosophy of music classes, actively discussing what they would need to think about beyond the day-to-day classroom procedures. The following excerpt stems from a discussion that took place during the first collaborative community meeting, showing an example of what the participants wanted to pursue in their music classes:

Jenny: While observing music classes in my high school, I realised that the students were not very interested in music. So, I think that we need to provide an environment where students can participate in activities pleasantly, instead of lecturing on fundamental concepts in music.

Jay: I think I am like an old-fashioned person I think it is important to teach something. I agree with you, but we need to allow students to gather knowledge. Am I wrong? Am I missing something here? Rather than only evoking students' interest, we need to think about important class objectives.

Solvin: Right. Enjoyable activities cannot be the purpose of music class. But we need to think about interesting games and activities in order to effectively deliver knowledge in music. They cannot be separated but should be integrated.

As their student teaching period progressed, the participants began to discuss students' and other teachers' perceptions of music classes in their schools. They especially had common concerns about the value of music education in schools. During the third meeting of their collaborative community, the participants discussed why music is necessary in schools:

Jenny: In music class, my mentor teacher allowed students to study any subject matter they wanted, rather than doing any ‘music teaching’. That was disappointing. Why would they study subjects other than music in music class? I felt very upset and realised that the music subject as a subject matter is not valued in school. I felt a sense of shame.

Sunny: Philosophy is important. We, as music teachers, need to think about why music education is important. Why do I teach music? What do I need to focus on? What kinds of objectives do I need to think about? These kinds of questions are really important, but at the same time, it is difficult to think about them.

Solvin: Right. Music is different from math or science. When I taught my students, I asked them how they had thought about composition . . . they seemed to feel that they would not need this kind of activity for their lives. They think that musical skills are not necessary for life in our society. It is very difficult for me to persuade students and help them be aware of the importance of music

Hyeri: No, No. You need to do that. You need to think about why music is important for students and tell them. If you don’t, music will disappear from schools.

Jenny: One of the students at my school told me that music is boring. He asked, “Why do we need to learn music?” I replied, “Music can enrich all our lives.” He said, “Um . . . right. If I don’t listen to music, there’s no fun in my life.”

While collaborating in the community, the participants described the influence of the community on their student teaching experience regarding the importance of philosophy of music education. They also discussed how the collaborative community, through their peers’ ideas and thoughts, helped them gain various philosophical perspectives on music education. When asked what they found most impressive during the collaborative community, Hyeri replied as follows.

I liked the conversation about what we need to think about for music class and why music class is important. When I was in my graduate courses, I learned about the role of philosophy, but it was difficult and I didn’t realise its importance . . . Throughout student teaching and our meetings, my peers’ opinions on why music is necessary in school helped me realise that a music teacher’s philosophy is important above everything else.

During the focus group interview, Jay also reacted to what she had learned from her peers in the community, referencing others’ philosophical perspectives on the purpose of music class.

When we had our first community meeting, I mentioned that I valued music classes designed for delivering knowledge; accordingly, I focused on my lectures and presentations, rather than considering activities which would arouse students’ interest. However, while teaching, I thought that my peers’ opinions on making music classes enjoyable meant a lot. I reflected on my thoughts and my philosophy: I was being too stubborn. It is important to design interesting lesson plans, especially as beginning teachers.

Awareness of instructional pacing in teaching

Regular meetings and interaction with peers in the collaborative community provided the participants with the opportunity to frankly and frequently share what they planned to teach their students. However, rather than discussing specific pedagogical information such as teaching materials and instructional activities, the participants tended to focus mainly on instructional pacing. This discussion was sparked by Jenny when, in the second meeting, she told the others of her teaching experience.

Jenny: You need to think about pacing. When you spend time on one activity, it's better to set a timer. You need to practise before you teach in front of students.

Jay: I haven't practised it yet.

Jenny: You should. I made a big mistake when I taught seventh graders. I went through all my activities, but there were still 20 min left. So, I tried to think of other activities and spent 20 min on a bingo game and body expressions while listening to music.

Solvin: Oh, I was worried about exceeding class time.

Jenny: So, you need to practise it. You need to allow students to finish activities while you count time.

Jay: How did you adjust the time?

Jenny: When I first taught these seventh graders, I was so nervous it drove me out of my mind. I kept my eye on the clock, but without checking on students' understanding, I went through all the activities too quickly.

The following week, Sunny and Bang commented that they understood the importance of instructional pacing but, because of unexpected problems in the music classroom, it was still difficult for them to take care of pacing for class activities and discussions. The following excerpt is an example from the discussion that took place during the third meeting.

Sunny: I tried to remember what Jenny told us last week, but it was difficult [laughs]. I didn't practise my lesson plan using a timer. I was confident in pacing the class activities. However, there was a problem. The music classroom's speaker didn't work. From that moment, I couldn't focus on the activities. I should've checked out materials in the classroom, but I didn't. After the class ended, I realised that I met only half of my objectives. It was like a disaster.

Bang: I had a similar experience in my class. I'd planned to teach singing and playing, but I only covered singing.

Hyeri: Why did that happen?

Bang: I spent too much time on singing. There were several students who had difficulty in reading notes and singing. I tried to explain some basic theory, which took a lot of class time.

As shown in the above discussion, interactions and discussion with others in the collaborative community increased the participants' awareness of instructional pacing in teaching and helped them become more insightful student teachers of their own classes. However, they still experienced difficulty in moving their classes along at just the right pace for the students. In the following interview, Jay mentioned why she experienced difficulty in finding appropriate instructional pacing.

After discussing instructional pacing, I realised that it is an important factor for an effective music class. So, when I designed my lesson plans, I tried to write the specific time that I would need to spend on each activity, which helped me to ease my mind . . . but, it was still difficult for me to pace activities. My speed was rather fast, so I still had 10 min left, even after I finished all activities. I think I need more practice. It takes time to gain such expertise, but while talking with my peers in the meetings, I realised that instructional pacing is one of the most important elements, especially for beginning teachers, to think about.

Feeling a sense of relief

In their collaborative community, the participants freely and frequently expressed their worries, frustration, and complaints about student teaching; they gained emotional support from their peers. As student teachers, they were in similar situations and positions, so they tended to feel reassured in dealing with their emotions and teaching problems while interacting with their peers in the community. For example, during the third meeting, they discussed several issues that most bothered them and supported each other by listening carefully.

Jenny: The most troublesome things for me were playing piano, singing, and asking questions. Especially asking questions . . . I am a quiet person, so it was difficult to think about appropriate questions, elicit students' ideas, and evoke their motivation.

Solvin: That was difficult for me too. We know musical pieces, musical terms, and related knowledge. However, it was difficult to transform the knowledge so that students could easily understand it. Also, it is hard to frame important questions that students can understand. When I wrote my lesson plans, that was an issue that I worried about. I need to practise. I think it would be better to read a lot of books to think about creative questions.

Sunny: You will be better. You are doing a good job. I had a similar problem at the beginning of my student teaching, and I felt I had made some improvement after teaching the same lesson plan over and over. We need to have more teaching experience in order to think about various questions for students.

Solvin mentioned during her interview that she appreciated the other participants' support and comfort, particularly when telling them about her challenges during student teaching.

First of all, it was good to get feedback and support from others when I shared my difficulties. They provided assurance, which made me more comfortable. That was really helpful for me to feel less stressed.

Jay's interview comments also addressed the theme of feeling a sense of relief. However, she explained that she had felt comforted just by being in the collaborative community, even though she had not shared anything with the others.

I really valued our meetings. Once a week, we met together, shared our difficulties and worries, and gave feedback to each other . . . Even though I did not share anything and just listened to what the others talked about, I felt better. Just being there . . . it was good for me to be reassured. At the beginning of student teaching, I felt pressured to save the extra time to meet with my colleagues. But, after 1 month, I think that my decision to join in the community was the best choice. They were emotional supporters.

By interacting with colleagues, student teachers might recognise that they have similar difficulties and challenges, which might help them feel less nervous about their situations and find emotional support from each other (Nguyen, 2013; Draves, 2017).

Also, the participants argued that they had a sense of belonging in the collaborative community rather than the student teacher community at their schools. Hyeri commented on her close relationship with each of the others in the collaborative community: "In my school, there were other student teachers, including for music, science, and math. But I was much older than them, and it was difficult to find commonalities amongst us."

Jay echoed Hyeri's comments during the focus group interview:

The other student teachers in my school were all younger than me. I tried to build close relationships with them, but the efforts sometimes left me exhausted . . . These meetings, regular interactions with other teachers, were of my age, and I have known them for several years, so I felt more comfortable to be frank and share my experiences during student teaching.

The participants in this study emphasised that similarity in age and their prior relationships with their peers affected how they interacted with each other in the collaborative community.

Discussion

It is important to note that compared to participants in previous studies (Rigelman & Ruben, 2012; Bond, 2013; Sorensen, 2014; Draves, 2017; Goodrich et al., 2018), the student teachers in this study showed relatively little interest in sharing pedagogical information, such as instructional activities and classroom management techniques. They focussed more on the issue of instructional pacing during their music classes, which was one of the most frequently discussed topics. This finding might be due to the loosely structured collaborative community taken as a model for this study. Previous research studies on peer mentoring (Draves, 2017; Goodrich et al., 2018), PLCs (Rigelman & Ruben, 2012; Bond, 2013) and peer placements in student teaching (Sorensen, 2014) have focussed on peer collaboration specifically planned by instructors, so the professional goals of the community were predetermined. This community's discussion topics, however, were not limited to sharing pedagogical activities for teaching practice, and the preservice music teachers were asked to discuss any topics they wanted to share with their colleagues. As a result, the participants tended to focus more on their immediate concerns for effective teaching, particularly instructional pacing. Therefore, in order to form a collaborative community for preservice music teachers, it would be better to loosely construct a community where preservice music teachers can more naturally discuss their current needs and difficulties regarding music teaching.

This study raises the larger issue of how to build and sustain a collaborative community to support preservice music teachers' expertise. In this study, the participants valued feedback and emotional support in a group of peers who shared in similar situations, as also shown in previous studies (Draves, 2017). Yet, this study indicated that factors, such as age and prior relationships, also affected the participants' relationships within this community. Preservice music teachers tend to feel more comfortable when working with peers who have similar challenges and difficulties (Draves, 2017) and close physical proximity in their workplaces (Rigelman & Ruben, 2012). More specifically, this study showed that they appeared most comfortable amongst colleagues who are of a similar age and when they had known each other for some time before taking part in the collaborative community. It is necessary to have a place where a group of student teachers can talk about their experiences without fear of being judged (Nguyen, 2013). Therefore, it is important to consider student teachers' ages and prior relationships when designing a collaborative community, which is meant to cultivate active collaboration.

Additionally, the findings of this research suggest that participants found value in sharing multiple perspectives on a music teacher's career and on philosophical issues in music education. The collaborative community was where preservice music teachers, concerned about their future teaching careers, gathered and exchanged their ideas about music teaching philosophy. They seemed to feel deeply about these issues while they confronted the realities of student teaching, and their peers became colleagues who listened to their thoughts, supported their ideas and helped them consider various perspectives on the issues of interest. This kind of exchange of support and

ideas in a community had not been found in previous research studies on music (Bond, 2013; Draves, 2017) or general education (Rigelman & Ruben, 2012; Sorensen, 2014). In future research, it is, therefore, necessary to investigate whether cultural differences affect the results or if preservice music teachers are especially interested in these topics.

Conclusion and recommendation

Collaboration has been recognised as one of the most important skills for the 21st century (Lamb et al., 2017). John-Steiner (2000) argued that ‘human beings who are engaged in new, partnered activities learn from the consequences of their actions and from their partners’ (p. 188). Therefore, this research aimed to determine the role of collaboration in a music teacher preparation programme and sought to understand the experiences of preservice music teachers in a collaborative community.

Observations and interviews with preservice music teachers corroborated the value of a collaborative community amongst preservice teachers in terms of emotional support (Bond, 2013; Nguyen, 2013). However, this research also offers additional insights into the relevance of peer collaborations. The participants in this study were at a stage where they were considering teaching as a future career, along with various philosophical issues, especially those closely related to the role of music in public education. This study reveals that a collaborative community can be an important forum for preservice music teachers, where they have the opportunity to learn the importance of collaboration and also to grow stronger in their abilities and possibilities as music teachers by actively sharing their passion for becoming music teachers, as well as various philosophical issues.

The participants completed the process of engaging in their collaborative community with more confident attitudes towards instructional pacing in their music classes rather than acquiring more general pedagogical information about instructional activities, classroom management techniques and assessment. This result differs from the findings of previous studies (Rigelman & Ruben, 2012; Bond, 2013; Sorensen, 2014; Draves, 2017; Goodrich et al., 2018), which reported on predetermined goals for a collaborative community set by instructors. The focus on instructional pacing for effective teaching practice rather than on exchanging other kinds of notes on teaching technique most likely reflected their immediate concerns during student teaching. This finding might indicate that to form collaborative communities for preservice music teachers for future studies. It might be better to allow preservice music teachers to decide on their own discussion topics based on their needs and challenges regarding music teaching.

The participants in this study stated that their similar ages and prior relationships affected how they learned through collaboration. John-Steiner (2000) argued that building trust is one of the most important elements for effective collaboration. Through trust, people can learn to listen carefully to each other and pay attention to different ideas and perspectives. The findings of this study showed that to build and sustain a collaborative community for preservice music teachers, it is important to consider their ages and prior relationship. This would help them to bond more easily during a short period of time and, thereby, accelerate their interactions and collaboration in a community.

References

- BARRET, J. R. (2014). Case study in music education. In C. M. Conway (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research in American Music Education* (1st ed., pp. 113–132). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- BARRON, B. & DARLING-HAMMOND, L. (2008). *Teaching for Meaningful Learning: A Review of Inquiry-Based and Cooperative Learning. Powerful Learning: What We Know about Teaching for Understanding* (1st ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- BOND, N. (2013). Developing a professional learning community among preservice teachers. *Current Issues in Education*, **16**, 1–14.

- DRAVES, T. J.** (2017). Collaborations that promote growth: music student teachers as peer mentors. *Music Education Research*, **19**, 327–338.
- EOM, M. R. & UHM, J. Y.** (2010). A survey on perception and needs for pre-service teachers before and after teaching practicum. *Journal of Human Resource Management Research*, **17**, 127–149.
- FULLAN, M.** (2009). *Motion Leadership* (1st ed.). Toronto: Ontario Principles Council.
- GOODNOUGH, K. ET AL.** (2009). Exploring a triad model of student teaching: Pre-service teacher and cooperating teacher perceptions. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, **25**, 285–296.
- GOODRICH, A., BUCURA, E. & STAUFFER, S.** (2018). Peer mentoring in an university music methods class. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, **27**(2), 23–38.
- HARRIS, A. & JONES, M.** (2010). Professional learning communities and system improvement. *Improving Schools*, **13**, 172–181.
- ISMAIL, S. N., MUHAMMAD, F., KANESAN, A. G. & YAACOB, A.** (2018). Teacher collaboration as a mediator for strategic leadership and teaching quality. *International Journal of Instruction*, **11**, 485–498.
- JOHN-STEINER, V.** (2000). *Creative Collaboration* (1st ed.). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- KILLIOM, J.** (2015). High-quality collaboration benefits teachers and students. *Journal of Staff Development*, **36**, 62–64.
- LAMB, S., MAIRE, Q. & DOECKE, E.** (2017). *Key Skills for the 21st Century: An Evidence-Based Review* (1st ed.). Sydney: NSW Department of Education.
- LEE, S.-H. ET AL.** (2015). The qualitative meta-analysis of attributes in teacher learning community. *Korean Journal of Educational Research*, **53**(4), 77–101.
- LEE, W.** (2016). Study on the process of student teaching in secondary schools: Application of mixed methods. *The Korean Journal of Educational Methodology Studies*, **28**, 225–255.
- LEE, Y. S. & YIM, S. J.** (2018). A study by the lesson study on early childhood science education cooperative mock class through preliminary early childhood teacher. *Korean Journal of Children's Media*, **17**(3), 55–73.
- NGUYEN, H. T. M.** (2013). Peer mentoring: A way forward for supporting preservice Efl teachers psychosocially during the practicum. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, **38**(7), 31–44.
- PATTON, M. Q.** (2002). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- RIGELMAN, N. M. & RUBEN, B.** (2012). Creating foundations for collaboration in schools: Utilizing professional communities to support teacher candidate learning and visions of teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, **28**, 979–989.
- SEO, K.-H.** (2009). Teacher learning communities and professional development. *The Journal of Korean Teacher Education*, **26**(2), 243–276.
- SHIN, J.** (2019). An investigation of preservice music teachers' experience on microteaching: Focused on feedback and peer collaboration. *Korean Journal of Research in Music Education*, **48**(1), 125–144.
- SHULMAN, L. S. & SHULMAN, J. H.** (2004). How and what teachers learn: a shifting perspective. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, **36**, 257–271.
- SORENSEN, P.** (2014). Collaboration, dialogue and expansive learning: The use of paired and multiple placements in the school practicum. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, **44**, 128–137.
- THESSIN, R. A. & STAR, J. P.** (2011). Supporting the growth of effective professional learning communities district wide. *Phi Delta Kappan*, **92**, 48–54.
- VYGOTSKY, L.** (1978). *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Sociological Processes* (1st ed.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- WENGER, E.** (1998). *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity* (1st ed.). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- WENGER, E., MCDERMOTT, R. & SNYDER, W.** (2002). *Cultivating Communities of Practice: A Guide to Managing Knowledge* (1st ed.). Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- YIN, R. K.** (2009). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.