The Effect of the Project:
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Background
• Little known about effective approaches for developing young musicians’ expressiveness.
• Instrumental tutors in an exploratory study used: teacher’s enquiry; discussion; aural modelling; gestures & movements; projected performance. Results suggested that teacher’s enquiry & discussion might be helpful for improving children’s expressiveness (Meissner, 2017).
• Experimental study comparing results of a one-off experimental lesson using dialogic teaching of expressiveness with a control lesson focusing on accuracy & technique confirmed effectiveness dialogic teaching (Meissner & Timmers, in prep.).

Aims
• To explore the development of young musicians’ expressive performance through weekly individual instrumental lessons with teachers employing dialogic teaching of expressiveness as well as other strategies.
• To investigate young musicians’ views on their learning of expressive performance.
• Dialogic teaching of expressiveness: Teacher enquiry to stimulate and extend pupils’ thinking about the musical character and structure, and how to convey this in performance.

Main Research Questions
• How do pupils respond to their teacher’s enquiries?
• What is their view on a dialogic teaching approach in their music lessons?
• Do pupils think that they benefit from the use of various instructional methods for learning expressiveness?

Method: Action Research Project
• 2 Cycles & teacher meetings (M1, M2)
• 3 performance sessions + 1 post project (P1, P2, P3)
• 4P: Weekly individual music lessons
• Questionnaires (pre – post) (Q1, Q2)
• Video-stimulated recall interviews (VSR): (Q3, Q4)

Participants
• 5 Instrumental music teachers (incl. HM)
  • Brass, clarinet, piano, violin/viola, recorder (HM)
• 11 Pupils (aged 8 – 14), Level Grade 1 – 5
  • Average students
  • Without known learning difficulties

Timeline Action Research Project

Findings
What Pupils Found Helpful:
- Questions musical character
  - Most pupils found questions helpful for thinking about the musical character.
- Modelling
  - Most pupils found modelling helpful for building up an aural picture of the music.
- Teacher playing with me
  - Some pupils found it helpful when their teacher played along with them.

How Did Pupils Respond to Questions?
- Several pupils responded with perceptive answers
- Expressiveness improved during lesson
- Some found it hard to verbalize ideas

What Did Pupils Learn?
- To think
  - ‘I think it’s important to think about the mood you are trying to convey’
- How to express
  - ‘I have learnt a lot about the feelings of pieces and how to express this better to the listener’

Effect of the Project:
• Pupils were more focussed during the project.
• Pupils reported more reflection on interpretation.
• Pupils felt more confident about performing.

Theoretic Model
Teaching Expressive Music Performance

Technique & Accuracy
- Playing with students
- Singing
- Questions & dialogue
- Imagined emotion
- Projected performance

Emotional Expression & Phrasing
- Listening to own recordings
- Improvisation
- Modelling
- Gestures & movement
- Analysis

Conclusion
• Several pupils responded with perceptive answers to their teacher’s questions, whilst a few found it hard to verbalize their ideas.
• Most pupils found teacher’s questions useful as it helped them to reflect on the musical character.
• Most pupils thought that modelling was important for their learning of expressive performance.

References