

A Qualitative Study on The Constructive Approach in Music Education: The Sample of Artvin

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Abstract: *Although it may look simple, the subject of education is actually a rather complex subject. It is known that the interest and approaches of various philosophers to education and especially to learning is based upon Ancient Greek and Plato. The fact that the phenomenon of learning is based upon science has become a field of epistemology as well which tries to explain what information is and its nature through researches. The matter how the human race managed to access information, had become to be conceptualised with a priori knowledge that was developed by Platon; and epistemology emerged. The issue of how, when, where and on which levels the information will be presented and the issue of how will it be managed to make the learnt information remembered is an ongoing problem even in our day. Like in many other subjects; new theories in modern education understanding present new approaches and illuminates the way of the humankind on this topic as well. The constructivism theory, which is one of these approaches, draws the attention by its great importance towards information and its containing of a philosophical approach herewith. In this study, an experimental study had been done with preservice teachers based on the constructivism theory. Preservice teachers are given the problem of teaching folk songs to children, who receive education at the elementary school; they had been enabled to actualise their own researches and discoveries, the definition of the theory had been made in the supervising of a teacher, the genuine samples that were given by the preservice teachers had been merged through essential propositions. At the end of the study, these samples and thoughts had been assessed.*

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I. Introduction

How the humans manage to actualize the learning phenomenon has been a curiosity ever since the first ages. Various thoughts on this subject have also affected modern education science as well as it had affected the philosophy. This situation which can especially be said to form the core of the constructivist approach, also forms the subject of this research. In this study where the preservice teachers had participated, the students had been given a problem and they had been asked to develop a learning strategy with discovery learning towards this problem. During the study, the teacher has also guided the students at times and tried to help the students create new samples. Hereby, cognitive methods and goals have had a great importance. During the study, the students had been prompted to intensely tend towards cognitive goals and methods. According to Joolingen (1991), cognitive methods may play a supportive role in discovery. In the traditional understanding of learning, it is considered that the information is being received by the explanatory learning environment that is materialised by the teacher. In the constructive understanding of learning, however, it is widely accepted that learning would be more affective and more permanent with cognitive methods and the student's cognitive senses and ability. According to Liu & Chen (2010), the role of consciousness in rooted constructivism is being determined by the students' needs. But how will the students determine these needs of theirs? According to Njoo & Jong (1993) researcher learning period is rather hard for those who learn for that they make mistakes and can exhibit inefficient and ineffective behaviours. Because of this, it is needed to motivate the students from time to time and to provide them to achieve the right informations by stimulating them at the right times. According to Beyer (1988), the purpose and order of the well-constructed thinking skills defines the skills and strategies for the learning during the curriculum duration. The guidances that will make the students eager and that will provide the students to achieve new explorations concentrated are needed to be made to develop the cognitive condition.

1.1. The Phenomenon of Knowledge, The Nature of Knowledge and Epistemology

The question of how the condition of learning is happening, is one to stimulate the philosophers and scientists to think for many ages. The humankind has always thought about especially the problem of what the notion of knowledge is and where it is originated from. According to Arslan (2009; 204-205-206), in Heraclitus there is not a theory that is related to the nature, conditions and possibilities of knowledge yet knowing is the thing that he attached importance the most. Which means although we cannot speak of an epistemology in

today's context we can still say that Heraclitus is one of the very first philosophers to mention information theory. Heraclitus actually emphasises wisdom as he mentions that knowing many things is important. Again, according to Arslan (2009; 207) Heraclitus counts observation as the precondition of knowledge, yet the observation itself is not enough alone. How important observation is on gathering and recalling information cannot be denied but it can be said that observation alone is never enough. Because emotions are dominant in the phenomenon of observation and knowledge mostly leans on to reason. Likewise, knowledge and learning phenomenon can be continued from Socrates. According to Glasersfeld (1989) constructivism is known from Socrates to these days. And according to Arslan (2008; 307) knowledge exists in human inherently as "a priori" and the person actually recalls this information which he has from birth by learning. Probably one of the most accepted one among various thoughts on this subject is Plato's opinions who thinks on the nature of knowledge and who is considered as the founder of epistemology. According to Arslan (2008) Plato said that the origin of knowledge is not experiment or sensation but reason. Akan (2012) indicates that for Plato what is preferential and real is what we perceive through our minds. According to Cevizci (2012; 32) knowledge has three factors; Mind as subject, subject of information as object and thing that is a product of the relationship between subject and object. What is important in knowledge is subject which means mind, because mind needs to go towards it to achieve knowledge. In short, it is not possible for the mind to achieve knowledge without going towards to knowledge. Of course hereby, the phenomenon of curiosity is also important, because without the will and wonder to achieve knowledge, the possessing knowledge cannot be talked about. On the other hand, it is known that Plato's importance that he attaches to reason rather than senses and sensations and his opinions on knowledge also especially influenced Immanuel Kant as well as it had the other philosophers. According to Pea (1993) information gets constructed as socially. Glasersfeld (1983) said that the question of how we know anything. Bruner (1985) emphasized the importance of education. When it is thought with the importance and value that the epistemological approach attaches to knowledge, the inspiration the epistemological approach gives to modern education science cannot be ignored. In modern education understanding, teacher centred and rote learning method had been abandoned and seeking where the students are actively participated in the learning process and where they add their knowledge, emotions and experiences to the phenomenon of learning has been verged.

1.2. Constructivist Approach

According to Saban (2013) constructivist theory is a philosophical theory that explains how the individual understands and learns. There are many researchers that mentions this theory. (Aykaç:2014; Ülgen:1997; Bacanlı:2012; Fer:2007; Fer:2011; Murphy:1997; Westwood: 2008; Jonassen:1991; Duffy & Cunningham: 1996; Feldman: 1996; Schunk:2009; Glasersfeld:1990; Glasersfeld:1989; Glasersfeld:1983; Glasersfeld:1995) According to Scholnik & Kol & Abardinel (2006;13) there are two approaches in constructivism which are cognitive constructivism and social constructivism. While cognitive constructivists focuses on the importance of reason in learning, social constructivists indicates that the key role is played by the communication between the environment and the learners. According to McAuliffe and Eriksen (2002) the lessons serves to three purposes; the first one is to provide information, the second one is to motivate or even inspire a group and the third one is to stimulate the critical thinking. We can think of it as this: Before any subject is being taught in classes, it is more rational for the students to learn the information they had learnt or experienced about the subject and to construct the new information and experiences on it afterwards. The logic of the constructivist approach is already this: To reveal what the students know by asking questions and questioning and to prepare them to the new information and experiences they will learn by steering them when needed. According to Confrey (1990) since Piaget are interested in science, mathematic and programming and how do students learn. Akarsu (1987) indicated that new information can not be reached through analysis and analyses are a priori. According to Ekiz (2009) for students to learn through interactions with each other in the classroom observation techniques is been used. Again according to McAuliffe and Eriksen (2001), Socrates used the questions to reveal the investigations and reasons. It is not possible for the learning event to happen without having the human asking questions and questioning. According to Glasersfeld (1989), constructivism is a consciousness theory with its philosophical, psychological and cybernetic origins. In this theory, the consciousness gets activated by the subject that comprehends, the function of cognition can be adapted and it serves the experimental world to be organized.

1.3. Discovery Learning

Salomon & Perkins (1998) indicate that learning involves social aspects. Discovery Learning which takes place in the approaches of constructive learning is a theory that is pioneered by Jerome Bruner. According to Bruner (1977), the discovery learning is actually the general information that the child can control and evaluate the resources by himself to gather more new information. And according to Tuovinen & Sweller (1999), discovery learning requires the students to explore the procedures and discovery concepts which can also be understood by direct steering. According to Joolingen (1999) discovery learning is being seemed as the

promising way of learning because of some reasons. What important here is that the student's active attendance to learning, unlike traditional learning, provides a more affective information for the student.

II. Purpose of The Study

The first stage of elementary school is a period that prepares the students to life, leads the student to gain experience and skills, unlike the memorized informations on the traditional method, and to lead the students to accept these values as their life principles. This situation carries more importance for the students who were not able to attend any school on their pre-school period. With the learning of Folk Culture and Folk Songs that the students were born and grow up in, the students will both know their own culture and have the chance to develop their own music cultures.

1.4. Method of The Study

The research had been done as a Case Study which is one of the Qualitative Research Methods. According to Yildirim and Şimşek (2013; 83); it is possible for the case studies to be made by quantitative or qualitative approaches. The purpose here is to reveal the results about the determined situation. One of the bases of this study is the subject or subjects to be deeply researched.

The Direct Observation Method had also been used on the research. According to Aziz (2010; 77); this observation method is where the researcher researches the events hewitnesses in daily life and the individuals and objects which are the research subjects, without putting any other thing between. Balcı (2013) indicates that educational research is relying on systematic objective observation, record and analyse.

1.5. The Sample of The Study

The sample group of the study is 40 participants who have been selected on voluntariness among the preservice classroom teachers who study at the second grade of the Primary Education Department. These participants are on ten groups and each group contains four participants. The participants have received music lessons for approximately three months.

1.6. The Restriction of The Study

In the research, it is aimed to learn about the opinions of preservice classroom teachers who study at the second grade of the Primary Education Department on the teaching of Folk Songs to children who study at the first grade of primary schools between the ages of 6-9 by Discovery Learning Method under the Constructivist Approach.

1.7. The Data Collection Tools and Analysis of The Study

At the end of the study, Analytic Description and Coding methods are being used. The text concepts had been gathered and analysed by coding. Also the content of the studies had been analysed from musical and educational perspectives, evaluated and interpreted.

III. Findings

The problem of teaching Folk Songs to children who study at the first grade of primary schools between the ages of 6-9 have been presented to preservice classroom teachers who study at the second grade of the Primary Education Department, Discovery Learning Method have been used for the solution of the problem. For this, a study that takes four weeks in total have been applied. The study programme has been done as this: Week One: The problem had been presented to the students, their knowledge of and experiences about Folk Songs had been asked and their suggestions had been listened. The students had been wanted to discuss and do researches with their groups by posing them these questions:

a) What is your knowledge of Folk Songs?

Opinions on Folk Songs	Number of Groups	Number of Students
They are separated as with and without lyrics	2	8
They are hard to teach, they are not convenient to children	2	8
They are based on true events	4	16
They are the products of local culture	2	8
TOTAL	10	40

b) In how many categories can the folk songs be examined?

Opinions on in how many categories the folk songs can be examined	Number of Groups	Number of Students
Folk songs do not be categorized	5	20
It depends on their features	2	8
Anonymous or not anonymous	1	4

In three categories of literary, musical and interpretation	2	8
TOTAL	10	40

3.1Week Two: The students had been asked about the informations on and experiences about the problem which was given to them a week ago and they had been verged to think with different perspectives by being posed these questions:

a) Should folk songs be taught to children?

Opinions	Number of Groups	Number of Students
They should be taught to children	8	32
They should not be taught to children	2	8
TOTAL	10	40

b) Why do folk songs should not be taught to children?

	Number of Groups	Number of Students
Children's songs are more entertaining and attention-grabbing	1	4
Phonetic structure of the children can be damaged	1	4
TOTAL	2	8

c) Should the subjects and stories of the folk songs be attached importance to while picking folk songs that are convenient to children?

Opinions on the importance of the subjects and the stories	Number of Groups	Number of Students
The subjects and stories are important	9	36
The subjects and stories are not important	1	4
TOTAL	10	40

3.2Week Three: The findings and newly gathered informations of the students about the questions that were posed to them had been listened, their suggestions had been followed and they have been presented these suggestions:

a) Is it important while selecting the folk songs for children whether the sound intervals are suitable?

	Number of Groups	Number of Students
Sound intervals are important	8	32
Sound intervals are not important	1	4
I do not have any idea	1	4
TOTAL	10	40

b) Are the orders of the melody structure and melody establishment important on the selection of folk songs which are suitable for children?

	Number of Groups	Number of Students
Melody structure and melody establishment are important	8	32
Melody structure and melody establishment are not important	2	8
TOTAL	10	40

Week Four: The information that the students have gathered about the subjects they researched suitably to the suggestions of the former week had been examined and these suggestions have been brought:

a) Through which method you can teach these Folk Songs that you choose?

	Number of Groups	Number of students
I teach through rhythm patterns	1	4
I teach through musical plays	1	4
I teach part to whole (Through inductive method)	7	28
I teach by playing a musical instrument	1	4
TOTAL	10	40

IV. Conclusion

According to Vrasidas (2000) although the constructivists are more interested in the student's pre-information; what is actually essential is not the preconscious of the learner, but the cognitive process, skills that reflects himself and the learning process of the learner. At this point it is needed to say that the learning environment is rather important. According to Vrasidas (2000); teacher's role moves out from the authority role and changes as a partner and coach in the learning. What is trying to be indicated here is the teacher to leave its traditional role and to guide the student to essential information by starting from the small information or guidances. In this study, the students had been made to study in groups and the factor of communication has also been featured. According to Prawat&Floden (1994) the process of evaluation of the students' understanding is an important subject on constructivist approach. In this research, the application topic has been discussed with students and various applications have been done to them. In conclusion; on this study which had been done experimentally in the light of the information that students had learnt before, it have been understood that the majority of the students have ideas on folk songs. However, while looking at the condition of the students who have stated that they do not have any ideas; it is seen that they did not stated any opinions mostly on the melody structure and melody establishment. Majority of the students have given affirmative responses to the question of teaching folk songs. Active applications have been made with students on the stage of teaching folk songs. It is thought that popularising and doing these studies on different areas would be beneficial and productive. Moreover, it should be started by the fact that the information which is generally being given as theoretical, cannot be actualised without being applied and they can easily be forgotten; and as it has been done here active applications should be made. By that, the theoretical studies will settle on the minds of the learners more steadily and they will be able to make different and original applications in the light of the freshly learnt information.

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