

WCLTA 2013

# The Effect of Instructor Feedback on Technique of Undergraduates Studying Instrumental Conducting

Mohd. Nizam Nasrifan

*Senior Lecturer, Sultan Idris Education University, Tanjung Malim, 35900, Malaysia*

---

## Abstract

The goals and the instructor feedback approach are as possible to comprise clear information in attaining the success criterion of a task or a performance. A group of student teachers in Basic Conducting Technique class participated in the implementation of the instructor feedback program. Overall, the whole program took four sessions over a 4-week period. The first week was a pre-test session, followed by 8 hours of instructor feedback sessions in the second and third weeks. The post-test was conducted in Week 4. The data for this study were gathered by using two sets of standardized assessment instruments (Standard Assessment Format for Basic Conducting Technique) which includes a set of questionnaires and the instrumental music pieces. The instrument is structured in a form of 5-point Likert-type scale to rate the conductor behaviors to communicate with the ensemble. The researcher analyzed the quantitative data to compare pre-test and post-test scores to determine student progress. The data analysis revealed findings that point to the efficiency of the instructor feedback strategy in enhancing students' conducting effectiveness. The findings pointed out that the instructor feedback program has positive effects on students' conducting efficacy. As indicated from literatures and the findings in this study, this program is beneficial to those who participate.

© 2014 Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>).

Selection and peer-review under responsibility of the Organizing Committee of WCLTA 2013.

*Keywords:* Feedback, Techniques, Music Education, Effectiveness, Conducting;

---

## 1. Introduction

The undergraduate course in Music Conducting offers opportunities for students to prepare for careers as music teacher which emphasizes various aspects of conducting such as baton technique, body language, score analysis and effective rehearsal technique as well as works with students to develop self-awareness as a conductor and the philosophical foundation of music conducting. By the end of the semester, students should be able to conduct short excerpts of the standard ensemble repertoire, demonstrating good conducting skills in front of an instrumental ensemble performance. According to McClung (2005), good conducting skills are attainable by connecting a specific gesture with a specific musical intention. Good conductors use their facial expression, body stance and posture to show the character of the music (Fried, 2001).

Corresponding Author: Mohd. Nizam Nasrifan  
E-Mail: [nizamnasrifan@gmail.com](mailto:nizamnasrifan@gmail.com)

## 2. Background of the Study

Students were demonstrating poor conducting skills, even after concluding Basic Conducting Technique course. There were gaps in their conducting training. Students often ignored the rudiments of conducting and overlooked at the important cues or are late in making particular gestures. Students failed to respond to the general requirements of meter, tempo, instrumentation, dynamics, and numerous other details in the score. Ideally, students must portray clear conducting gestures that represent appropriate attacks and releases, tempo, meter, style, dynamics, balance, cuing, accentuation, phrasing and interpretation for effective ensemble conducting (Labuta, 2000). Other weaknesses identified such as students missed on demonstrating certain important gestures for dynamic contrast, *ritardando* and cues for soloist; failed to show clean and clear conducting patterns; unable to maintain the given tempo; failed to inspire and challenge performers to perform at their highest level; and last but not least felt nervous while standing and conducting in front of a large group.

Because a large percentage of students will use their conducting skills extensively during their career as a music educator and the development of effective nonverbal communication through conducting gestures is essential in producing superior musical performances in school, a study to improve the conducting skills of students within the undergraduate conducting course seems warranted. Ulrich (2009) stated that we should prepare the conductor as teacher, musical collaborator, and pedagogue because many undergraduate conducting students will spend their careers in the teaching profession working with inexperienced, amateur musicians. Bell (2002) noted that undergraduate conducting classes should initiate efficient rehearsal procedures and communication skills to student conductors. Bell posed three questions: (a) what do conductors do in rehearsal to maintain a thriving ensemble, (b) how do successful conductors shift their ensemble to comprising a meaningful musical experience, and (c) how can instructor share this information with future music teachers? Malta and Clair (2006) recognized the value of sharing music activity between instructor and student teachers. They also emphasized that by sharing skills and experience, instructor will know what to expect for the students and strategize the valuable service that should be provided. Spangler (2010) stated that, "Almost all formal course or program evaluations occur, students have little sense that the feedback is useful or likely to be used" (p.100). To this extent, the researcher justifies that it is crucial for the each student conductor to review and evaluate the conducting techniques he or she used during the rehearsal through instructor feedback and discussion. In conjunction with the use of videotape, the interactive instructor feedback and responses will help students identify and take action to problem areas that occur during conducting performance.

This study searched the communal pattern of the poor conducting skills demonstrated by students. Ulrich (2009) emphasized that, the fundamental task of a conducting instructor is to observe and refine student's conducting movements that will communicate the existed ideas of the music. According to Running (2009), despite the importance of building a foundation of clear baton technique, there is an instructor's role to prescribe to a philosophy of beginner conductor training that extends beyond purely physical instruction. The research then focused on intervention or treatment that be posited for the conducting ability in class for finding a solution to these students' poor conducting skills. For this study, the purpose was to examine the relationship between the implementation of an instructor feedback strategy and change in the students' conducting efficiency. Feedback increases the number of changes that students make on revision (Sweeney, 1999). The researcher used playback video, discussing participants' conducting activity with the instructor during the feedback session. The expected results are that the use of instructor feedback will help students to identify his or her strengths and weaknesses; and improve their conducting skills in future conducting tasks. Findings of this study may provide guidance on how the instructor can create learning environments that instil a strong sense of support for their undergraduate conducting students.

## 3. Methodology of the Study

The researcher used a quantitative approach "for the purpose of improving education by developing and testing intervention" (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007, p. 299). The purpose of this applied dissertation study was to measure the effectiveness of the instructor feedback program on student conducting achievement. According to Sweeney (1999) feedback increases the number of changes that students make on revision. The participants for this study were a group of 18 undergraduate music major students who are undertaking the Conducting Technique course.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1113292>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1113292>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)